Understanding the Lived Experiences of Second Career Beginning Teachers

Meera Varadharajan

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I dedicate this thesis to God

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Certificate of originality

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

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Abstract

The past twenty years have seen a steady increase in the number of mature aged individuals entering the teaching profession as a second career (McKenzie, Rowley, Weldon, & Murphy, 2011). To expand the potential pool of well-qualified teachers, opening the profession to individuals with relevant experience outside education is now recognised as an important policy option (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2011). Career change teachers are seen to bring with them a "variety of skills, including management or organisational expertise" (Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003, p. 95). They are also increasingly relied on to bolster the teaching cadre in countries facing teacher shortages. In spite of their increasing presence in the teaching profession, little research has been conducted on career change teachers. Compared to the large number of studies of first career beginning teachers, research on second career teachers and their school experiences are few and far between. In particular, the literature rarely publishes the voices of second career classroom teachers after they have begun their teaching journey, tending to rather focus on second career student teachers instead.

This qualitative study uses both an interpretive and a phenomenological approach to explore the school experiences of seven second career beginning teachers from schools in the state of New South Wales, Australia. The purpose is to investigate what it is like to be a second career teacher after having been elsewhere and to understand the ways in which the participants' past career and life experiences influence their current roles as school teachers.

Participants' individual accounts are represented through thematic analysis, woven around the existential themes of lived relation and lived space. The study found that all the participants shared a deep passion for teaching and most had made a conscious and thoughtful decision to become a teacher. Teacher participants were keen to share their prior work and life experiences with students and believed they brought valuable perspectives to school and classrooms Career change teacher participants had to make significant adjustments to fit into their new work environments and to adapt to school culture in general.

This dissertation leads to a better understanding of the career transition process of second career teacher participants. The contributions of career change school teachers, particularly with respect to student learning and development is also highlighted. By increasing awareness and understanding of second career teachers and their contributions to the teaching profession, the study will benefit the teaching community, including senior school management who employ second career teachers in their schools. ■

Chapter 1

Introduction

Statement of the problem

Establishing and maintaining a pool of well qualified teachers is an ongoing challenge for education policy makers in many countries. Teachers' roles and responsibilities are becoming more significant and complex: they are expected to prepare students to participate in an ever-evolving knowledge-based society (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, 2008) and at the same time take care of students' social and emotional well-being (Mayer, 2003). Teachers' tasks are not made any easier by being required to achieve the same goals for every student despite being faced with a diverse student population with different learning needs and abilities. The focus of educational policy objectives continues to be on how to attract, hire and retain talented teachers, particularly when there is compelling evidence that teacher quality and calibre is the most significant determinant of student achievement (OECD, 2012).

Over recent years the teaching profession has witnessed a significant increase in the number of mature age individuals switching careers to become teachers (McKenzie et al., 2011; Australian Education Union, 2008). The average age profile of entrants to teacher preparation courses shows that many are now in the late twenties to early thirties age bracket (Evans, 2011). A sizeable proportion of early career teachers are now in their thirties and forties and many of them have been in other occupations before commencing teaching (McKenzie et al., 2011). Mature age individuals are generally perceived to be an attractive group of teachers who bring with them a variety of skills and who can "play an important part in bolstering the profession" (Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003, p. 95). They are actively sought and recruited to fill the gap caused by teacher turnover in some countries, particularly in high demand subject areas such as science, mathematics and technology (Grier & Johnston, 2009). Yet, in spite of their increasing presence in the teaching profession, little research has been conducted with career change teachers. Compared to the vast number of

studies of first career beginning teachers, studies on second career teachers and their school experiences are few and far between. As career change teachers have the potential to make unique and significant contributions to student learning and engagement in and beyond school, the education community stands to benefit from knowing more about this growing group of teachers.

Purpose of the study

The overall aim of this study is to inquire into the lived experiences of second career beginning teachers in schools. My inquiry is directed at examining career change teachers' thinking processes and understanding of themselves as they make the transition to teaching. I explore the ways in which they live their lives in schools as mature age career change beginning teachers. The study seeks to understand individuals' 'lifeworlds' after they have changed professions to become teachers. In other words, my aim in this research is to understand what it means to be a second career teacher, having entered the profession with previous work and life experiences.

Introducing research methodology

My research is situated within a philosophical inquiry to understand career change teachers. The framework of the study is underpinned by philosophical questions into human existence. It is also grounded in practice and situated in context and relations by interpretively inquiring into second career teachers' ways of existing in school. I have chosen to use both interpretive and hermeneutic phenomenological approaches to uncover the lifeworld of teachers. A phenomenological methodology is a qualitative human science methodology that inquires into individuals' ways of existing in the world. It is a methodology with philosophical orientations. Terms such as 'nature' and 'essence' are used in this thesis with the specific meanings they have within phenomenological studies. Phenomenological questions are meaning questions (van Manen, 1990, p.23) inquiring into individuals' existence in the world. Everyday words and their descriptions have a particular meaning in phenomenological research. For instance, I use the term 'understanding' to refer to how I 'make sense' of the participants and their experiences. A hermeneutic inquiry seeks to interpret and bring to light the essence of a phenomenon. I will use hermeneutic phenomenology to understand, describe and interpret career change teachers' lived experiences and the way they have created meaning for themselves in the process of becoming a teacher. A hermeneutic study is always an inquiry into possible human experiences in an attempt to know the world in which we live

as human beings (van Manen, 1990). The purpose is not to provide definitive answers or to solve problems. Rather, the aim is to seek knowledge about what it is to be human.

There are very few studies on career change teachers that use this methodology in this way to uncover teachers' lifeworlds. My motive for inquiring into second career teachers and my choice of methodology are partly influenced by my personal experience and by my philosophical perspective on life, as I will now briefly outline. In providing an account of my personal experience in this phenomenological inquiry, I recognise that "one's own experiences are also the possible experiences of others and also that the experiences of others are the possible experiences of oneself" (van Manen, 1990, p. 58).

Personal orientation to the research

My interest in career change teachers stems from my personal experience of changing my career later in life. I believe my own experience underscores the need for research concerning second career teachers. By describing my own personal experience, I hope to be able to argue the impetus for undertaking research with second career beginning teachers.

I was in my late thirties when I contemplated changing careers. After graduating with a first degree in commerce many years ago, I later worked as a taxation specialist in a small tax firm for a couple of years. Although there was no single episode or incident that triggered the need to change direction, I did not find my career to be meaningful and fulfilling. I was driven more and more into thinking about my own interests and passion about what I wanted to do in order to lead a more satisfying life. I knew that the time for a change had come and I intuitively felt it was right to move to a different field. However, I was also in a state of flux as I attempted to make sense of what was happening to me, the reasons for the change and where I wanted to go with my life. It was a journey of soul-searching during which I asked myself some deep questions about the purpose of life. During this transitional period, I took the opportunity to understand myself and my own philosophy in the context of my past and current experiences and decisions. I also reflected upon and wanted to understand the nature and ways in which my previous life experience and history impacted on my decision to change fields. It was not just that I was focused on the practical aspects of which field to choose and why, but that I was directing myself inward to explore and inquire into some fundamental questions of my ways of living in the world: Who am I? What is my lifeworld? Why am I doing this now? And what does this change mean?

At the same time, the field of education fascinated me at both a personal and a professional level. Being involved in my own children's education and school made me think about how the education system works and how schools are run. I found myself viewing the school not just through a parent's eyes but also from perspective of the teachers. I tried to see what it is would be like to be an educator, attempting to explore and understand their perspectives, thinking and philosophies. I realized I wanted to find out more and this led to a transformative journey during which I changed my career direction from commerce and taxation to education and educational research. I enrolled in full-time university study and completed a Master of Education degree. Even though at this time I was unsure of my future pathway after my studies, the period of being a 'student' again and being immersed in the course brought great joy and a sense of happiness. I felt that as a result of the change in career direction I was re-discovering aspects of myself that I had not known about or recognised.

After completing my Master of Education, I was employed as research assistant working on a project on the retention of beginning teachers. I conversed with a number of beginning teachers, including mature age individuals who had decided to change careers to become a teacher. These second career teachers raised challenges and issues that differed from those mentioned by younger or first career beginning teachers. As second career teachers described their journeys and experiences to me, I recognised certain parallels between their personal experiences and my own. For instance, I could relate to their descriptions of their search for direction in their lives and ways in which they reflected on what was meaningful to them at certain points in their lives. I too had gone through a similar process of thinking and reflection and I tried to understand how these thoughts and the search for meaning led to their decisions to change direction. In their descriptions, I was able to see how an individual is shaped by the life experiences he/she has gathered over time. At the same time, new life experiences become more meaningful because of what we know and bring from our prior experiences. In this way, the cycle of connections between past and present life experiences goes on. Teachers' descriptions of their thinking processes during career change and their close parallels with what I went through led to my eagerness and curiosity to explore career change teachers' lifeworlds. I was curious to understand how mature age individuals make meaning not only of their 'new' life experiences (after their career change) but also how they see themselves as individuals after the transition. I became interested in the philosophical question of how people think and why they say what they say, attempting to make sense of

others' ways of thinking. Thus began my doctoral research journey into understanding the lifeworlds of second career beginning teachers.

My personal orientation brought to light the philosophical underpinnings embedded in my research study, as articulated more fully in the methodology chapter. More importantly, the pragmatic and philosophical dimensions of my own career change journey enabled me to recognize the relevance of understanding career change teachers and their construction of meaning in contexts, relations, and situations.

Research study significance

This research study on second career beginning teachers is significant for three main reasons. First, there is a clear upward trend in the number of mature age entrants who join the teaching profession after working in a different career. Second, mature age individuals with experience continue to be sought after for various reasons such as to address teacher shortages in subject-related areas, particularly at the secondary level. Third, because of their prior career and life experiences, career change teachers are perceived as a potential pool of effective teachers who are able to contribute towards the development of a high quality teaching workforce.

A number of recent studies demonstrate the increasing trend in the number of older adults switching careers to enter the teaching profession both internationally and in Australia (Skilbeck & Connell, 2004). For example, in Australia, a 2007 state-wide survey of about 1700 beginning teachers reported an increase in the number of mature aged beginning teachers, with just over 24% in the 35+ age range in 2007, compared to 17% in 2006 and about 8% in 2005 (AEU, 2008). The survey also showed that nearly 50% of respondents previously had a career other than teaching (2008). Commenting on the continuing trend of the age of beginning teachers as being "increasingly mature aged", the AEU 'New Educators Survey' of about 1500 beginning teachers found 35% of teachers who were surveyed in 2008 were aged over 30 years of age and above (AEU, 2009, p. 20). Figures from the 2011 Staff in Australia's Schools report indicated that a "sizeable proportion of early career teachers [were] over 40 years (13% primary and 17% secondary) old" (McKenzie et al., 2011, p. 75). The same report also indicated that nearly 20% of early career primary and over 25% of early career secondary teachers were in full-time employment in the year before they commenced teacher preparation programs, leading the report authors to conclude that "the most recent entrants to the profession are more likely than earlier generations to be working in other jobs before commencing teaching" (p. 82). Similar trends can also be observed in the number of

mature age individuals who are now undertaking alternative certification programs with a view to qualifying as either a primary or secondary teacher.

Other studies around the world also confirm an increase in the number of mature age adults from other professions who enter the teaching profession (Chambers, 2002; Crow, Levine & Nager, 1990; Freidus & Krasnow, 1991; Hart Research Associates, 2010; Mayotte, 2003; Watt & Richardson, 2008). For example, in the US, according to the Project on the Next Generation of Teachers, more than a third to half of new teachers have worked in another profession before becoming a teacher and mid-career entrants constitute a large proportion of alternative teacher preparation courses (Donaldson, 2012; Johnson and The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers, 2004).

At the same time, the significance of mature age entrants to the teaching profession is increasingly being recognised by governments and employers. Teacher education pathways are being made more attractive to increase the pool of potential mid-career entrants. Career change entrants with industry experience and passion for teaching are viewed by the Australian government as a potential pool of talented individuals who can be drawn into the profession to address issues such as shortages in subject-related areas, teaching in hard-to-staff rural and regional schools or perhaps even closing the gender gap (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2013). Additionally, career change entrants are perceived as a group who can contribute towards the development of a high quality teaching workforce and generally lift the status of the teaching profession. This is evident in the recognition given by the Australian government to alternative pathway teaching programs as representing "one of the strategies required to support the development of a high quality teaching workforce" (2013, p. 5). To this effect, a number of initiatives continue to be introduced to improve alternative teaching pathways—pathways through which many career change individuals enter the profession. Government objectives that include steps to attract high quality entrants such as mid-career professionals to teaching, steps to overcome barriers for career changers entering the profession and diversifying teacher workforce demonstrate the significance that this group of teachers bring to the profession (2013, p.17).

Even though career change teacher numbers are rising, we know little about them since there are few research studies on this group of teachers. This is in contrast to the considerable body of literature that can be found on first career beginning teachers. As career change

teachers represent a growing group of beginning teachers, it is timely to research this cohort to help us to better understand their philosophy, perspectives and contributions in the field of education. Unlike first career beginning teachers, career change individuals have had a different life trajectory and bring prior work and life experiences to the classroom when they decide to become a teacher. Their past studies and professional and personal experiences shape and influence their values and beliefs when they join the teaching profession. By learning more about their backgrounds, skills and attributes we will be better able to recognize and acknowledge what they have to offer the profession. As Skilbeck and Connell (2004) acknowledge in their report to MCEETYA, the increasing proportion of mature age entrants calls for policy makers to pay "close attention to the specific expertise, experience, attitudes and expectations that career change entrants bring to teaching" (p. 9). This doctoral thesis seeks to make a significant contribution to the current limited understanding on this very important and growing group of beginning teachers.

This research study is also significant because it allows for classroom teachers' voices to be heard and understood. Any study that focuses on the lived experiences of individuals must seek out the particular perspective and point of view that shapes the study, in this case, the teachers' perspectives (Elbaz, 1983, p. 17). To date most of the studies conducted on career change individuals have focused on career change student teachers who have not yet graduated to become practising teachers in schools. The purpose and implications of such studies are understandably different from studies about teachers who are already teaching in schools. The main emphasis in career change literature has been from a teacher education perspective, exploring for example the impact of mature aged entrants as adult learners and the implications for teacher training programs and for teacher recruitment and retention policies. Student teacher responses in such studies generally provide reasons and motivations for choosing teaching, including student teachers' thinking and beliefs and the skills and attributes they will bring from their prior career and other experiences. Some pre-service teacher studies also include mature aged teachers' thoughts and experiences on the school and how these impact on their actual school experiences. To a large extent, analysis of issues and implications have been drawn from responses from career change student teachers who have had limited exposure to schools and classrooms, for instance, when they have been on practicum.

The current study is significant because it brings the perspectives of second career classroom teachers who have already graduated from teacher training programs and are beginning teachers. Hearing and understanding the perspectives and actual school experiences of classroom teachers who have already commenced teaching can provide rich insights into career change teachers' thinking and philosophies about teaching and learning after changing professions. The thesis provides an opportunity for career change teachers' voices to be heard. The study is significant because it provides an in-depth understanding and knowledge of what it is like to be a teacher in a school after having had a career elsewhere. The research sheds light on how teachers who have worked in other careers perceive the school as a work place and how they view students and staff. This research also explores how career change teachers use their prior knowledge and experiences in student learning and how they describe their overall school experiences while reflecting on their previous lives. Descriptions of real-life examples from career change teachers working in schools significantly contribute to the existing body of research on second career teachers. These second career teachers who are also beginning teachers offer rich insights into their everyday school experiences, such as the challenges faced in classrooms, their relationships with staff and management and their perspectives on being an early career teacher after having come from another line of work. The research thus extends the work of most other previous studies where the primary focus has been on career change students with no or limited experience as practising classroom teachers.

The research study's significance can be further observed in the nature of the qualitative methodology adopted to investigate the phenomenon of second career teachers' lived school experiences. The methodology of hermeneutic phenomenology allows for a philosophical understanding of career change teachers. This type of existential approach assists in examining the career change teacher as a person who has chosen to change career path later in life. Changing careers also changes the lifeworld (or the world they live in) of the individual and the person they become in their new career. A philosophical approach such as this brings a new perspective to research on career change teachers. By offering a critical examination of how their past career, lives and experiences shape their present lives in the process of becoming a teacher, the study also builds on some existing studies that focus on teacher identity of career changers. The notion of a 'holistic' approach in schools has been receiving some serious attention in the research literature, as has the need to pay attention to students' social and emotional dimensions in addition to their intellectual and academic

development (Hunter, 2011). This research offers a philosophical understanding of second career teachers and their lived experiences and explores teachers' abilities to see and develop their students in a holistic way. The research study is also significant since it makes a scholarly contribution to the field of human science research by exploring how humans understand and make meaning of their experiences.

Research questions

In light of the limited research on career change beginning teachers' school experiences, I have argued that we need to examine this group of teachers and gain their perspectives as beginning school teachers. As outlined earlier, my personal experience and philosophical orientation constituted the initial impetus for my research questions. My intention in this research study is to inquire into, interpret and describe the lived school experiences of a small group of second career beginning teachers. The research questions reflect the purpose of the study and my adoption of a qualitative phenomenological methodology:

1. What is the nature and essence of the experiences of a group of second career beginning teachers in schools?
2. What kinds of influences do second career beginning teachers' past experiences have on their current role as teachers?

Scope of the thesis

The seven participants in my research study are all mature age individuals who have chosen to become teachers later in their lives. They had completed teaching requirements and were teachers in schools at the time of the interviews. The second career teachers in my study met all the following criteria:

- They were over 25 years of age in the year they began teaching.
- They had previously undertaken a degree in a non-teaching field.
- Before becoming a teacher they had either worked in a career outside of teaching or had raised a family.

I have not differentiated between someone coming into teaching as a second career or more than a second career, such as third or fourth career. I have included primary and secondary school teachers who are teaching on either a casual or permanent basis in schools. My research did not investigate second career teachers who were trained overseas.

I have not differentiated between the terms 'career change' and 'second career' teachers in my research. Both of these have been used interchangeably throughout the study.

Like all qualitative research, my study into the lived experiences of second career beginning teachers in schools is not an attempt to generalise or prove a hypothesis. My interpretations and conclusions are derived from what the seven teacher participants narrated to me during the interviews. I have also been guided by literature on career change teachers to derive some of the existential interpretations in the discussion chapter.

Thesis overview

The thesis chapters are sequenced to reflect the descriptive and interpretive focus of this research into people's lived experiences. In chapter two, I review the literature that currently exists in the area of second career teachers. The literature is critically examined, pointing to the gaps and my contributions in the topic area. Apart from studies on career change teachers, the literature review chapter also provides a critical analysis of the methodologies used in career change studies. I outline the limitations that exist in current qualitative human science studies and situate the innovative approach to career change teachers taken in my research.

In chapter three, I describe the methodology adopted for this study. I discuss how the mixed methods of an interpretive approach and a hermeneutic phenomenological approach gave me the potential to inquire into, discuss and interpret career change teachers' lived school experiences in a human and philosophical manner. I explain how I was able to apply this seemingly complex methodology in the practical world of teachers, schools and pedagogy. I argue that making sense of teachers' lives through hermeneutic phenomenology has opened up possibilities for us to better understand this group of teachers in their particular context.

Chapter four is a presentation of the research design and procedure adopted in the study. I discuss how my chosen methodology required me, as the researcher, to have a phenomenological orientation in all aspects of the study. The chapter explains the process and criteria involved in selecting teacher participants for the research and the application of the phenomenological interviewing procedure with each of the seven teacher participants. The chapter also describes how the process of data analysis generated rich phenomenological meaning from participants' descriptions.

In chapter five, I present the results of the research study, using an interpretive approach. The findings are based upon the descriptions shared by each of the seven participants in their interviews. In keeping with the nature of the chosen methodology, I will describe how the resulting themes are woven from an interpretive perspective while providing meaningful insights into each of the participants' lives. The chapter provides the thematic framework that gives rise to an existential analysis of teacher participants' lifeworlds in chapter six.

Chapter six brings together the results, in order to articulate the phenomenological and pedagogical sense of being a second career teacher. I present an existential perspective on career change teachers' reasons and motivations for choosing teaching as a profession. I also derive existential themes (lived relation and lived space) from the results chapter to make phenomenological sense of the nature and essence of being a second career teacher. Participants' processes of pedagogical meaning-making are woven around these themes to give clarity to what it means to be a second career teacher in the world of the school. The chapter articulates the journeys of the seven teacher participants in becoming teachers while attempting to maintain the unique individuality in each teacher–participant.

The seventh and final chapter outlines the implications of the research and makes recommendations for future work in the area. The chapter also re-visits the research questions to evaluate the extent to which the research achieved what it initially set out to do.

In conclusion, the thesis showcases a group of teachers who have changed careers to become teachers. In presenting learnings about these teachers, the research aims to generate further interest in career change teachers, both in a philosophical and in a practical sense. It may be possible that the philosophical inquiry that guides this research makes us reflect upon and question ourselves and our ways of life when we experience similar transitional phases in our lives.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Chapter overview

Recent years have witnessed a steady increase in the number of mature age professionals entering the teaching profession as a second career after working in another field. However, as mentioned in chapter one, there are few research studies on second career teachers and their school experiences. The majority of career change literature concentrates on second career *student* teachers who are not yet practising teachers. Moreover, there is little research conducted on career change teachers' experiences from a philosophical perspective. To fill these gaps, my research adopts an existential and phenomenological approach to understanding a group of practising second career teachers and their lived school experiences.

The literature review in this chapter aims to articulate how the limited previous research on second career teachers informed my own research study, creating scope and opportunities to further understand second career beginning teachers and their school experiences. This review chapter will critically examine existing career change literature, identifying gaps while highlighting the importance of my research and its contributions. Since my research study seeks to open up discussions on teacher quality in relation to career change teacher characteristics, the literature review also explores where this link is evident in existing career change studies.

The literature review begins with a brief overview of why individuals may decide to change careers later in their lives. After defining career change teachers for the purposes of this research, the chapter then reviews the changing nature of the teaching workforce and the role played by career change teachers and examines current research studies on career change teachers. The review then considers the methodologies and theoretical frameworks that underpin career change studies that are relevant to the methodology adopted in my research. I

begin by introducing the general theme of career change before moving on to career change to become a teacher.

Changing careers

In the contemporary workplace it has become more and more common for individuals to collect a 'portfolio' of careers over their working lives (Mayer, 2003). Changes in labour market conditions over the years also mean that Generation 'X' and beyond are more likely to change their careers several times over the course of their working lives (Watt & Richardson, 2008, p. 410). They are seen to be moving seamlessly across careers. The term "boundaryless career" has been coined to indicate the widespread prevalence for changing jobs or professions during one's working lifetime (Lee & Lamport, 2011, p.3).

In spite of the fact that we know that many individuals do not remain in one profession for a long time, it has proven difficult to determine how often and what type of career change occurs in individuals' lives. Organisations such as the US Bureau of Labor Statistics observe the difficulties in producing estimates of the number of times individuals have changed careers in their lives (2012). In a longitudinal survey of data collected by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, people born between 1957 and 1964 changed their jobs an average of eleven times from ages 18 to 44 (2012). While this constitutes only a small subset of the population during a specific time period, it provides a snapshot of how individuals may be considering career change as a recurrent rather than a one-off event.

Consequently, there has yet to emerge a consensus among economists, sociologists and career guidance professionals on what constitutes career change and on the criteria used to define careers and career changes (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). Generally, a complete change of occupation (for instance from being an engineer to a magician) would signify that a career change has occurred. Career change could also signify a partial or complete change of role in one's place of employment. Even an opportunity to take up a higher position in one's current field or profession, either with the same employer or a different one could be identified as a career change. The length of time that an individual spends in a different career could also be a factor in determining whether career change took place or not.

For those in managerial and professional roles, there can be a variety of factors that influence someone's decision to change careers. Studies that link the stages of human

development to the career choices that individuals make at different points in their lives provide a useful guide in the theoretical understanding of the issue (Erikson, 1963; Levinson, 1996). Factors such as one's career expectations and aspirations play a crucial role in career transition processes; however, these would differ in importance for 'younger' and 'older' career changers. While economic motives (such as salary, prestige and job security) may drive some to change their career, the domain of intrinsic work motivation defined by 'values' and "meaningful work" feature prominently among the reasons for career change among middle-aged managerial and other professional workers (Thomas, 1980, p. 177). The transition (during mid to late adulthood) from having established a career conforming to societal and other external expectations to moving into a career that is influenced by personal choices and beliefs such as altruism and personal satisfaction have been explored in such age-related developmental studies (Williams, 2013).

Individuals may start to construct a new 'career identity' for themselves through a change in career. They begin to reflect on and question their past and current career choices and how these choices are indicative of their own values and personal goals (Williams, 2013, p. 26). Williams suggests that the construction of a new career identity is akin to the creation of a new personal identity as individuals draw on their own personal feelings and emotional concerns in the contextual process of developing a personal narrative for themselves during career change (p. 27). Variables such as the extent and degree of external factors as well as the weight given by individuals to their personal/internal desire all play a role in not only distinguishing between different types of mid-life career changers but also in understanding their motivations for making the change. Research to date suggests that a complex combination of external circumstances and personal thinking based upon individual circumstances is what drives someone to change career at a certain stage in their lives (p. 26)

Rather than treating all mid-life career changers as one group, studies focusing on career changers have identified patterns based on an individual's career decision-making style and choices. Terms such as "self-evaluative", "strategic focused"; "aspirational" and 'opportunistic' attempt to capture the thinking of career changers (Bimrose & Barnes, 2007, p. 20). Certain typologies (based on motivations, identifiable characteristics and responses) such as 'drift outs', 'opt outs', 'bow outs', 'force outs', 'classic career changers', 'persisters' and 'desisters' have also been adopted to distinguish between different mid-life career

changers (Thomas, 1980; Halladay, 2008; Watt & Richardson, 2008). The next section discusses why some individuals choose teaching as a career.

Why be a teacher?

Becoming a teacher has been considered to be an attractive career option for many. Considered to be relatively stable profession, teaching is viewed as a career that provides a high level of job security (OECD, 2009). Literature spanning the fifty years up to the early 1990s has typically classified the motivations influencing teachers' career choice in terms of *intrinsic, extrinsic* and *altruistic* factors (Watt, Richardson, Klusmann, Kunter, Beyer, Trautwein & Baumert, 2012, p. 792). Published research suggests that the reasons for choosing teaching have not primarily changed since the 1990s, although different studies tend to emphasise one or other of the factors depending on the time period, methodology, country, context and purpose of the study. Since most of the studies conducted are surveys and interviews, responses vary depending on who is interviewed (student teachers, pre-service teachers or beginning teachers) and the perceived level of importance they give to the factors they are quizzed about (Halladay, 2008; Manual & Hughes, 2006). The intrinsic and altruistic factors weigh more heavily in studies conducted in developed countries, whereas in socio-cultural contexts such as in Africa extrinsic reasons of salary and job security tend to be more important (Watt et al., 2012).

In a large survey study commissioned by the Australian Government for the report 'Staff in Australia's Schools' (2011), 'personal fulfilment', 'desire to work with young people', 'being passionate about education' and 'enjoyment of subject area' were the top reasons for choosing teaching among early career primary and secondary teachers in Australia (McKenzie at al., 2011, p. 76). In another earlier Australian study to understand the motivations of pre-service teacher education students, Manuel and Hughes (2006) found that a majority of the participants interviewed had personal aspirations to work with young people and mentioned the attainment of personal fulfilment and meaning among the reasons for choosing to teach. Watt et al.'s 2012 study to assess pre-service teachers' motivations for choosing teaching was implemented with a large sample of teachers in the US, Australia, Germany and Norway and the primary motivations were assessed using what the authors describe as a "psychometrically sound" choice scale (p. 2). The study found the highest rated motivations were "intrinsic value, perceived teaching ability, desire to make a social contribution, to work with children/adolescents, and having had positive prior teaching and

learning experiences … while at the same time extrinsic factors such as job security were rated consistently lower across all countries" (p. 14).

Studies in several OECD countries also revealed that individuals were drawn to teaching due to a desire to work with children and because teaching offered the potential for intellectual fulfilment and the means to make a social contribution, with a strong emphasis on intrinsic factors (OECD, 2005).

Other studies have suggested that individuals may also choose teaching because of its "ease of entry and exit options, flexibility, compatibility with family life and sense of autonomy and independence" (Halladay, 2008, p. 20). Becoming a teacher could be a lifestyle choice, with teaching viewed as a "vocation rather than as a job" (Powers, 2002, p. 303), suited to an individual's personal and family needs. Unlike some other professions where it may be difficult to re-enter employment after a gap or a break in career due to changed family and personal circumstances, teaching provides the opportunity to be able to return to work at a later time (Lee & Lamport, 2011; McKenzie et al., 2011,). The attractiveness of teaching as a profession and whether one chooses to take up teaching as a career may also depend on how a society views and values education and its citizens and the teaching profession more broadly. The happenings in the external environment such as the evolving job market, changes in the field of education and teaching and demand and supply conditions also play a role in the career choice process (Watt et al., 2012).

International demographic studies indicate that large proportions of teachers are set to reach retirement age over the next decade or so in several western countries (OECD, 2012). Even though teacher demand and supply can be seen to be fluctuating as countries go through cycles of teacher shortages and surpluses (Halladay, 2008; Watt et al., 2012), teacher shortage is most critical and evident in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab states. According to the UNESCO's Institute of Statistics' (UIS) latest projections, over eight million extra teachers will be required by 2030 world-wide to provide all children with a basic primary and lower secondary education. These figures do not include vacancies created due to teacher attrition (particularly among new teachers), assumed to be at an annual rate of about 5% (2013). As part of its Millennium Development Goal, in Oct 2013 the UIS stated that five million teachers would be needed in order for universal primary education to be achieved by 2015. New teaching positions need to be created and filled to provide education for all.

Australia, the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Norway and other European countries report difficulties in recruiting and retaining suitably qualified teachers (Brindley & Parker, 2010; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; OECD 2011; Ramsay, 2000; Watt et al., 2012; Williams & Forgasz, 2009). Several studies have been conducted to understand the reasons behind teachers leaving the profession and to improve the retention of teachers beyond the early years of teaching. Mature age individuals with life and work experience are one group who are seen as an attractive option for bringing more teachers into the profession.

Just as in any career decision, individuals who consider teaching as a second career are shaped in their thinking by their current and past circumstances along with their predictions about the future. As individuals who have worked in another job setting, their previous lives and work circumstances are likely to play a critical role in their career change decision-making process. I now introduce and examine the profile of career change teachers as indicated in the literature.

Changing careers to be a teacher

Career change teachers have pursued a different career or type of employment before making the decision to leave that career and become a teacher. With reference to this study, the terms 'career change teachers' and 'second career teachers' are used interchangeably in this chapter and throughout the thesis. Terms like 'mature age', 'non-traditional' teachers (Serow & Forrest, 1994) or 'mid-career entrants' (Marinell, 2008) are also used in the literature to identify those who come into teaching later in life. Depending on the purpose of the study, the data in career change teacher studies are primarily drawn from surveys and interview studies.

Generally, career changers tend to have a degree in a discipline area, possess particular subject area knowledge, and/or have 'relevant recent work experience' from a professional domain other than teaching (Tigchelaar, Brouwer, & Korthagen, 2008). Literature may also define a 'parent' as a career changer—one who may have entered teaching later in life as a *first* career after having been involved in parental duties or perhaps been in paid employment before but not immediately prior to changing career (Marinell, 2008; Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003). Some of the literature on second career teachers specifies the minimum number of years (anything in the range of six months to five years) an individual should have been in their prior career before being classified as a career change teacher. There is also considerable variation in the literature with respect to the age of a career change

teacher. This is generally linked to the length of time (whether full-time or part-time, paid or unpaid) the teacher has been involved in the previous career field. For instance, Tigchelaar et al.'s (2008) North American-based study considered the 'real career change teacher education student' to be someone aged over 32, "possessing substantial life experience and belonging to the group targeted by legislation; opening up teaching for people from other professions" (p1538).

Studies of career change teachers have also created profiles of these individuals based on their reasons and motivations, coining names for the profiles such as 'the freelancer', 'the successful careerist', 'the late starter' (Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003); 'home-comers', 'converters' (Crow, Levine & Nager, 1990); 'time is right", 'teaching is me' (Anthony & Ord, 2008). Second career teachers might perceive themselves as different from other teachers when they enter the profession (as they have previous experience gained in other workplaces) and this may determine how they construct meaning and "develop a new work role identity" as a teacher (Wilson & Deaney, 2010, p. 2). Some researchers argue that each career change teacher is different and needs to be understood in the way he/she constructs his/her identity in the process of career change (Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003). Studies that focus on links between career change and identity construction argue that the development of a teacher identity would be different for individuals who enter teaching later in life compared to those who choose to become a teacher early on in their lives (Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003; Wilson & Deaney, 2010).

I have defined career change teachers in my research as individuals who have entered teaching later in life after previously participating in the labour force. I have used Eifler and Potthoff's (1998) definition of a second career teacher as someone well over 25, possessing life experiences resulting either from previous careers and/or from parenthood, which potentially enables them to bring important assets, such as maturity and expertise to teaching (p. 193). Eifler and Pothoff's definition has been used in the current research to encompass a broad range of mature age participants, placing emphasis on the non-teaching background as well as on their life experiences as a result of participation in the adult labour force. I have identified second career teachers in my study as those over 25 years of age in the year they began teaching, who have an initial qualification in a non-teaching field; and who either worked in a career outside of teaching and/or raised a family before becoming a teacher.

Defining second career teachers' presence in the profession

The presence of mature age individuals in the teaching workforce is not a new phenomenon. As a profession, teaching has always attracted individuals across different age groups. In the United States, the presence of mid-career entrants has been noted since the late 1980s in the applicants to teacher preparation courses (Crow et al., 1990; Novak & Knowles, 1992). Serow and Forrest (1994) reported on two 1991 studies from Canada and the United States which indicated that approximately 20% to 30% of all teachers were previously in another occupation (p. 556). The authors observed that mature age individuals consider being a teacher at "almost any stage of their working lives" (p. 556). Individuals, particularly career changers, 'self-select' themselves into the teaching profession, taking into account their circumstances and their own judgement (p. 556). In the United States, retired army and military personnel who still had many years of working life ahead were keen to contribute to society and, in teaching, they were able to utilize their previously developed skills (Evans, 2011; Powers, 2002). Sponsored by the US government, the *Troops for Teachers* initiative was a significant effort to recruit veterans seeking to become teachers (Lee, 2011, p. 18). The introduction of alternative certification courses from traditional and non-traditional providers also opened up increased opportunities for mature age professionals to consider teaching as a potential career. These programs have the ability to attract a more diverse pool of individuals in terms of age, skills, expertise and prior experience, and research shows that individuals with previous careers have been interested in enrolling in such programs (Hart Research Associates, 2008, 2010).

While career change teachers are not a recent phenomenon, their numbers have steadily increased over the past twenty years or so. Data on the age profile of early career teachers and new entrants to teacher preparation programs generally indicate the number of older age entrants who are also likely to be career changers. In the United States, according to the Project on the Next Generation of Teachers, research has suggested that between 28% to 47% of new teachers were mid-career entrants and had worked in another profession before becoming a teacher (Johnson et al., 2004). Similarly, Marinell's nation-wide survey in the United States found that the percentage of mid-career entrants among first year teachers nearly doubled from 20% to 39% between 1987 and 2003 (2009). Other surveys and reports in the United States also confirm that career changers represent at least one-third of all classroom teachers (Hart Research Associates, 2010). In New Zealand, Anthony and Ord (2008) reported an increasing trend for older people with prior work experience to enter

teaching (p. 359). Similar trends can be observed in the United Kingdom. According to provisional statistics released by the UK Department of Education, over 40% of new entrants to initial teacher training programs for the period 2013 to 2014 are over 25 years old. The report observes that career changers are reflected in these numbers (2013).

Employers consider career change teachers attractive and have put forward various reasons for recruiting them. Firstly, the rising and significant focus on improving student achievement and learning outcomes has led to a renewed interest in the recruitment of well-qualified teachers. Shortages of qualified and well-trained teachers in "high demand subject areas" (such as STEM—Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) is reported as a major concern in policy studies such as one by the OECD (2011, p. 5). Career changers are seen as an attractive group of teachers to address shortages in subject specific areas such as mathematics, science and technology, possessing content knowledge and practical professional experience (Grier & Johnston, 2009, 2012; Halladay, 2008; Marinell, 2008). Participants in a study of mid-career entrant teachers recruited to teach maths and science indicated that, aside from practical subject-related knowledge and skills, they also brought "technological skills, communication and presentation skills … which were useful to their work as teachers" (Marinell, 2008, p. 15). Second career teachers are thus viewed as able to make science and mathematics instruction more relevant and interesting to students (Freidus, 1994).

Secondly, mature age teachers are sought to fill shortages in hard-to-staff schools. Some studies show they may be more willing than other groups of teachers to seek placements in high needs schools, thus representing a "potential untapped supply to fill voids in rural and urban hard-to-staff schools" (Halladay, 2008, p. 4). Certain findings (Donaldson, 2012) also suggest that older age entrants are less likely to leave their teaching commitment in low income challenging schools. This could indicate that their reasons for choosing teaching (such as by choice and desire rather than by default) played a role in their teaching commitments.

Thirdly, there is some research to show that older entrants to teaching are more likely to be male than their first year counterparts (Donaldson, 2012; Marinell, 2009), thus potentially addressing the issue of the declining numbers of minority and male teachers (particularly in the United States). This aspect is particularly significant since the teaching profession has traditionally attracted more females than males.

Finally, career change teachers are perceived as contributing to a quality teacher workforce. The importance of building a high quality teaching workforce is a priority for many countries. Quality teachers with expertise are not only essential to improve standards of student performance and learning but also to cater for the student diversity that exists across classrooms. Organisations such as UNESCO have made teachers' training, recruitment, retention, status and working conditions one of their top education priorities (http://en.unesco.org/themes/teachers). Governments and educational institutions all over the world have had to think of innovative and alternative ways to attract and retain competent and quality teachers who can actively contribute towards teaching being "a knowledge-rich profession" (OECD, 2009, p. 26). Research is now clear on the impact of teacher quality and competence on student achievement (OECD, 2011).

Second career teachers' career and life experiences may enable them to provide a solution to some of the challenges faced by the teaching profession. Mature age individuals are considered attractive by employers as they are "well-suited to the shifting demands of the contemporary workplace" (Serow & Forrest, 1994, p. 556) and are perceived as able to "contribute positively to changing the culture of the schools" (Richardson & Watt, 2005, p. 476). Second career teachers are potentially seen to have the "intangible ability to transform common outlooks and experiences in a rapport with students, parents and colleagues regardless of background" (Halladay, 2008, p. 6). Having made a carefully examined life choice to enter teaching, they are also perceived as bringing the "hard-to-quantify values of maturity and worldiness" (Halladay, 2008, p. 17). Career change teachers who have parenting experience are also perceived as having a specific advantage that positively informs the practice of teaching in classrooms.

The benefits of bringing in career change individuals to teaching are now widely accepted. Not surprisingly, key policy statements such as those from the OECD (2011, 2012) have discussed the need to boost the pool of teacher education students and the number of teacher training programs and to be flexible and responsive to "alternative routes to certification for mid-career professionals intent on changing careers" (2012, p. 485). Usually, mature entry teachers, whether in Australia or elsewhere, have a degree qualification in their previous specialised field and then go on to undertake either a Graduate Diploma in Education or complete an undergraduate teaching degree or a Masters in Teaching qualification to satisfy teaching certification requirements. By offering different pathways, the teaching profession is

open to "individuals with relevant experience outside education" (2011, p. 9), thus expanding the supply pool of potential teachers. Attractive teacher certification opportunities now exist for those who wish "to train as a teacher after having completed studies in another field" (OECD, 2011, p. 11). Alternative teacher certification courses, or alternative pathways to teaching as they are sometimes known, vary between countries (both in content and in form and depending on the type of 'clientele') as documented in the literature. The broad aim behind introducing such courses was to open the gates of teaching to a different demography of the population, the 'non-traditional' teacher candidates, including those qualified in non-teaching areas, with or without prior work experience (Brindley & Parker, 2010; Evans, 2011; Richardson & Watt, 2006). Evans (2011) reported on a steady growth of these alternative teacher preparation programs in the United States, with as many as 49 states adopting the alternative program in 2005 (p607). On the demand side, mature age individuals who have previous tertiary qualifications and work experience and who are keen to fast-track their way into teaching have found the alternative teacher education programs run by universities attractive (Cornius-Randall, 2004), although they are also equally likely to undertake the traditional teacher training pathway.

Australian context of career change teachers

The context in Australia is no different from its other western counterparts in that Australia is experiencing an ageing teaching workforce and changes in the demand and supply of teachers. The numbers of mature age entrants to teaching have steadily risen over the years although studies conducted on this cohort are far more numerous in the United States than in Australia. For example, the number of adults in the over 30 years bracket commencing teacher education programs in NSW rose from 14% in 1990 to 25% in 2002 (Cornius-Randall, 2004). A 2008 Australian survey of about 1500 beginning teachers shows that teachers are increasingly mature aged when they join the profession, with 35% of teachers aged over 30 years and above (AEU New Educators Survey, 2009). Similar figures can be seen according to the 2008 OECD TALIS (Teaching And Learning In Schools) Survey Report, in which new teachers aged 30 and above in Australia account for more than 33% of the total number (Jensen, Sandoval-Hernandez, Knoll, & Gonzalez, 2012, p. 20).

Figures from the *Staff in Australia's Schools* report (McKenzie et al., 2011) show that more than half of all early career teachers are over 25 years old, an increase from a 2007 report. The extensive report commissioned by the Australian Government to provide a

detailed picture of the Australian teacher workforce also identified a "sizeable proportion of early career teachers as being over 40 years (13% primary and 17% secondary) old" (McKenzie et al., 2011, p. 75). The figures also reflect the greater proportion of older early career teachers who go into secondary teaching. The figures are supported by another set of statistics in the same report which examines early career teachers' main line of activity before commencing teacher training programs. Nearly 35% of secondary teachers were in either full-time or part-time employment in the year before they commenced teacher preparation programs, leading the report authors to observe that "the most recent entrants to the profession are more likely than earlier generations to be working in other jobs before commencing teaching" (2011, p. 82). The expanding age range and the increasing proportion of those in prior employment would indicate there are a substantial number of individuals who have switched from another occupation. The report notes that career changes to teaching are becoming more common, particularly with "the many teacher education pathways that encourage movement into teaching" (2011, p. 75). Richardson & Watt, in their Australian based survey across three universities, found that "over a third of graduate participants from each university indicated they had pursued another career prior to entering teaching education" (2006, p. 44).

The significance of alternative pathways into teaching is also reflected in a recent discussion paper released by the Australian Government (DEEWR, 2013). Alternative teaching programs can take the form of employment-based, accelerated or scholarship programs (DEEWR, 2013). A number of initiatives have been introduced by various State governments and teacher education providers to attract the best entrants into teaching. For example, the Accelerated Teacher Training Program (ATTP) was initiated by the New South Wales government in Australia to provide an accelerated pathway for experienced mid-career professional and industry workers, with a view to addressing teacher shortages in particular subjects (Lonsdale & Ingvarson, 2003). More recently, teaching scholarships have been offered through the '*teach.NSW'* program to attract experienced professionals to teach in areas where there is teacher shortage such as mathematics and science. Teacher education institutions have also responded to the changing workforce and developed programs to suit different teacher candidates entering the profession as well as recognising the value that career changers bring to the profession in terms of life experience and maturity. For example, Victoria University initiated the Career Change (CC) program pathway about a decade ago to attract mature age entrants who had substantial industry experience to complete their course

and teach vocational education subjects in hard-to-staff secondary schools in regional Victoria, thus transforming these entrants from being an "industry expert to a teacher/industry expert" (Pitard & Greenfield, 2011, p. 96). The authors described the program as a win–win situation for all, with "benefits for students they would not have otherwise achieved" (p. 99). Such initiatives demonstrate the significance of attracting a different pool of talented teachers to the profession.

As with the rest of the world, government bodies and agencies in Australia are recognising the significance of quality teachers and teaching and its influence on student engagement and achievement. The need to attract and retain the best professionals in teaching has been a high priority and reports have been recently released emphasising this issue (e.g. McKenzie et al., 2011). The Smarter Schools National Partnership for improving Teacher Quality (2008-09 to 2012-13) demonstrates the Australian and State and Territory Governments' commitments to achieving this in many ways. These include attracting the best graduates through additional pathways, improving the quality of initial teacher education, rewarding quality teachers and improving the quality and availability of teacher workforce data (Department of Education, n.d.). I now turn my focus to highlighting the major aspects that are found in the career change teacher literature.

An overview of career change teacher literature

While considerable research has been conducted on the induction, teaching and professional development experiences of first career traditional beginning teachers, there is relatively little literature on second career new teachers as they begin their teaching career (Brindley & Parker, 2010). Second career (or non-traditional) teachers enter teaching later in life having worked elsewhere in a different career or careers. Research suggests that their prior life and career experiences shape and influence their experiences and thinking as a classroom teacher (Mayotte, 2003). Younger or first career teachers usually come straight into teaching after completing school and tertiary education. Their thinking and philosophy as teachers are usually shaped by their own schooling and tertiary education experiences.

The bulk of the literature, both in Australia and world-wide tend to focus primarily on either or both of two topics. One that has been studied extensively is the reasons and motivations behind changing professions to become a teacher. The other major topic in the literature deals with the characteristics or attributes that second career teachers may bring to the teaching profession. These two topics are discussed in detail below. Substantial research

has been carried out among career change student teachers (that is, those who are still undertaking teacher training programs) rather than with second career classroom teachers. Studies of second career 'student' teachers have a different focus and purpose. For example, the (in) adequacy of alternative certification programs created to prepare career change teachers are a focus of many studies (Tigchelaar et al., 2008).

For convenience, I examine the career change teacher literature under three subheadings: second career student teachers' literature, reasons and motivations, and teachers' attributes. However, the three topics overlap and linkages and connections will be commented on where appropriate. Additionally, the section will examine literature on questions raised about second career teachers' abilities and experiences. Relevant literature on career change teachers in Australia is also briefly discussed.

Literature on second career student teachers

Most of the literature on career changers has focused on career change *teacher candidates* or *teacher trainees* rather than on career change classroom teachers (Brindley & Parker, 2010; Castro & Bauml, 2009; Eifler & Potthoff, 1998; Grier & Johnston, 2009, 2012; Haggard, Slostad, & Winterton, 2006; Peter, Ng, & Thomas, 2011; Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003; Richardson & Watt, 2005; Salyer, 2003; Serow & Forrest, 1994; Tigchelaar et al., 2008, 2012; Williams, 2010, 2013; Williams & Forgasz, 2009). The purpose and implications of such studies have a very different focus from that of this thesis. They concentrate on the implications for teacher education programs and for teacher recruitment and retention policies. The literature on second career teachers emphasises the implications for teacher education programs and how best to cater to the distinct needs of these 'non-traditional' student teachers (Tigchelaar et al., 2008, Grier & Johnston, 2009). With the rise in the number of mature age entrants in teacher education programs, university researchers and teacher education academics have seen this cohort as a potentially attractive group to investigate, particularly with respect to the programs that were introduced and specifically run for the second career entrants.

Studies consist of student teacher entrants being surveyed and/or interviewed individually. Studies have explored the reasons for and influences on participants' career change, their choice of teaching as a second career, analysis of the attributes they possess and what they bring as second career teachers to the teaching profession, their views and beliefs on the transferability of their previous experiences to school settings and the challenges they are

likely to face as adult learners and in schools as beginning teachers. Most of these studies are linked to teacher training programs undertaken by the career change entrants. Recognising that mature age individuals are different from the traditional entrants to teaching, the majority of the literature is geared towards how best to adapt teacher education and alternative certification programs to suit the needs of this particular cohort of student teachers. The purpose is to attract them as well as to prepare them for their transition into their new careers as teachers (Peter et al.,2011; Salyer, 2003; Tigchelaar et al., 2008).

For instance, second career student teachers' beliefs and conceptions on teaching and learning were investigated in a Netherlands based study by Tigchelaar et al. (2008, 2012) with implications for improvements to the Alternative Certification Program (ACP). The program is offered by the Dutch Government enabling career changers to attain "professional teaching competence within a shorter time span than students in regular pre-service programs" (2008, p. 1530). Similarly, Brindley and Parker's study in the United States examined student teachers' beliefs during a two-year teaching program and investigated whether and to what extent those beliefs and expectations persisted or changed when participants transitioned into teaching (2010). Other studies question the effectiveness and suitability of various teacher preparation programs and analyse the differences between traditional and alternative programs for career change entrants (Halladay, 2008). The purpose is to determine what changes are required in teaching programs to meet the needs of mature age entrants. Suggestions include tailoring and adapting programs in ways that recognise second career teacher trainees' prior experiences and responsibilities (Grier & Johnston, 2009; Novak & Knowles, 1992) in "both practical and educational terms" (Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003, p. 110) and increasing accessibility for career switchers with frequent entry points to teaching programs as well as flexibility in classes (Castro & Bauml, 2009).

Studies also focus on understanding the experiences of mature age entrants 'transitioning' to the role of student learner and the challenges and needs of adult learners who have made a choice to become teachers (Haggard et al., 2006). Other studies explore the formation and development of student teacher identity (Williams, 2010), student teachers' likely school experiences, including challenges and opportunities that may occur, and how best to prepare career change student teachers become practising teachers (Grier & Johnston, 2009; Roy 2002). For example, the importance of developing and maintaining collegial relationships (through virtual communities) with other second career teachers to ease the transition from

business world to school as well as from tertiary institution to classroom is discussed by Roy (2002). Exploring the transitioning identity of STEM career change student teachers with a view to informing teacher education programs was the basis of Grier and Johnston's study (2012). The significance of local contexts and environment is highlighted in Halladay's study (2008) as different types of teaching programs are distinguished based on career change candidates' characteristics. Salyer's study (2003) on career change student teachers had implications for school principals in describing how best they could support career changers "to be successful teachers by recognizing and building upon their skills" (p. 25).

Career change student teachers' responses to questions regarding challenges faced in schools and their need for support are based on what they think is likely to happen when they begin as practising teachers. Student teachers' visions for themselves as school teachers have not yet become a reality. The responses to questions that are concerned with their motivations for changing careers and the attributes that they bring to teaching may be different when respondents are students from when they are classroom teachers. The teacher candidates themselves may respond differently to the same set of questions when they begin teaching in schools (Freidus & Krasnow, 1991). The results and implications that are presented in such studies—including efforts to retain career change teachers in schools—are based on extrapolations derived from student teacher participant responses.

One cannot learn very much about second career beginning teachers from the arguments that are put forward when the participants have not yet commenced teaching in the classroom. Studies where the participants are pre-service teacher candidates with some practicum experience teaching in schools are to be interpreted with care. While participants have had some exposure to the school environment, their responses could be entirely different when they become full-time classroom teachers. Thus, with the exception of studies conducted with second career classroom teachers, the implications of research on second career student teachers and pre-service teacher candidates must be critically examined. Questions, responses and the subsequent analysis of issues that relate to career changer teachers' challenges and ways to improve retention are likely to be more informative if they are based on the real-life experiences of the teachers rather than on predictions and extrapolations. This pre-service research needs to be complemented by research with practising career change teachers. Letting classroom teachers speak for themselves is

fundamental to understanding their experiences at school since they have the practical everyday knowledge about their school and students.

Research on the actual school experiences of second career teachers after they have graduated from their teacher preparation courses is limited. Some interview-based studies have been conducted with career change school teachers. For instance, Brindley and Parker's study investigated the teaching beliefs of three career change student teachers over their two-year graduate teaching program and then observed their transition to first year teaching after they had completed the program (2010). The purpose was to observe whether their teaching beliefs had changed or persevered across the teaching program and into their first year of teaching (p. 578). An earlier study by Powers (2002) included interviews with seven teachers who had taught for three years at schools to understand their perceptions on school and administrators. The findings put the spotlight on school administrators and their responsibilities to provide support for second career teachers. There was also another study by Chambers (2002) where both pre-service and in-service teacher candidates were interviewed to examine their motivations and beliefs about what they bring to the classroom. The study recommended that "education programs, in-service training workshops, and peer mentoring […] make use of teachers' previously learned skills" (p. 216). In Evans' (2011) study, though career change school teachers were interviewed, the implications were from a teacher education perspective. The differences in teachers' motivations between those who had undertaken the traditional teaching preparation pathways and those who had qualified through the alternative programs was examined, with an analysis of the effectiveness of different teacher education programs.

In a report on career change teachers prepared for the Woodrow Foundation, responses from over 500 second career teachers teaching in schools across North America were discussed (Hart Research Associates, 2010). Teachers' motivations, their responses on the adequacy of teacher preparation programs and suggestions for improving support in schools were highlighted. A New Zealand study interviewed newly qualified second career teachers to understand their motivations and to explore how their expectations played out in the first 18 months of their teaching career (Anthony & Ord, 2008). The study had implications for school policy and teacher retention recommending improved professional development and induction programs for career change teachers and in recognising and valuing their prior experiences (p. 373).

The methodology, approach and purpose of my research are different from these existing studies on career change student teachers and teachers. My study provides an in-depth account of career change teachers' lived experiences in the school and classroom and offers a phenomenological account of participants' intrinsic motivations for choosing teaching. The aim is to understand what teachers experienced when they commenced teaching in schools, for instance, in their relations with students and staff. The purpose of my research is to explore career change teachers' ways of becoming teachers and how they made sense of their career change experiences.

Career change teachers' reasons and motivations

Research on career change professionals has primarily concentrated on understanding the reasons and motivations behind individuals' decisions to change career and enter the teaching profession. Studies have been done since the 1990s in the United States (Castro & Bauml, 2009; Evans, 2011; Serow & Forrest, 1994), in the United Kingdom (Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003), and in Australia and New Zealand (Anthony & Ord, 2008; Manuel & Hughes, 2006; Richardson, Gough, & Vitlin, 2001; Richardson & Watt, 2005; Watt & Richardson, 2008; Williams & Forgasz, 2009). The literature has explored late entrants' intrinsic motivations in considerable detail (Richardson & Watt, 2005; Watt & Richardson, 2008).

Most of the studies examine second career student teachers and participants are either interviewed or surveyed. A few studies had a different approach such as the 2008 Australian study by Watt and Richardson which provided a comparative analysis of the motivations of different types of beginning teachers. Another study in the United States (Evans, 2011) explored the motivations of older mature age beginning teachers based on the type of teaching programs they had undertaken. As observed previously, intrinsic reasons such as personal fulfilment and the desire to work with children and young adults forms part of any individual's decision to become a teacher, whether career changers or not. Similarly, 'social utility' values such as intellectual stimulation and service to others can also rank highly among all groups of teachers, both traditional and non-traditional teachers and teacher candidates (Evans, 2011).

Teaching can also represent a "calling" (Manuel & Hughes, 2006, p. 7) or a desire to "make a contribution to society" (Salyer, 2003, p. 19) and a chance to have a "moral career" (Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003, p. 101). Tigchelaar et al.'s (2008) study of second

career student teachers observed the intrinsic reasons in terms of career change teachers' "beliefs, identity and mission" (p. 1535). These are concerned with "what inspires one to become a teacher and what gives meaning and significance to his or her work and life" (p. 1535). The intrinsic meaning could thus be provided by identity statements such as "something has always been in me" or "love or passion for the subject matter" (Tigchelaar et al., 2008, p. 1542), 'giving back to the community', or 'spiritually satisfying work' (Evans, 2011; Halladay, 2008).

Some researchers suggest that when changing careers, mature age workers may be inclined towards teaching as a profession that "mirrors one's belief systems and personal goals" (Lee & Lamport, 2011, p. 4). Individuals may make decisions that involve giving up well-paid jobs. This can also be attributed to changes in their ideals and to a general "changing perspective on life" brought about as a result of their personal experiences (Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003, p. 103). For example, in Evans' (2011) study, retired military personnel indicated teaching to be a "natural career extension" (p. 624). They viewed serving in the military and teaching in a similar light since they saw themselves fulfilling a mission in both careers and as offering a means to make themselves useful to others. Thus, the concept of altruism or putting others before oneself, can be seen to be connected with intrinsic motives. Personal goals are seen to be aligned with service, "making a difference to the wider community" (Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003, p. 102) and giving "something back to the world" (Powers, 2002, p. 304).

As Evans (2011) found in her study of mature age beginning teachers, an altruistic element can also embed a moral obligation in teachers who may thus be "grounded to instil a sense of purpose in children" and enable children to "reach their potential" (p. 622). Personal growth, enhancement and "looking for a challenge" (Anthony & Ord, 2008, p. 366) are intertwined with altruism and all these values can be elements in the intrinsic motives of a career change teacher.

Studies that examine the reasons behind individuals taking up teaching later in life show consistent outcomes over the years. For instance, various studies have found that factors relating to salary and job prestige are not rated highly or are not a high priority for someone choosing to become a teacher later in life (Crow, Levine, & Nager, 1990; Mayotte, 2003; Powers, 2002; Priyardharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003; Williams & Forgasz, 2009). In a study across three Australian universities, Williams and Forgasz (2009) found that career

change teacher candidates viewed pay and the social status of teachers as far less important than other factors and the authors concluded that "career changers were not entering teaching for these reasons" (p. 103). In the same study, intrinsic and altruistic reasons were ranked higher than extrinsic rewards by the candidates. Earlier studies on career change teachers came to similar conclusions (Crow, Levine & Nager, 1990; Serow & Forrest, 1994).

For some career changers, the inner desire to become a teacher may have been present for a long time, with the individual waiting for the right moment to make the career change decision. For instance, literature refers to some career change teachers as 'home-comers' (Crow, Levine, & Nager, 1990), likening their decision to coming home to a profession they always wanted to be a part of, the "realisation of a long-held dream" (Williams & Forgasz, 2009, p. 103) or something "they were supposed to do" (Watt & Richardson, 2008, p. 417). At the same time, considering teaching as a serious option is also closely linked to the status of an individual's current occupation and how satisfied or disillusioned they are in their current role. When individuals consider teaching as a career as a result of an extrinsic event such as changes in work or family circumstances, they are identified as the 'converted' (Crow, Levine, & Nager, 1990) in the literature since they have made the decision to change or 'convert' to teaching after recent events. For instance, their motivations could be "related to their earlier experiences in work and life" and influence their ways of evolving to become a teacher (Tigchelaar et al., 2008, p. 1546).

An individual's present employment can play a decisive role in the thinking and change process, thus making the pursuit of teaching an "economic decision" in some cases as different career options are weighed up (Serow & Forrest, 1994, p. 556). Stress and frustration in a previous career and feelings of isolation and the need for change (Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003) are commonly cited as factors that motivate individuals to consider changing to teaching. However, the same individual may also be intrinsically motivated, having a long-held desire to pursue teaching.

The intrinsic reasons observed in published studies hold special significance for my research. I examine this in detail in chapter six, the discussion chapter of the thesis.

Changes in family circumstances and lifestyle choices have also been cited by some career changers as pragmatic reasons to enter teaching (Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003; Richardson et al., 2001). Individuals may be drawn to teaching because it is perceived to be

less strenuous and more suited to family and personal lifestyle and is seen as a rewarding career providing security and stability. In making the career switch in favour of teaching, respondents in some studies say they had finally found an occupation that "fitted more comfortably with their goals and ambitions than the previous careers they had pursued" (Watt & Richardson, 2008, p. 417). Some career changers may have a deep interest in their subject area and perceive teaching to be fulfilling their intellectual desires (Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003). Mid-life career changers may be inclined to seek a challenging line of work or may seek to challenge themselves intellectually while being drawn by a love of learning and may thus view teaching in that light as Grier and Johnston found in their study of teacher candidates (2009).

The age of the career changer has a role in the reasons for choosing teaching. A career change individual in their late twenties would perhaps have different priorities and reasons for switching to teaching than someone ten or fifteen years older who is approaching middle-age, even though both are classified as 'mature age entrants' in the literature. The introduction of various alternative pathways to enter teaching has also made it easier for people to make the transition and this could act as a motivating factor for career changers to consider teaching as a viable option.

While generally mature age individuals do not enter teaching for extrinsic reasons such as salary and job status, changes in work or lifestyle may direct them to seek a career in teaching hoping for security *including* salary and status. It is possible for the same individual to experience both 'push' factors such as stress and frustration in a prior career and 'pull' factors that draw them into teaching. Hence, none of the reasons are exclusive or seen as solely responsible in the career decision process and one or other of the factors may play a greater role in the career change process (Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003; Serow & Forrest, 1994).

In fact, research suggests that "a multiplicity of factors … together impact the decision to enter teaching as a career" (Richardson & Watt, 2006, p. 52). Second career teachers are a diverse group, with variations in age, circumstances, professions and beliefs. An understanding of the reasons behind an individual's motivation to change to a teaching career involves acknowledging the uniqueness of each individual, including their particular work and life circumstances, as well as taking into account variables such as their age and the time period in which they make the career change decision (Tigchelaar et al., 2008). Each

individual's decision to turn to teaching as a second career is complex, multifaceted, and sometimes contradictory (Anthony & Ord, 2008). It would also be unwise to assume that all career changers fit into the same mould and that they all have the same reasons and motivations (comprising intrinsic, extrinsic and altruistic) for entering the teaching profession.

The above reasons represent a broad picture of why individuals may decide to change careers to become a teacher at a later stage in their lives. Such life changing decisions have been described as "rarely whimsical", making them worthy of closer attention (Priyadharshini and Robinson-Pant, 2003, p. 96).

Most of the literature on reasons and motivations has been conducted with second career teacher candidates. My research participants are second career beginning teachers in schools. My research therefore adds to the existing body of literature on career change beginning teachers and their inner motivations for entering the teaching profession. It also enables the research on career change teachers to take the next step—that of a closer look at their early school experiences—beyond just a comprehensive understanding of their reasons and motivations to enter the profession. As Anthony and Ord (2008) suggest, "In addition to knowing more about attractors to teaching, it is important to consider how teacher expectations play out in the first few years of teaching" (p. 361).

Career change teachers' attributes

> *"Late entry teachers into teacher education who make the transition into a teaching career have the potential to enrich and diversify the profession by bringing their wealth of experience from other occupations into schools and classrooms."*
> *(Richardson & Watt, 2005, p. 488)*

The second focus in studies on career change teachers has been to analyse what these individuals bring to the teaching profession. Studies argue that career change teachers bring a combination of work and life experiences as well as a certain maturity and wisdom gathered over the years. Diverse work experiences together with intrinsic motivations may result in a stronger appreciation of and for the teaching profession (Lee & Lamport, 2011). Being able to draw upon prior work experiences and expertise also contributes to affirming teachers' identities and sense of self-efficacy as beginning teachers (Anthony & Ord, 2008). The literature mentions broad life experiences, breadth of knowledge and strong people skills,

teaching-related abilities, personal qualities and attributes such as maturity, wisdom, professionalism, motivation, confidence and enthusiasm (Anthony & Ord, 2008; Grier & Johnston, 2009; Williams & Forgasz, 2009). In a study of alternative teacher certification candidates (Salyer, 2003), participants believed that "their experiences from previous careers (such as practical real-world knowledge, effective inter-personal and organisational skills) will positively influence their performance as teachers" (p. 24). Through their prior work experiences, career change teachers would have had the opportunity to develop inter-personal skills and to learn flexibility and responsiveness to change. They may also feel they bring to the classroom expert knowledge and patterns of thinking acquired in their first career and skills in how to approach the task of teaching (Chambers, 2002, p. 215).

In Grier and Johnston's study (2009), the authors believed that career change teachers demonstrated an "authentic caring for their students and student learning that is manifested in two ways: viewing student learning as their responsibility and through making content connections in their lesson plans and teaching by using real-world examples" (p. 71). This might be particularly true for those career change teachers who have been recruited in specific subject areas such as STEM. These teachers bring wide content knowledge and practical experiences that may lead to more "authentic science teaching" (Grier & Johnston, 2012, p. 21). STEM career change teachers are believed to have the ability to make connections between field science and classroom science (Grier & Johnston, 2012). For example, a second career teacher who may have worked extensively in their subject area (for instance a science teacher who was a research scientist) may play to their strengths as a classroom teacher by providing practical scientific examples and scenarios. While science teaching is different from scientific practice, seeing the value and place of their previous careers will assist teachers in capitalising on their specific skills and experiences.

For some career change teachers, studies identify a clear "willingness to pass on knowledge and experience acquired in their earlier professions to their pupils" (Tigchelaar et al., 2008, p. 1548). This was examined by Tigchelaar et al., (2008) in the study on career changers who had entered the Alternative Certification Program (ACP), to explore whether they transferred their earlier experiences easily into teaching. The authors believed that "career changers share specific types of earlier experiences, even though individuals may differ widely in how these experiences manifest themselves" (p. 1534). As a consequence, commonalities existed in what they bring into the profession in terms of values and beliefs.

Tigchelaar et al. (2008) applied the 'onion model framework' (derived from Korthagen's 2004 earlier study on teacher identity) to second career teachers. The framework consisted of looking at the aspects of environment, behaviour, competencies, beliefs, professional identity and mission to help understand the levels of change in personal development and ways in which "second career teachers' different background and experiences may influence their learning during their transition into teaching" (2008, p. 1535).

The study found that the inner level aspects (beliefs, personal identity and mission—relating to intrinsic motivations) determined the ways in which an individual functions at the outer levels (environment, behaviour, competencies) but vice versa can also be true. Teachers experienced 'continuity' in their professional lives when there was alignment of the different levels; and they experienced 'change' when there was inner tension between the different levels. A challenging interplay between continuity and change existed for the student teacher participants and alignment or tension at the different levels determined whether or not teachers were able to transfer their earlier experiences into teaching (p. 1546). The study reiterated the need for further studies to understand second career teachers' current and future experiences in school.

Tigchelaar et al.'s (2012) subsequent study investigated second career student teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning as they transitioned into teaching. The purpose was to understand student teachers' conceptions, with implications for teaching programs and for improving teacher retention.

Both of the studies were conducted with participants who were teacher education students and who spent some time each week in the classroom as "uncertified teachers or trainees in schools" (2012, p. 1165). Participants' beliefs and conceptions concerned the time they had spent as teacher trainees. They had not yet graduated to become practising classroom teachers. We cannot know whether student teachers' beliefs will hold true once the same teachers graduate and become classroom teachers. Similarly, the participants in Salyer's study (2003) who believed their prior work and life experiences would positively influence their performance as teachers were all teacher candidates. While they believed this would happen, they could not know since they were not yet classroom teachers, and, as Salyer herself pointed out, "no claims can be made about teacher effectiveness from this study" (p. 24).

Critically examining teachers' beliefs and conceptions when they are practising classroom teachers provides fresh insights into issues that matter, for instance, on improving retention of these teachers. Teachers would have the opportunity to closely relate their classroom experiences to their beliefs and conceptions about teaching and learning and what they have brought into teaching such as work and life experiences. My study focuses on hearing second career teachers' descriptions of their school experiences and what they brought from their previous life and experiences to the classroom. The study builds on existing studies such as Tigchelaar's to contribute to understanding teachers' growth and development as individuals in the profession.

Issues of concern

While the literature emphasises the positive aspects of what mature age entrants bring to teaching, studies have also raised questions about the potential performance and capability of these individuals as classroom teachers. For instance, it is not yet clear whether second career teachers possess new knowledge in the subject area and have the ability to transfer and translate prior knowledge and skills in the school context (Eifler & Potthoff, 1998; Grier & Johnston, 2012). They may be well qualified to teach a subject and may possess prior practical experience that has given them adequate 'outside' knowledge. Their teacher training may have prepared them in terms of pedagogical knowledge. However, this does not necessarily mean that career changers possess the ability to effectively apply those skills in the classroom context. In Grier and Johnston's study on career change science teachers, the authors found that having a previous STEM career with relevant qualifications and experience did not necessarily translate to being a successful science teacher who could create engaging science lessons for students (2012, p. 42). While many second career teachers may have advanced degrees in specific content areas as well as extensive content preparation in their academic fields, they may lack the ability to transform their extensive work experience, personal beliefs about learning and non-textbook oriented practices to create and implement conceptually rich and meaningful teaching in conventional school cultures (Powell, 1997).

Published studies thus question the transferability of career change teachers' competencies to the school set-up (Eifler & Potthof, 1998; Grier & Johnston, 2012). Having content expertise or subject matter knowledge does not mean teachers are equally equipped with competent teaching skills and the transition for career change teachers from workplace to

school may not be a naturally occurring process. An Australian study (2006) profiling more than 1500 pre-service teacher candidates across three universities found that for some career switchers, the transfer from the first career may not be seamless. Career changers often struggle with "their attitudes and beliefs about teaching, pre-conceived notions of the nature of teaching and learning, and the need to learn pedagogical strategies" (Richardson & Watt, p. 29).

However, it is difficult to draw inferences about career change teachers' capabilities from studies conducted on student teachers (Grier and Johnston, 2012; Jenne, 1996). Interviewing second career teachers who have taught in classrooms—as I do in my research—is more likely to give an accurate picture of how they perceive their ability to transfer prior knowledge to teaching practice. Teachers are able to provide examples and arguments from their everyday teaching lives to explain how and to what extent they have been able to transfer their skills and competencies.

It has also been argued that career changers may not be adept at teaching every field or topic area in a particular discipline. For instance, an accountant who changes career to become a mathematics teacher may not be proficient in each of the curriculum areas in the subject (Halladay, 2008). It might thus seem that career change individuals who enter teaching are being given too much credit for what they are 'deemed' to possess and much is assumed or expected of them when the reality may be quite different. Jenne (1996) goes on to suggest that far from being agents of 'second order' changes in schools, second career teachers may hold "well-entrenched and rigid" educational perspectives and perceptions that were acquired during their first career and from other life experiences (p. 6). Having formed firm views and beliefs on teaching and learning, some career changers may be unwilling to adapt to the new situation. Even though Jenne's study examined the perspectives of some second career teachers in a rather limiting way by focusing on the experiences of ex-military personnel in the subject area of social studies, she raises questions about the flexibility and willingness of this group of teachers in knowledge construction. Jenne asks (p. 22): Would becoming a teacher make them a conservative and traditional force (who prefer to 'leave things as they ought to be') rather than agents of change and transformation?

Halladay's (2008) descriptive study questioned the portrayal of career change teachers in the literature and asked whether they embody the characteristics they are assumed to possess such as subject area knowledge and expertise, life experience, intelligence and maturity. The

study found that career change teacher candidates' diverse characteristics and effectiveness are bound up with the type of teaching preparation programs they undertook to become a teacher. The unique regional economic, political and cultural contexts in which candidates undertook their programs, and the educational system and issues that surrounded each environment all had an impact. Rather than making a blanket assumption about career change teachers' capabilities and effectiveness, Halladay's study reiterated the importance of understanding career changers "individual distinctiveness" (p. 10) and the effect of local contexts to better construct and develop teacher preparation policies (Halladay, 2008).

Questions have also been asked about the adequacy and suitability of teacher training programs undertaken by career changers in terms of preparing them to become teachers and equipping them with highly developed pedagogical knowledge (Halladay, 2008). Mature age students enter both traditional and alternate programs depending on their qualifications and previous experience. While alternative programs concentrate on the knowledge base and practical experience of career changers, traditional programs view "teaching as a profession defined by a series of skills to be learned through study and monitored practice" (Halladay, 2008, p. 1). Teacher educators may also be responsible for not adequately preparing career change teachers and warning them about what teaching is really like. This could lead to an "unrealistic optimism and inner confidence that teaching would be easy and manageable" (Brindley & Parker, 2010, p. 591).

The literature on second career teachers also discusses the frustrations experienced by these teachers when they enter the profession. Second career beginning teachers are sometimes referred to as 'expert novices' in the literature (Williams, 2013). They have already worked and acquired various professional, social and personal experiences along the way but they are new to teaching. Career change teachers may feel they are not being recognised for the experiences and knowledge they already possess and that they are not receiving understanding and support specific to their needs. They can also experience 'culture shock' as they settle into being a classroom teacher and deal with the realities of schools and classrooms (Bullough & Knowles, 1990; Freidus, 1994; Freidus & Krasnow, 1991; Novak & Knowles, 1992). Teacher colleagues and parents may have 'unrealistic expectations' because the new teachers are "older" (Anthony & Ord, 2008, p. 359). While career changers express long-standing aspirations to enter teaching, the disappointment, frustration and feelings of

isolation can "negatively affect … the level of mission" and what brought them into teaching in the first place (Tigchelaar et al., 2008, p. 1547).

The recruitment of second career teachers to fill the shortages in subject-specific areas such as mathematics and science has also led to research investigating the implications of such recruitment (Jenne, 1996; Powell, 1997; Grier & Johnston, 2009). Results from various studies have been mixed, with those teachers having previous work experience in these subject discipline areas believing they can make a positive contribution to students' thinking but at the same time being frustrated and challenged by the lack of resources and by the general culture of schools (Powell, 1997). A recent US research even suggests that career change entrants are found in large percentages at elementary schools levels than in middle and high schools (Marinell & Johnson, 2013). This challenges the common belief that career change entrants will teach a subject that is related to their former career and consequently, are unlikely to "solve secondary school staffing problems .... in mathematics and science" (p. 27).

Being a mature age student teacher can also pose challenges and this is discussed in the literature at considerable length. The literature tackles this particularly at the tertiary level and explores the various steps that teacher educators are able to take to alleviate the problems. For instance, Haggard et al. (2006) discuss the need for teacher education institutions to acknowledge "the physical and emotional needs of second career students" by accommodating the varying needs and learning styles of adult student learners (p. 318).

Australian context of career change teacher literature

In the context of Australia, studies of career change teachers have primarily concentrated on understanding the motivations and influences behind choosing teaching as a career (Richardson et al., 2001; Richardson & Watt, 2005, Watt & Richardson, 2008; Manuel & Hughes, 2006). The construction of teacher identity as a career change teacher has also been investigated (Williams, 2010, 2013; Williams & Forgasz, 2009). All or most of the studies have been conducted with student teacher candidates and participants have either been surveyed and/or interviewed. Williams and Forgasz (2009) surveyed 375 career change student teachers across three universities and found intrinsic and altruistic reasons to be ranked higher than extrinsic rewards. The findings supported earlier research (such as by Richardson & Watt, 2006) that career change entrants bring personal qualities considered essential for quality teaching. Williams and Forgasz's study reiterated "the need to

investigate whether the promise held in terms of career changers' potential is evident and sustained once they enter the profession as fully qualified teachers" … for example, "during and beyond their first five years of profession" (p. 107). Richardson & Watt's 2005 qualitative study in Australia grouped participants into cluster groups depending on their motivations and reasons for choosing teaching. Again, since all the 74 participants were second career pre-service teacher candidates, the results and implications are from the student teacher perspective only and not from a classroom teacher perspective.

My research focuses on hearing and understanding classroom teachers' frustrations, challenges and needs in their first few years of teaching as a beginning teacher. This is very different from studies that discuss teacher candidates' frustrations and challenges where the participants are not yet practising teachers and have limited exposure to schools.

Teacher quality

Introduction

The importance of building a high quality teaching force is now recognised by all countries worldwide. The focus is no longer just on increasing teacher intake but also about being innovative and smart in recruiting the best and talented teachers to classrooms. Policy statements and reports on education and teaching emphasise not just the numbers but the quality of teachers in the development of a child's learning and education. Career change individuals are perceived as a potentially attractive group who may possess quality teacher characteristics due to their motivation to enter the profession as well as the personal and professional attributes they possess and bring to teaching. If quality teaching is measured by student performance, then career change teachers are perceived to possess the quality characteristics of subject area knowledge, skills and life experiences (Halladay, 2008). Their intrinsic and altruistic motivations to enter teaching are also perceived as bringing them closer to what is required of a quality teacher. In the 'Teachers for the Future' report prepared for the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment Training and Youth Affairs, Skilbeck and Connell (2004) refer to attracting mature age entrants to enhance teacher quality (p. 9).

Career change teachers are perceived as bringing a wealth of personal and professional experience with them into the classroom, helping to "make connections between content in the classroom and the outside world" (Grier & Johnston, 2009, p. 59). While several reports and studies have explored just what teacher quality is (particularly in terms of its relevance to

student performance output), the focus here is on the personal attributes and qualities that are mentioned in studies on quality teachers and their connection with career change teacher characteristics since these are most relevant to the career change teacher participants in my study.

Teacher quality and career change teachers

Along with the continuing concern about teacher numbers, policy makers and public discussion debate the issue of teacher quality and "professionalism of the teaching force" (Richardson & Watt, 2005, p. 475). The challenges now extend beyond numbers so that hiring more teachers must mean achieving better quality learning for students through teacher training and ongoing support (United Nations News Centre, 2013). Teachers are said to account for nearly 30% of the variance in student achievement besides other variances such as the students' abilities and attitudes and their home and family background (Hattie, 2003). The OECD (2011) report "Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers" states there is a broad consensus that "teacher quality is the single most important school variable influencing student achievement" (page. 7).

Quality teachers and teaching have been widely acknowledged by governments as "central to the development and maintenance of an intelligent and informed citizenry" (Richardson & Watt, 2006, p. 27). The teacher is often seen as the initiator when it comes to quality teaching, adjusting the "elements of teaching on the basis of what is at hand in the way of students, surround and resources" and looking for ways of "adapting his or her instruction to the context in hand" (Chambliss, Alexander & Price, 2012). While there is widespread agreement that teacher quality is the single greatest in-school influence on student outcomes (Hattie, 2003; Linda Darling-Hammond, 1999; NSW Government discussion paper, 2012), debate still continues on the variables that determine what teacher quality is and on which of the variables have more positive outcomes on student performance and achievement than others.

As societies and economies evolve, teachers' roles in schools have been getting increasingly complex and multidimensional due to "diverse socio cultural contexts in schools and communities". Teachers' skills now extend to "social, behavioural, civic, economic and technological dimensions" (Richardson & Watt, 2006, p. 29). The concern for recruiting quality teachers in some countries may also take into account the changing roles of teachers

and question whether candidates have the required adaptability, character, skills and motivations that go beyond the simple "desire to work with children" (p. 31).

Researchers have suggested that career change entrants developed a "well-defined sense of themselves" in their previous careers and that they possess "people skills germane to teaching" (Richardson & Watt, 2006, p. 29). Some argue that their "collective life wisdom enables them to approach teaching with a multitude of responses to critical teaching situations" (Powers, 2002, p. 304). Could such perceived skills and attributes resonate with the characteristics required of a quality teacher?

In the United States, the introduction of alternative certification courses raised the issue of quality teachers, as program designers were faced with the challenges of designing a fast track program that would also ensure teacher quality (Johnson, Birkeland & Peske, 2005). The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers, a US-based study that examined alternative certification courses, set out the perceived advantages of the courses' candidates (typically career change entrants) over traditional teacher candidates, pointing to their knowledge, skills and life experience (Halladay, 2008).

The perception of career change teachers as a response to teacher quality can be seen in reports such as the one prepared for the Woodrow Foundation on career change teachers (Hart Research Associates, 2010) as well as in studies on career change teachers (Halladay, 2008; Williams, 2013). Such studies make explicit the relation between growing a rich teaching talent pool and perceiving career changers as being able to fill the demand. Some career change studies have also explored the link between career change teachers' characteristics (primarily their motivations for entering teaching and attributes of knowledge, skills and experiences) and the characteristics of quality teachers.

For instance, an Australian study that examined the motivations and attributes of second career student teachers argued for a link between the results of their study (as well as previous studies) and "what is considered to be essential for quality teaching" (Williams & Forgasz, 2009, p. 100). The study argued that many career change student teacher participants possess qualities that are essential for quality teaching and that career changers could be valuable, both to address teacher shortages and to improve potential teaching quality (p. 106). Similarly, another earlier Australian study that profiled pre-service teacher

candidates brought out the link between career change teachers' characteristics and quality teacher characteristics (Richardson & Watt, 2006).

Since few studies have been conducted into second career teachers' school experiences, it is not possible to establish whether such a link has been previously researched. The characteristics of second career teachers researched in studies are not consistent and, as discussed earlier, questions have been raised about the adaptability and transferability of prior experiences into teaching and their pedagogical content knowledge. Hence, statements that connect second career teachers' attributes with quality teacher characteristics are to be read with some scepticism. Not all second career teachers possess the characteristics that are ascribed to quality teachers. However, the existence of certain similarities between the two is evident in the literature.

Placing the value of experiences (both teaching and non-teaching) and qualities of the teacher above and beyond teachers' impact on student achievement has been reiterated by Goe & Stickler in their policy brief on teacher quality and student achievement. They state:

> *Teachers' character, classroom management skills, stability, and leadership qualities may contribute to smooth school and classroom functioning, yet this situation may not be adequately reflected in student achievement. Thus, policies should not be shaped solely by test scores but should take into consideration the many important ways in which teachers make a positive impact on the lives of students, the success of colleagues, and the culture of schools. (p. 13, 2008)*

Teacher quality can be said to intersect between the personal attributes of the individual teacher and the structural and policy environment they work in (Williams & Forgasz, 2009). Generally associated with effective teachers, a quality teacher is someone who apart from a deep understanding of pedagogy and content knowledge (NSW Government discussion paper, 2012), is passionate about teaching and students' deep learning (Hattie, 2003) and also displays traits such as desire for "lifelong knowledge and learning … ethical behaviours in the students' greatest good and compassion" (Williams & Forgasz, 2009, p. 96). Great teachers are not only passionate about the subject they teach but also "use this passion to inspire a thirst of knowledge and love of learning in their students" (NSW Government discussion paper, 2012, p. 3).

As a dynamic process, creativity draws on many different areas of a person's experience and intelligence (Robinson, 2012). Effective teachers are perceived to be creative and flexible in their teaching practices to suit student needs. They are seen to be using a range of teaching strategies and to possess "a broad repertoire of teaching skills" and the ability to engage students in higher-order thinking (Darling-Hammond, 1999, p. 14). Flexibility in expert teachers extends to taking advantage of new information and bringing "new interpretations to light" (Hattie, 2003, p. 5). Creativity can also extend to being able to combine new content with prior knowledge, thus having the experience to create their own unique set of lessons by adding, combining and changing components to suit the students' needs and the teachers' own goals. Expert teachers are thus perceived to possess knowledge that is more integrated, having "deep representations about teaching and learning" (Hattie, p. 5). Career change teachers are also perceived as being able to think outside the traditional box of teaching due to their presumed ability to "draw upon their rich organisational insights" (Evans, 2011, p. 610).

Supporters of alternative certificate courses in which many career change entrants enrol believe the attributes of content knowledge and an innate ability to teach brought by these entrants represent the ingredients of a quality teacher (Evans, 2011). An examination of career change teachers' preferred work characteristics by Evans (2011) found her participants focusing on the social context and how that can impact on the classroom and children's lives (pp 627–628). Hattie's (2003) research on expert teachers points out that these teachers are likely to be more context oriented, needing to know the "ability, experience and background of the students" (Hattie, p. 7). It seems as though some of these characteristics that are of an affective nature are common both in career change and in quality teachers. The OECD (2011) report *Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers* observed the characteristics of a 'quality' teacher to include the ability to be "enthusiastic and creative, to convey ideas in clear and convincing ways and to create effective learning environments for different types of students" amongst other things (2011, p. 7). Among the many recommendations made in the report is one to expand the pool of potential teachers "by opening the teaching profession to individuals with relevant experience outside education" (p. 9). Hence, there is an implicit acknowledgement of what career changer teachers may bring to the teaching profession.

Korthagen (2004) explored ways for teacher educators to nurture and enhance 'good teacher' qualities (p. 87). He took a holistic approach that focused on the 'person' (p. 79) that exists within the teacher and looked at aspects that were more than just teacher competencies. Teachers' professional and personal identity was most influenced when they questioned the meaning of their existence and when they became aware of themselves in relation to others (p. 85). The study identified teachers' core personal and positive qualities in terms of their "character strengths" (p. 86). Qualities such as creativity, trust, care, courage, flexibility, sensitivity, decisiveness and commitment (p. 86) are always present in the 'person' of the teacher; qualities that draw out the "individual in every child or student" (Robinson, 2012, p. 160). Korthagen's study suggested that being aware of and "emotionally in touch with those qualities" (p. 87) shaped teachers' personal development and growth where they were able to "teach from within" (p. 89). In distinguishing between an expert, experienced and novice teacher, Hattie (2003) identified certain "affective attributes" that expert teachers possess. These included having "high respect for students, and demonstrating care and commitment for them" (p. 8).

The qualities of a good teacher identified by Korthagen and Hattie are similar to the personal attributes that some career change teachers are deemed to possess, such as strong people skills, flexibility, enthusiasm, maturity, wisdom, professionalism and motivation (Grier & Johnston, 2009; Williams & Forgasz, 2009). Career change entrants' intrinsic and altruistic reasons for choosing teaching—consistently referred to in the literature—are associated with characteristics of commitment, determination and wanting to make teaching a success, also seen as hallmarks of an expert teacher. Career change teachers' desire for personal and intellectual fulfilment may be a factor that motivates them to make their role a success. The career change student participants in Grier and Johnston's study demonstrated authentic caring for their students and student learning. They reported being intrinsically motivated to be good teachers (2009).

To summarise, with the emphasis on teacher excellence and what is important for students, above and beyond student achievement, there exists a potential pool of teachers in second careers who may very well possess all or most of the qualities some associate with an excellent or expert teacher (Lee & Lamport, 2011). Their reasons for joining the profession, together with their previous career knowledge and experience, seem to indicate that they are driven by the passion and ability to be effective teachers who possess quality attributes. It is

possible that they demonstrate what Korthagen (2004) referred to as 'good teacher' qualities and character strengths, including commitment, creativity, care and flexibility.

It is prudent that this connection between second career teachers and the characteristics of quality teachers be further explored in future studies. I have also examined this link in my study with teacher participants' descriptions of their intrinsic reasons and their actual school experiences.

I now turn to review existing studies that have applied phenomenology and qualitative approaches to understanding second career teachers' school experiences. The purpose of the section is to highlight the significance of this approach in my research, given its limited use in career change literature.

Phenomenological research in educational research: an overview

My research study is a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to understanding a group of second career beginning teachers and their school experiences. The methodology is existential in nature as I attempt to describe and interpret how the teachers create meaning for themselves in their new roles. This section of the literature review therefore deals with a critical analysis and exploration of the studies that exist in the field.

In the methodology chapter, I outline my understanding of hermeneutic phenomenology and its application in teaching and pedagogy, inspired by philosophers such as Husserl, Heidegger and Dewey and by practitioners such as Max van Manen. Hermeneutic phenomenology is a methodology that has philosophical roots. It is associated with ontology and the study of human beings and their existence in the world. Phenomenology is not only a methodology but is also a research method inquiring into human beings and their meaning-making in the world. Applied to research, hermeneutic phenomenology is used to interpret participants' descriptions of their lives and the meaning contained in those descriptions. It is a philosophical approach that can be applied to any discipline area interested in exploring and understanding how human beings make sense of their world.

Phenomenology has been applied in discipline areas such as clinical psychology (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009), medicine, nursing and education (van Manen). Many research studies have been conducted to understand the 'practical and everyday' relevance of phenomenology to these disciplines. Due to its breadth and scope across a wide spectrum of

disciplines, the literature on phenomenology is spread across various fields and specialisations.

Within the area of education itself, the literature is vast, ranging from a broad look at the relationship between education and philosophy (for example, exploring the work of Dewey) to observing specific areas in education, for instance, pedagogy and teachers and their ontological ways of becoming. Several studies can be found that focus on an ontological approach to teachers and their becoming and many of these (Brook, 2009; Burch, 1990, 1991; Donnelly, 1999; Field & Latta, 2001; Vandenberg, 1971 to name a few) have informed the study, particularly in the discussion chapter.

While the research study has been enriched through an understanding of these studies in various aspects in the education field, it is not the purpose of this literature review to cover all dimensions of phenomenology—nor is it practical to do so. The primary purpose here is to examine the application of this existential approach to study of career change teachers and to explore how existing studies have assisted me in shaping how I apply this research methodology to my own study.

Career change teachers and hermeneutic phenomenology

The use of hermeneutic phenomenology to understand second career teachers and their lived experiences is a largely unexplored area in the literature. Phenomenology as a methodology has been used by one study (Powers, 2002) about second career teachers. In this qualitative study, teachers were interviewed to understand the challenges they faced and to develop suggestions for administrators to assist career change teachers in the career change transition process. The purpose was not to understand second career teachers' meaning making of themselves, nor did the study have an existential focus. Similarly, Powell (1997) used phenomenology and personal construct theory to perform a comparative analysis of a first career and second career teacher with implications for curriculum reform in teacher education.

Hedrick's thesis on career switchers in the United States used interpretivism to understand the reasons why teachers stay in the profession and to investigate the role of the school principal (2005). An interpretivist approach is a qualitative approach similar to hermeneutics, allowing insight into participants' worlds and meanings, derived through analysis that is then interpreted by the researcher. The purpose of Hedrick's study was to uncover reasons

teachers stayed in the profession and investigate how school principals could influence teachers' decisions to stay. The study used qualitative research methods such as interviews, observations and document analysis (2005, pp. 72-73). The research aim in another thesis on a group of second career teachers in Canada was a qualitative understanding of teachers' motivations, experiences and perceptions (Lee, 2010). The study was informed by a phenomenological method of inquiry and drew on the theories of Maslow, Herzberg, Alderfer and Levinson to understand teachers' motivations to change professions and their perceptions of being a student teacher and later on a classroom teacher. While both of these studies on career change teachers were qualitative with elements of phenomenology and hermeneutics, their scope, purpose and research questions were different from my study which has its focus on the existential understanding of the teacher participants' life world through their lived experiences.

Williams' (2010, 2013) study to understand the identity of career changers in teacher education provided another qualitative perspective on second career teachers. The meaning and relevance of identity to teacher growth and development has certain similarities with an ontological and existential approach to understanding teachers, like the one I have adopted in my research. Teacher identity is essentially how one defines oneself as a teacher or how one sees the development of his or her professional identity (Korthagen, 2004). Teacher professional learning and identity is not only shaped by one's own upbringing but also influenced by earlier or prior experiences such as critical life events, one's own schooling, prior work, parenting, experiences during teacher education (including practicum) and school workplace culture after commencing teaching. Teacher growth takes place as earlier experiences and the earlier development that results due to those experiences are incorporated or integrated into the present in the becoming of a teacher.

As a relational concept, the professional identity of teachers is "the result of temporary meanings related to themselves and their profession, which teachers construct by interacting with their environment" (Korthagen, 2004, p. 84). Becoming a teacher is seen as a dynamically evolving and fluid process, with transformation constantly taking place at various stages of a teacher's life, right from being a student teacher and throughout their teaching careers.

Teacher identity for individuals is intrinsically related to their relationship with others and has thus been understood in the literature as a socially negotiated practice (Akkerman &

Meijer, 2011). Akkerman and Meijer (2011) also discuss the concept of "the sameness of teacher identity", viewing the notion as both unitary and multiple, individual and social (p. 308). Teacher development occurs not just with others but also with self in the form of self-dialogues and engagement with different parts of the self. From the research point of view, this concept of understanding teacher identity in both multiple (self with others) and single (with self) terms is interesting and relevant. It lent itself to my research focus on understanding career change teacher participants from a human perspective and how they create meaning for their 'self' in and through their lived relations with others.

For instance, career change teacher participants' processes of becoming a teacher and the transformation that occurs in the individual can be described in teacher identity terms. The influences of participants' experiences prior to becoming a teacher or prior to undertaking teacher education is particularly significant for their development of teacher identity and their process of becoming a teacher. Career change teachers' identities and practices may largely be influenced by their prior life histories, experiences and personal philosophies and less by teacher education experiences (Bullough & Knowles, 1990; Novak & Knowles, 1992). Williams' (2010) study, referred to earlier, examined the construction of a second career student teacher identity and the process of 'becoming' a teacher during teacher education. The study made reference to Lave and Wenger's "community of practice" theoretical framework and found that one teacher's various prior identities had to be negotiated and reconciled by "drawing on the expertise that her previous career had given her … in order to construct her new professional identity (as an expert novice) as a student teacher" (p. 646). Another North American study explored the development of teacher identity in six career change student teachers and discussed the implications for pre-service teacher education programs (Grier & Johnston, 2009). Findings revealed that teacher identity was largely influenced by their motivation and commitment to enter the teaching profession in the first place. Wilson & Deaney's (2010) study examined career change teachers' exercise of agency in identity construction.

While studies on teacher identity can be helpful in understanding how individuals construct identities about their self in the process of career change, my research is not a study of teacher identity but a philosophical study underpinned by the methodological principles of hermeneutic phenomenology. I apply the research methodology in my study to interpret teacher participants' descriptions of their school experiences and the meaning-making

process that the participants went through in becoming a teacher. The emphasis of my study is on understanding, describing and interpreting teacher participants from a philosophical and existential perspective, to elucidate how they understand themselves through their relations with others after changing professions to become a teacher.

Career change teacher studies have also applied other human science approaches and descriptive methods to track and understand teachers' motivations and individuals' attributes. Examples include the psychological approach (Crow, Levine & Nager, 1990); the life history methodology (Serow & Forrest, 1994); transition theory (Castro & Bauml, 2009); ethnographic grounded theory approach (Evans, 2011); socio-cultural and 'community of practice' theory (Anthony & Ord, 2008); personal belief statements (Brindley & Parker, 2010) and use of professional metaphors to make sense of teaching (Peter et al.,, 2011).

The use of qualitative and human science approaches in studies of career change students has a different focus from qualitative studies of classroom second career teachers. For instance, in Peter et al.'s study (2011), metaphors and teacher narratives were used to understand how career changers were shaped by their past experiences, with implications and suggestions for schools (e.g. to be more receptive to recognising these teachers). The suggestions were from the lens of alternative certification programs and of teacher educators since the participants were career change student teachers. Castro and Bauml's (2009) theoretical framework of "transition" theory (p. 113) investigated the career change student teachers' movements during the transitional phase of changing careers, with implications for teacher education programs.

Whatever methodology may be adopted, studies of career change student teachers tend to argue from the perspective of teaching programs or teacher educators. As a qualitative study conducted on practising classroom teachers, my research has a different purpose. I apply a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to understand and interpret second career teachers' lived school experiences. A rich qualitative and existential analysis will not only build on existing studies but will also add a new source of information about teachers' perceptions and beliefs, drawn from when they are in schools as classroom teachers.

Summary

While studies to determine the reasons and motivation for career changers continue to be conducted with implications for teacher recruitment and policy makers, little research has

been done to understand second career teachers' experiences when they commence teaching in schools. Previous research focuses primarily on mature age student entrants who are in the process of undertaking pre-service teacher training to qualify as a teacher. In some cases, the participants have had minimal exposure in the classroom. Attempts have been made in these studies to gather the reasons and motives behind career change, candidate aspirations and expectations for themselves as adult learners and prospective teachers, their attributes and what they may bring to the profession as well as the challenges and opportunities they foresee for themselves after they graduate. The studies therefore tend to have implications and significance for teacher education and preparation programs and courses and at the recruitment and policy level rather than at the school and teaching level itself. Results in many of the studies discuss the challenges that mature age entrants are likely to face as they enter the teaching profession and the ways that teacher education institutions and teaching programs can adapt to provide opportunities for recognition and inclusiveness at various levels. Little is known about the actual school experiences of second career teachers with a view to probing their subjective interpretations and meaning-making experiences after they enter the teaching profession. My research aims to fill this gap by reporting on career change participants who have commenced teaching in classrooms. The scope, purpose, and the application of phenomenology as a qualitative human science research method differentiates the current study from previous research approaches. In the next chapter, I will outline hermeneutic methodology to investigate career change teacher participants' experiences.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Chapter overview

In this chapter, I outline and describe the research methodology I have employed and the reasons for my choice. In qualitative studies, the methodology chosen is inherently bound up with the theoretical assumptions of the author. Moreover, any given field of inquiry will always have some philosophical roots, drawing upon the researcher's perspective about how the world works and what people are like (Silverman, 2010, p. 332; Willis, 2008, p. 298). My methodology for this study comprises an interpretive inquiry which frames a hermeneutic phenomenological approach. My personal orientation and philosophical underpinnings together with the overall research purpose determined the choice of methodology for the research.

I begin the chapter with a discussion of the theoretical framework adopted in the research. I describe my philosophical underpinnings, examining how these have shaped my understanding of the research study on second career beginning teachers. I articulate my philosophy and view of the world and the meaning that I bring or give to my research based on what I know. What are my assumptions about human knowledge, experience and meaning in life? My research on understanding the lived experiences of second career teachers is a qualitative human science study that goes deep into understanding the meaning of being human in the world we live in. The purpose is to understand how teachers, as individuals, make meaning of themselves when they change careers. The study is thus underpinned by philosophical questions into human existence. It is also grounded in second career teachers' ways of being teachers in schools, and is thus situated in context and relations. The study is thus founded upon an interpretive method of inquiry with the aim of uncovering and describing meanings that occur in teachers' lives and this will be discussed following explication of the theoretical framework.

The next section unpacks hermeneutic phenomenology. Hermeneutic phenomenology is not just a qualitative methodology but is rooted in philosophical and existential underpinnings. One can even say that hermeneutic phenomenology is a philosophy in itself. The study has taken shape and meaning inspired by the works of philosophers such as Martin Heidegger (1962, 1968).

I then discuss the rationale and argument for choosing hermeneutic phenomenology. The rationale for the methodology comes fundamentally from my desire to understand the lifeworlds of second career beginning teachers. The methodology chosen also aligns well with the research questions framed for the purpose of this study. My personal philosophical perspective plays a significant role and fits well with the principles associated with hermeneutic phenomenology.

The next section is a discussion on what hermeneutic phenomenology brings to the research study and how I have used the methodology in the research in order to understand career change teachers' lived experiences. Here, I prepare the reader for the discussion in chapter six on the 'phenomenological sense' of being a second career teacher. I consider the concepts around the use of phenomenology in education as espoused by van Manen (1990), such as 'phenomenological attitude', 'pedagogue' and 'pedagogic awareness', concepts drawn on in the research study.

Following this, I explicate the challenges associated with hermeneutic phenomenology and to conclude the chapter, I articulate the steps taken during the research journey to ensure that academic and qualitative rigour are maintained.

Theoretical perspective

I begin this section by presenting my thinking about the big questions relevant to my theoretical position. I believe that making explicit this thought process is a useful exercise in any human science study as it can increase clarity in the research process and enhance the author–reader relationship.

- How do I exist in the world?
- How do I see the world?
- Where does my research understanding and research positioning come from?
- What is my research strategy?
- What position am I taking in the research study?

The theoretical framework in any study originates from explicating the researcher's own philosophical roots and how he/she sees the world. Adopting an existential approach requires me to expound my theoretical perspective in a certain way—one that aligns with a human science inquiry. Theoretical perspectives are a description of my philosophical stance that underpins my chosen methodology. It allows me to state and justify the assumptions that I have put forward underlying my chosen methodology. Essentially, theoretical perspective is "our view of the human world and social life within that world" (Crotty, 1998, p. 7). At the same time, my ontological and epistemological beliefs are laid out for the audience and the readers of the thesis to judge the significance and outcomes of the research. Ontology is the study of being and concerns itself with 'what is' and epistemology concerns 'what it means to know something'. The theoretical perspective provides a rationale for the research methodology adopted. The theoretical positioning also provides an opportunity for me as researcher to orient myself to the research in a manner that is deeply personal and unique in terms of how the topic area is understood.

By knowing and understanding how others before me have undertaken the task of studying human inquiry, I have been able to make myself aware of what is possible in my own research and to construct meaning that is aligned with the purposes of my research while being true to my philosophy.

The point about articulating my assumptions and pre-understandings is not to give the impression that I know all there is to know but rather to indicate that I know little and want to know and learn more. Hence, while my assumptions provide a window on my thinking and philosophy on how I see the world, part of me always wants to remain open to new discovery and new ways of thinking.

I describe below my philosophical stance as it forms the logic behind the methodology chosen. The stance also embeds my epistemological beliefs. My thoughts and beliefs have been informed by reading various texts in phenomenology, education and qualitative research, in particular, Heidegger (1962), Dewey (1938) and Crotty (1998).

My epistemological belief stems from the notion that people or things cannot exist as meaningful entities outside of consciousness and experience and this is what makes possible a world that is significant and full of meaning. Individuals understand knowledge and

construct meaning in different ways based on their engagement with the realities of the world around them.

Philosophical stance

I set out my philosophy in bullet points because I believe it will be useful for the reader to see each point and the inter-connectedness that exists between them.

- Individuals have experience. The experiences are unique in meaning and can be interpreted.
- We are always in the process of becoming. Hence temporality plays an important role in who we are and how we shape ourselves. The process of becoming also means we are constantly learning and re-inventing ourselves.
- Human beings are always situated in a context and our meanings are constructed in that context and situation.
- Individuals are not alone and we exist as social human beings informing and shaping each other. Relationality is thus a necessary characteristic of our existence.
- As human beings, we constantly evolve throughout our lives. As we go through the life journey we are also engaged in an inquiry process to make sense of ourselves and of the paths we undertake at different points in this journey.

The philosophical perspective outlined above together with my own personal experience and orientation led to the crystallisation of the type of research I wanted to pursue on second career beginning teachers.

I believe we all have experiences that are unique to us. Experiences make the person we are. Every experience carries a different meaning from previous ones. We not only learn from each experience but also grow through each of them. The process of growth never stops since we are always experiencing. We are always 'living' our experiences. This also means we are constantly evolving from what we previously were and this shapes the way we live in the world. We are, however, not alone. Our experiences take shape and meaning in the contexts and situations we live in as well as in the relations we have with others. I have incorporated these underpinnings in my research study on career change teachers, forming the basis of the theoretical framework for the study.

Grant reminds us that "philosophy always uses the user rather than he or she using it" (as quoted in Burch, 1990, p. 131). Hence, while I may claim to have used the study of

philosophy and phenomenology to develop my theoretical positioning, I also believe it is true that the disciplines also grow and are enriched through the way(s) in which I have used philosophy in practice.

In embarking on this research, I wanted to understand what it is like for someone to change careers to teaching after having been elsewhere in a different profession and having had different experiences, and in different contexts and relations. This led me to my research questions about, firstly, understanding the nature and essence and the meaning of being a second career teacher and, secondly, how the participants' previous experience may or may not have influenced their second career. The following research questions were used to guide the study:

- What is the nature and essence of the experiences of a group of second career beginning teachers in schools?
- What kinds of influences do second career beginning teachers' past experiences have on their current role as teachers?

I now discuss the two methodologies that are used in this study: interpretive inquiry and hermeneutic phenomenology.

The conceptual framework of an interpretive inquiry

A qualitative researcher is most interested in "how humans arrange themselves" and how they "make sense of their surroundings through symbols, rituals, social structures, social roles, and so forth" (Berg, 1995 p. 7). My qualitative data, consisting of participants' thick descriptions of their personal perspectives and experiences, form the basis of the detailed analysis and interpretation. As Patton points out, "The discipline and rigour of qualitative analysis depend on presenting solid descriptive data … in such a way that others reading the results can understand and draw their own interpretations" (cited in Best & Kahn, 2006, pp. 270-271). I attempt to understand and interpret what it is like for participants to be second career teachers but my understanding and interpretation are from within the terms of the stories and text that the participants have produced (Smith et al., 2009). The study is thus an interpretive qualitative study as I explain the findings and attach significance to particular descriptions in order to draw out meaningful conclusions. I am interested in the world that second career teachers live in, which may include emotions, motivations, empathy, attributed meanings, an individual's own perceptions and subjective apprehensions (Berg, 1995).

Qualitative interpretive research is also a relational approach where one cannot study persons without studying the relations they make with others (Lincoln, 1995). The study is about meaning and meaningful interpretations that exist in the person-centred nature of interpretive work in social contexts, all of which underpin human science research.

The conceptual framework of hermeneutic phenomenology

Introduction

Hermeneutic phenomenology is a qualitative methodology with philosophical underpinnings. In my research, I have used a hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry to uncover, interpret and understand the lived experience of second career beginning teachers as well as the meanings ascribed by these teacher participants to their lived experience. In a human science inquiry, the notion of 'understanding' is intended to have a broader meaning. It is about researchers making 'sense' of their participants through maintaining an empathetic and thoughtful relation. Understanding, from a human science perspective is significant to our ways of living in the world particularly when we are standing in another person's shoes in an attempt to make sense of their thinking (van Manen, 1990, p. 15). Understanding second career teachers' lived experiences is situated in the context of teachers' everyday lives and in their relations with others.

The study is qualitatively focused to allow for exploration, discovery and understanding of teachers' experiences in a holistic and meaningful way. A qualitative study requires 'theoretical sensitivity', which means one has to possess the instinct to be sensitive and aware while ascribing meaning to data. It also requires the capacity and understanding to separate meaningful from non-meaningful data as the theory is being developed (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The current study lends itself to qualitative analysis of the experiences of second career teachers in an open-ended way and to developing theoretical explanations based on these understandings and meaningful interpretations. Interpretations in a qualitative study are referred to as meaningful when we immediately understand what is said (make sense of) or are "already with" the participant (Heidegger, cited in Dreyfus, 1991, p. 219).

Hermeneutic phenomenology is a methodology that is attentive to the two concepts: hermeneutics and phenomenology. While the two concepts can be independent, it is prudent to read them as a 'whole' since they are intertwined. Hermeneutic phenomenology is more of

an 'interpretive' method and methodology, while phenomenology is more descriptive and existential.

Philosophers such as Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Sartre have all made significant contributions to phenomenology. The task of a researcher is not only to demonstrate an understanding of the particular methodology chosen but also of what the methodology means to their research. My research methodology is informed by Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology and I have been guided by his philosophical arguments to support my research stance (for example, Heidegger, 1962 and as cited in van Manen, 1990). I also see the relevance to my research of the work of Jonathan Smith's interpretive approach to inquiry research (2009). Such an interpretive approach has enabled me to make sense of hermeneutic phenomenology in the lived world of people and relationships. The methodology chapter will also briefly touch on the ideas of Merleau-Ponty (1962) and Sartre (1948) and the reasons for including their views in my research, in particular, where they apply to my research on second career teachers.

There are some fundamental concepts associated with hermeneutic phenomenology that I need to unpack because of their relevance to my research study. Where I consider it essential to understand and interpret relevant aspects of the philosophy from a 'worldly' perspective, (such as Heidegger's interpretive understanding), I have referred to Max van Manen (1990) and Smith's interpretive approach (2009) in my research stance.

Phenomenology

Phenomenology originated in the 19th century in Germany and the Netherlands. Phenomenology is the study and research of human beings and the meaning-making of human experiences. A phenomenological approach seeks to gain an understanding of the meanings of experiences as humans live them, in other words, the understanding of human lived experience (van Manen, 1990). Phenomenology is about describing the essence of the 'lived-through' quality of lived experience as well as describing the meaning of lived experience (p. 25).

Phenomenology provides the tools to study the essence or the essential nature of being a second career teacher. Essence is the what-ness or what it is that makes something what it is. For example, what is it about a chair that makes it a chair—the essence of a chair or the 'chair-ness'—the true being or the essential nature of a chair without which the chair, as a

thing, would not exist (Husserl as cited in van Manen, 1990, p. 177). In terms of the research study, I am seeking to determine the fundamental essence or the what-ness of a second career teacher—the essential nature with which it is possible to be 'characterised' as a second career teacher.

My research is on understanding the lived experience of second career teachers in schools. Lived experience is what one experiences immediately as one lives his/her life here and now. Second career teachers' lived experience takes place every day in the classroom and in the school. Van Manen (1990) notes that lived experience is temporal in nature and hence "can never be grasped in its immediate manifestation but only reflectively as past presence" (p. 36). We can access experience immediately but can only witness it after the event. However, teacher participants' lived experiences have a lived character and a lived quality when the teachers go through the process of reflective thinking during the interview with me, the researcher. Ordinary everyday experience becomes 'a lived experience' that is significant when the participant reflects on the significance of what occurred and engages in cognitive thinking to make sense of it (Smith et al., 2009, p. 33). Human experience has a lived quality when meaning is breathed into the experience. While meanings are already constituted and embedded when the teacher participant goes through an experiencing process, meanings are also constantly being created through the process of reflective questioning and repeated examining. "Meaning does not lie in the experience. Rather, those experiences are meaningful which are grasped reflectively" (Burch, 1990, p. 134). Meaning brought about through reflection is what breathes life into the lived experience without which it would be impossible to grasp the fullness of the experience. Put another way, experiences and their meaning emerge or appear through the reflective process such that we become aware or conscious of them. A phenomenological inquiry is thus focused on what is experienced in the consciousness of the individual (Husserl as cited in Smith et al., 2009, p. 15).

When a teacher recalls a lived experience through reflective thinking, it is not just fleeting moments of awareness but the moments of experience itself, which are then made into a coherent sense in such a way that there is a whole 'unity' in meaning. These meanings that are recovered upon reflection may not be exactly identical to the meanings that were created during the actual lived experiencing process and thus "may or may not disclose more truly who we are and where we stand" (Burch, 1990, p. 136). However, the full meaning, though

not necessarily the same meaning, of those lived experience emerges (and becomes 'secure') only during the retrospective reflection process (1990).

To summarise, second career teacher participants in the research do not create new meaning for the first time when they recount their experiences during the interview process. Meaningful lived experience already exists in memory that is then 're-lived' and rendered into a coherent meaningful whole at the time of the interview. As a researcher, my phenomenological inquiry is to understand and describe the lived experience of teacher participants as it appears to me and as they (the participants) have lived and meaningfully experienced in schools. Teacher participants are able to retrospectively reflect and re-call their lived experience and I attempt to grasp the meanings. I also seek to outline the unity in meaning in their lived experience as I attempt to understand the 'whole' in each of the different experiences they describe based on the context they were situated in.

Phenomenology is also about understanding humans in the context of their existence in the world. Teacher participants are already situated and exist in a world of people and objects. It is only in their existence in a world and in relation to other human beings that we can begin to uncover the essence of who a second career teacher is. Sartre's famous expression "existence comes before essence" (as quoted in Smith et al., 2009, p. 19) means, 'I first exist and through that existence I become who I am'. The meanings about their lived experience are thus constructed in the context of being a second career teacher in schools and in relations that exist with students and other teachers. While each teacher participant's lived experience and their meanings are personal and unique, belonging to the perspective of the particular participant, the participants (and their lived experience) are situated in a worldly and relational context. Hence, the phenomenological view of experience is not just contained in the 'typical' understanding of an individual participant but in the participant's connectedness with the world around him or her.

One way to understand teacher participants' connectedness to the concrete world is through their embodied position (or bodily being in the world). For Merleau-Ponty, consciousness (or awareness) meant existing in (and toward) the world through the body (1962). Teacher participants' existence and place in school and in the classroom as well as their perceptions of themselves are through their bodily being. Their lived experience and how they give meaning and expression to those experiences belong to their own embodied and situated position in the world. Similarly, participants' perception of others develops from

their own embodied perspective (Smith et al., 2009, p. 19). Through my phenomenological inquiry, I am attempting to understand how teacher participants give expression and meaning to their lived experience as 'embodied' human beings—existing in the world (and in relations) and in their embodied nature of relationship shared with others in the school.

Finally, when Sartre (1948) referred to our existence, he indicated that the self is not a pre-existing entity that is waiting to be discovered, but rather an ongoing project waiting to be unfurled (p26). In other words, an individual is always in the process of becoming (Kierkegaard, 1974, p. 79). My research is thus an attempt to understand the developmental and the 'becoming' process of teacher participants as they change careers to become a teacher.

Hermeneutic phenomenology

In the previous section, we saw how the teacher participants' lived experiences are made intelligible through the descriptions of the meanings embodied in them. Lived experiences are related in parts to other contextually related experiences which are then reflectively re-called as a 'whole' to provide unity of meaning and render the experiences meaningful. One may thus conclude that for a human science researcher, phenomenological essence is not just being attentive to the 'things themselves' (in this case, the lived experiences of second career teacher participants) but also to the meanings that manifest, all from within a hermeneutic and interpretive situation (Burch, 1991).

While phenomenology as a methodology refers fundamentally to a process of inquiring into an individual's ways of existing in the world, hermeneutic phenomenology could also be articulated as a phenomenology in action (van Manen, 1990). From a research point of view, hermeneutic phenomenology guides me in not just the methodological way of inquiring into participants' lives (as a methodology); it also guides me as a researcher in my own analytic process of understanding that inquiry (as a method). The following paragraphs aim to clarify the above.

Hermeneutics is the theory and practice of interpretation. It is the "interpretation and study of experience via some text or symbolic form" (van Manen, 1990, p. 25) in order to determine the meaning of those experiences.

Heidegger's phenomenology is interpretive phenomenology because it is about seeking knowledge in the world of human existence that is grounded in the lived world of people,

things and relationships (as cited in Smith et al., 2009). The world (with people in situations) always already exists together with the possibility of knowledge and meaning associated with the world. Hermeneutic inquiry seeks knowledge and meaning as they appear in the world of human existence and where humans are "naturally engaged in their worlds" (van Manen, 1990, p. 18). The meanings constructed and interpreted are contextual in our naturally occurring engagement with the world (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007). Heidegger's phenomenology is about understanding the essence, but from a 'worldly' (world that exists) perspective (as cited in Smith et al., 2009). Thus, all knowledge emerges from an interpretative stance with meaning-making of fundamental importance. Description of any kind or nature is always an 'interpretive' description because of our ways of being in the world (van Manen, 1990).

Since hermeneutic phenomenology possesses similar characteristics to other qualitative methodologies with socially constructed meanings and interpretations, a phenomenological description of an experience is always one interpretation with the possibility of other potentially richer and deeper descriptions (van Manen, 1990). Understanding the lived experience of second career teacher participants means that the descriptions of the lived experience are personal, varied, subjective, and are open to multiple interpretations.

Teacher participants in my research are always and already situated in this world. Interpretively understanding and describing their lived experience is a hermeneutic understanding of their being or existence in the world. As participants reflect upon and recall their lived experience, meanings start to emerge or appear in their thoughts and discussions. Sartre reminds us that lived experience (and its meanings) can never be entirely captured or absorbed but at the same time should never be overlooked or ignored (Smith et al., 2009, p. 19). Hence, there may also be some hidden or concealed meanings that may not come into view. A hermeneutic inquiry allows me, as the researcher, to be aware of the possibilities of these hidden meanings and through an interpretive understanding to be able to uncover those hidden meanings as they appear and emerge. Interpretive phenomenology is thus not only about understanding teachers' lived experiences as they present themselves but about (interpretively) understanding and making explicit the sometimes concealed and implicit meanings that may lie hidden in teachers' stories. According to Heidegger, hermeneutic phenomenology is not aimed at "re-experiencing another's experience" (cited in van Manen, 1990, p. 180). Instead, through interpretation, it aims to "come to understand the possibilities of being revealed" (p. 180). As a researcher, I am able to understand the meaning of lived

experiences of second career teacher participants in part through the hermeneutic inquiry of making explicit and thematic that which is at first implicit and un-thematised (Crotty, 1998, p. 97).

The concept of a hermeneutic circle of understanding is relevant in my research. Heidegger espoused the concept to explain how our understanding of ourselves in an existential sense is continuous and evolving (cited in Krell, 1978). Furthermore, every understanding (or making sense through interpreting) is a more enlightened understanding than the previous ones as we learn to thrust aside or keep to one side our pre-understandings while orienting to the essence of what we are seeking (Dreyfus, 1991; van Manen, 1990). Through a hermeneutic inquiry, in chapters five and six I attempt to articulate participants' ways of understanding themselves at the time of their career decision, leading to a more enlightened awareness of how they exist when they become a teacher. As a method in action, in chapter four, I also discuss my own hermeneutic ways of thinking during the analytic process of engaging with participants' stories.

Language plays an important role in phenomenological understanding since language brings out the lived experience that is inside, in its immediate form. Multi-dimensional and multi-layered meanings of lived experience are articulated through language and the aim is to leave the reader with curiosity, fascination and intrigue about the topic being researched. Van Manen (1990) argues that if any human experience can be spoken of as some kind of text, then it can be said that all "phenomenological description is text interpretation or hermeneutics" (p. 39). He holds both hermeneutics and phenomenology in a dialectical relationship—"let things speak for themselves"—while recognising that social phenomena need to be understood and interpreted through language (p. 180). Human research is inherently dialectical and thus there are bound to be conflicts between what we hear and what we write. However, being aware of those contradictions can assist in understanding human experience in a thoughtful manner. Through language, I will attempt to describe the essence of participants' lived experience so as to bring out the lived quality in a fuller manner. Through language, I will attempt to disclose or 'show' the deeper ontological meaning of participants' lived experience as revealed through the interpretive process.

Summary of conceptual framework

Phenomenology is a human science research method through which human beings can seek knowledge and understanding of who they are and how they exist in the world. A

phenomenological approach allows for lived experience to come to light (and become meaningful) through reflective inquiry and thinking. All descriptions are thus reflective. A hermeneutic inquiry allows for all such reflection to be interpretive because one does not just describe but *decides* to describe (Langan, 1984). Descriptions are laid out to create new possibilities and meaning which are interpretive descriptions.

As a methodology, hermeneutic phenomenology appropriates itself to human science research by attending to the experience of others both existentially and from a worldly perspective. Fundamentally, my research is interpretive phenomenology (based on Heidegger) while being descriptively oriented towards understanding the essence of what it means to be a second career teacher.

I have used an interpretive approach to existentially understand second career teacher participants' descriptions of their lived experiences. Participants' descriptions are present in the meaning they reflectively give to their lived experience. I will attempt to interpretively and reflectively understand and uncover the sometimes concealed phenomena of what it means to be a second career teacher. I will attempt to articulate participants' existential understanding of themselves and how the process of career change leads to a more heightened awareness. Hermeneutic inquiry as a method in action also plays a part in the research in the process of my own reflective thinking and analysis and this will be brought to light in chapter four.

Through a hermeneutic phenomenological approach, I attempt to meaningfully uncover participants' descriptions of their lived school experiences. I use an existential perspective to bring out the meaning of what it is like to be a second career teacher.

Rationale for methodology

The rationale for using hermeneutic phenomenology comes from a fundamental desire to understand second career teachers' lived experiences from both a philosophical and contextual angle. Context here refers to applying phenomenology in practice—in schools and in teachers. A hermeneutic phenomenological approach allowed the voices of second career beginning teacher participants to come through in all their fullness while still ensuring those voices were being represented faithfully through textual interpretations. As a researcher, I recognized the need to capture the fullness of lived experience through the medium of textual interpretation' (van Manen, 1990, p. 180).

My rationale for using hermeneutic phenomenology can be understood from three main angles. Firstly, my personal orientation and philosophy (and the framing of my research questions) led to my interest in understanding the lifeworlds of second career beginning teachers. This aligned well with hermeneutic phenomenology. Secondly, the presence of possible existential themes in second career teacher reasons and motivations as revealed in prior research also provided a rationale. In using the methodology, I saw the potential to articulate this existential argument further through my research. Thirdly, understanding the experiences of second career practising teachers in schools from a qualitatively philosophical perspective is underrepresented in the research on second career teachers. This provided me with further motivation to pursue the field of inquiry. These rationales are discussed further in the next sections.

To understand second career beginning teachers' lifeworlds

The choice of methodology and method is influenced by, and the need to be in harmony with, the researcher's interest and experience (van Manen, 1990). My personal orientation and philosophy together with my background and experience, particularly as a mature age adult pursuing a second career in the field of education and pedagogy, underpinned my desire to know more about the life journeys of people and their experiences.

Human lifeworld is the lived world we live in and that which we experience in everyday situations and relations. The term 'lifeworld' (English translation of the German term Lebenswelt) comes from Husserl, the philosopher and founder of phenomenology. He referred to it as the individual's "world of immediate experience" and inner world of consciousness (cited in van Manen, 1990, p182). Through phenomenology, one can gain access to individuals' life worlds and describe their experiences of a particular phenomenon. Hermeneutic phenomenology is an attempt "to construct a whole and full interpretative description of some aspect of the life world", though it may not be possible to completely accomplish this (p. 18). Each of us has different lifeworlds (as researcher, as wife, as mother, as friend and so on) to which we orient ourselves and make meaning of our lived experiences.

My research using hermeneutic phenomenology understands the world of an individual, one of whose lifeworlds is that of being a second career teacher. Teacher participants' existence with others such as students and other teachers determines their ways of being in the world as a second career teacher. Teacher participants live in a shared world with other teachers and students and their identity as a teacher is constructed by and defined through

their relations with others and in contexts and situations. Changes in their work environment has led to changes in their work space and in the people they work with. Hermeneutic phenomenology opens up the possibility to grasp and explicate the meaning of being a second career teacher as individuals live their self in their lifeworld in everyday existence.

The motivation to undertake a philosophical approach in my research led me to think deeply about the type of research questions I wanted to ask about second career teachers. I attempted to formulate meaningful research questions regarding second career beginning teachers' way of life in terms of the nature and the essence of their lived experience. My questions needed to make sense both philosophically as well as contextually. In my thinking and reflective questioning process, I realised it was not a particular attribute, aspect or characteristic of teachers or what they bring to the profession that I was interested in, but the teachers themselves in their entirety and what it is 'like' for them to be a second career teacher after having been elsewhere. Hermeneutic phenomenology allowed me to understand this question deeply and clarify my thinking as to what knowledge I was seeking through the research process. It was not just about understanding the teacher participants as second career teachers (in teaching terms) but also understanding what it is that makes it possible for them to be who they are, the essence or what-ness of being a second career teacher and a human being. With a phenomenological approach, I could be open to the possibilities of what I was seeking while being deeply and closely engaged with the core of the problem. The methodology allowed me to question that which I was questioning. "To truly question something is to interrogate something from the heart of our existence, from the centre of our being" (van Manen, 1990, p. 43).

Presence of possible existential themes in career change teachers' reasons and motivations

I also chose hermeneutic phenomenology as a methodology because of what I perceive as the 'existentiality' or the 'human' aspect in career change teachers' reasons and motivations to change professions.

In the process of researching the second career teacher literature, I observed that although teachers' motivations for choosing teaching later in life are complex and personal, there exists a common theme: an intrinsic desire to help students. Second career studies such as Chambers (2002) point out that, "As a group, these teachers are clearly inspired by their intrinsic desire to help students, to give back … and to make schools work better" (p. 214).

Teachers may also refer to teaching as a 'calling' that is beckoning to them, indicating that they are looking to "shape the future of children and make a social contribution" (Watt & Richardson, 2008, p. 420). Hence, I noted that second career teachers' decisions to become teachers are almost always associated with not just thinking about their own self but also thinking about what kind of impact their (career change) decision will have on the lives of others (students). Most of them have made a "conscious choice to shift their careers towards working with youngsters" (Tigchelaar et al., 2008, p. 1546). The career change decision to become a teacher also results in career changers contemplating and thinking of not just their future career but also their future lives and where they want to be.

Hermeneutic phenomenology with its philosophical roots is about understanding humans and how we live our life and what makes us who we are. Second career teachers' decisions to change their course of life to become a teacher may have an existential theme. These mature age individuals reach a point in their lives when they may start to think about their being in the world and the meaning and significance of their existence in terms of their work and their life (Tigchelaar et al., 2008). Their intrinsic desire to change careers to become a teacher involves some deep reflective thinking (about themselves and what they want to do in their lives at this point in time) so that they enter the teaching profession with some awareness and purpose that involves both their self and the students. Their reasons to become a teacher involve both personal intellectual fulfilment as well as making a social contribution. Thus, some of their reasons and motivations can have elements of a higher level philosophical thinking in that they search for and question the meaning in their life and their existence. This finding also led me to consider a hermeneutic phenomenological approach for my research.

A synergy exists between my own research philosophy (to understand teachers' being and becoming in existential terms) and what I found in some of the literature on second career teachers, for instance, their reasons and motivations for choosing the teaching profession. Hermeneutic phenomenology provided the opportunity to further strengthen the above connections by providing a means of understanding career change teachers' ways of being in the world and by enabling me to "probe the innermost subjective interpretations of career changers' teaching and learning" (Tigchelaar et al., 2008, p. 1549). The methodology also opened up ways of understanding how teachers see themselves as human beings, a largely unexplored area particularly in second career teacher literature.

Methodology largely unexplored in second career teacher literature

In general, there is a great deal of research on beginning teachers but very limited research on second career teachers. As I discussed in chapter two, the majority of studies about career change teachers focus on career change students in teacher education rather than on those who are practising classroom teachers.

Hermeneutic phenomenology pursued as an inquiry to understand the nature and essence of a small group of second career practising teachers in schools is largely an unexplored area in research. While the qualitative methods and methodology used in teacher studies such as interviewing, interpretivism and narrative inquiry, have many common features with hermeneutic phenomenology, they are not the same. Moreover, the nature and purpose of previous studies make them quite different to the research approach taken in this study. For instance, Hedrick in her thesis on career switchers used interpretivism to understand the reasons why teachers stay in the profession and the role of the school principal (2005). Lee's (2010) thesis was on understanding the motivations, experiences and perceptions of a group of second career teachers using phenomenology and theories that relate to needs and motivation such as Maslow's and Herzberg's. Watt et al.'s Australian study (2012) of career change teachers' motivations and perceptions used a Factors Influencing Teaching (FIT) choice scale method.

My purpose is to understand how each of the teacher participants see themselves in school as well as how they see themselves as a person now that they have taken on a new professional role. The focus of obtaining thick, rich and meaningful descriptions from a small group of second career beginning teachers after they have changed careers and are practising classroom teachers in schools is virtually absent in prior studies.

In summary, a hermeneutic phenomenological approach is appropriate for the overall goal of the research study. The type of research questions posed in terms of uncovering experiences and representing them from the perspectives of those being represented lend themselves to the chosen methodology. My personal and professional values and theoretical perspectives also influenced the overall conceptual framework in terms of my experiences as an academic researcher and human being. I also found reasons to pursue this methodology based on the current literature on career change teachers. Very few studies had pursued a hermeneutic methodological approach as their line of inquiry. There was also the presence of

possible existential themes in teacher's stories in the literature that could be taken further through this research study.

Use of hermeneutic phenomenology in the research

I have taken both a phenomenological and an interpretive approach in my research because I am interested in the reality of lived human experience as it is appears to me. I now want to convey how I have used what I have understood about this approach and why it makes sense to use phenomenology in this manner in the study of teachers. I have used some of van Manen's terms as my reference point for this purpose to highlight and bring out the nature and essence of what it means to be a second career teacher. I have used hermeneutic phenomenology in two ways.

Firstly, I have used hermeneutic phenomenology in a manner that helps me understand and interpret the 'phenomenological sense' of being a second career teacher. To this end, I have attempted to develop for myself what is called a 'phenomenological attitude'. By this I mean that I read and reflected on the methodology and also attempted to embed the philosophy into my whole being. My own personal experiences of changing careers later in life may have assisted in developing a certain phenomenological attitude – that of orienting to a certain phenomenon-in the context of my own experience. I was also able to examine whether second career teachers themselves had some form of phenomenological orientation in their lives as they changed professions to become a teacher.

Secondly, by viewing phenomenology as a phenomenology of practice in teaching and education, I have used the concept of pedagogy in a phenomenological sense to understand second career teachers and their lived experiences in school. I will describe the two ways in which I have used hermeneutic phenomenology in some detail below.

Phenomenological attitude

Hermeneutic phenomenology has shown me a way to *orient* myself to understanding second career teachers and their experiences from an existential perspective. Orienting in a phenomenological research is always with respect to seeking answers to the essence of a phenomenon. Van Manen refers to this type of orienting as adopting a 'phenomenological attitude' towards the subject matter that one is seeking to understand (1982). In my case, attempting to adopt a phenomenological attitude would allow me to understand the phenomenological sense of being a second career teacher. By developing a phenomenological

attitude, one attempts to answer the question: What counts as knowledge in phenomenology? Rather than signify a behaviour or a disposition or even a personal view, the attitude associated with phenomenology is more like a stance or a manner of holding, and is always *directed or oriented* towards something, in my case the teachers' lived experience (van Manen, 1982). What am I seeking from understanding the lived experience of second career teachers? The very process of questioning the question (my own phenomenological research) allowed me to understand teachers from an existential perspective. The attitude served as a constant reminder of the purpose of my research and what it all means in terms of seeking knowledge. It referred me back to the fundamentals of life itself and what it means to seek this type of knowledge.

When we develop theories of knowledge based on frameworks or models, it takes us away from the lifeworld we belong to. By having a phenomenological attitude, one is mindful of the 'ease' with which we rely too much on theoretical abstractions and principles in our professional endeavours. I allowed myself to be detached or disengaged from the scientific theories and conceptions overlaying the phenomena so that I could bring the nature and essence of second career teachers' pedagogic experiences out into the open. Knowledge speaks through who we are, what we speak, read and write and through our lived experience (van Manen, 1982, p. 298).

Phenomenological attitude also constitutes a form of openness and awareness to what is presented. I am not only open and aware to my own thoughts but I also learned to keep an open mind towards what I was oriented to, that is, teachers' descriptions of their lives. Developing or learning to develop a phenomenological attitude can be viewed as one of the challenges of applying this methodology, yet, it also constitutes a form of academic rigour that is necessary in this type of qualitative research.

Learning to develop a phenomenological attitude as a researcher gave me the ability to understand teachers and their existence in the world from a phenomenological perspective. The methodology provided me with the window to orient towards the source itself, as Husserl would put it, "back to the things themselves" (cited in van Manen, 1990, p. 184). In my case, I oriented myself to the pedagogic life of the pedagogue – the second career teacher participant. Van Manen, an educational philosopher, calls this kind of orienting "pedagogic theorizing"—a way of developing a phenomenological attitude that teaches one "to recognize the grounds that make pedagogic work possible" (1982, p. 298). Such orienting enabled me

to make sense of participants' lived experience and reminded me that they as human beings bring schema and frameworks into their being (van Manen, 1982, p. 297). Pedagogic theorising assisted in taking me back to the actualities of the being of a second career teacher. Having a phenomenological attitude led me to asking the question: What is it like to be a second career pedagogue?

Pedagogic theorising allowed me to question how pedagogy is made intelligible by the pedagogues themselves and whether they think about making any positive pedagogic difference in the lives of students. Thus, developing a phenomenological attitude as a researcher additionally made me think whether mature age individuals who choose to become teachers have themselves a phenomenological orientation in their being and in their actions. What kind of existential understanding (if any) did they have during the course of changing careers to become a teacher? I will go into a little more detail on this in the next point. Suffice to say here that theorising (and developing a phenomenological attitude) about teachers' pedagogic ways of life required me (as a researcher) to reflectively recognise the grounds of the possibilities of pedagogic awareness in teachers. Was it the pedagogy that chose the teacher–pedagogue or vice-versa? A phenomenological attitude also assisted in uncovering the sometimes hidden pedagogic meanings in second career teachers' stories and descriptions. It gave me the ability to pick up subtle nuances that may otherwise have remained hidden, thus helping me to "bring the nature of experience more to light" (Moran & Mooney, 2002, p. 5).

Hermeneutic phenomenology in education—using pedagogy in a phenomenological sense

Phenomenological research is conducted with an eye to the consequences for action (Barritt, Beekman, Bleeker, & Mulderij., 1984, p. 15). A hermeneutic phenomenological approach to understanding second career teachers raises broader questions about the role and purpose of philosophy in education. In my research study, I wanted to understand how people who have come into the teaching profession later in life make meaning of their work experiences as educators and how they view themselves as human beings now as second career teachers. These are philosophical questions that are applied in the discipline of education and to the practice of teaching and teachers. I believe that understanding teachers' lived experience should also be about how we use or practice philosophy in our lives.

Studies that link interpretative phenomenology with the practice of education usually relate their work to Heidegger—to bring in the phenomenological aspect—and Dewey—to bring in the 'role of philosophy in education' (Brook, 2009; Donnelly, 1999). A phenomenological and philosophical approach to education and experience is evident in the works of educational pragmatist John Dewey. As a leading theorist of the progressive education movement, Dewey's writing and teachings have had profound influences on the role of philosophy in education. Dewey's works are extensive and it is not my intention to fully explicate his philosophy. Dewey's educational philosophy was not just a philosophy of his beliefs about what education should look like but also an emphasis on the role that life experience plays in education. Stated broadly, education for Dewey equates to wisdom or the full development of the individual (Archambault, 1964, pxxii). Examining the 'becoming' of a second career teacher is not just a philosophical exercise. It is also about understanding the role and significance that experience plays in teachers' lives as well as in the lives of their students. In chapter six, I examine Dewey's philosophy of education in the context of teachers as educators and explain how I have used Dewey's principles to understand second career teachers in their practice of teaching.

Linking ontology (that is, our ways of being in the world) with teaching practice is an especially difficult task as phenomenology is considered theoretical and abstract while teaching and being a teacher are seen as practical and practice-oriented. Vandenberg attempted to understand the philosophy behind education in terms of teachers' pedagogic obligation (1971). He pointed out that the task is to "waken people who are becoming teachers to awareness of their own being" (p. 10). My research seeks to understand how mature age individuals see themselves as teachers in their pedagogic encounters with students in the school.

Although a phenomenological inquiry can be explored for various purposes and under different domains of inquiry such as existential, historical, ethical, transcendental phenomenologies, one of the purposes in this research is to probe the practical everyday engagement of such an inquiry for human living. Since the research study has a practical focus and application in teachers' experiences in the everyday world, it was important to find the appropriate nexus between philosophy and education. The study can be viewed as a "phenomenology of practice" (van Manen, 2007), contextualised within the discipline of education. Scholars such as van Manen have written about being able to 'apply' the

phenomenological approach in education through the practice of pedagogy and this is what I seek to do in the research. Pedagogy, in a phenomenological sense, brings to bear the practical process of education (van Manen, 1995) through seeking the meaning of lived experience in the pedagogical practices of teachers.

While the research methodology is interpretive phenomenology, I am inquiring and seeking knowledge as observed through the 'medium' of pedagogy. My study is thus both an interpretive phenomenological inquiry and a pedagogical inquiry because I am attempting to understand second career teachers as educators and their meaning-making of their everyday lived teaching experience during their pedagogic encounters with students. My research has borrowed van Manen's understanding of pedagogy in a phenomenological sense in the unpacking of second career teachers' lived experience.

Van Manen says that a phenomenological orienting "gives to educators a certain style of knowing" (1990, p. 154). For educators, pedagogy is a mode of life that is present in them. However, they may not be able to recognise the 'pedagogic' presence. A phenomenological orienting can bring to light this presence. Van Manen calls this knowing (that is revealed through phenomenological orienting), "pedagogic thoughtfulness" and "pedagogic tact" (1991, p. 206). At the highest and most fundamental level, a phenomenological orientation is about educators taking a philosophical and holistic approach to pedagogy and to being a teacher. Being phenomenologically oriented also involves answering to the innermost existential of the pedagogical everyday relationship between teacher and students.

Pedagogy, in a phenomenological sense, is about teachers being full of awareness and sensitivity during every pedagogical situation and in every educational moment in the classroom. In this sense, the pedagogue must continuously and reflectively "redeem, retrieve, regain, or re-capture in the sense of recalling" through reflective, thoughtful action (van Manen, 1982, p. 291). Teachers who are phenomenologically oriented also mindfully embody the subject they teach, constantly reflecting on how they, as pedagogues, impact on students. Pedagogic competence for such teachers is not just teaching children about history or maths but also being able to "help the child grow up and give shape to life by learning what is worthwhile knowing and becoming" (p. 292). The self, as pedagogue, displays qualities of being authentic or truly-human and perhaps most importantly, understanding and making meaning of the ways of being a teacher. The term authentic here signifies a philosophical and phenomenological questioning to one's life and existence.

I am interested in exploring whether teachers in my research display or possess any of these meaningful qualities that I have mentioned above or direct themselves to an authentic existence. For instance, through the research study, I aim to find out if the teachers are oriented towards the students' being and becoming and whether they direct their pedagogical competence to help the students grow. I will examine this in chapter six of the thesis.

Thus, hermeneutic phenomenology allows me to determine the phenomenological sense of being a second career teacher. By attempting to develop a phenomenological attitude, I have used hermeneutic phenomenology to orient myself towards second career teachers' lived experiences and to search for any phenomenological orientation that may exist in the teachers. I have done this by applying pedagogy in a phenomenological sense to uncover the pedagogic qualities that may or may not exist in teachers' being and in their everyday actions. While each teacher's story is unique, what binds them together in this research is an attempt to make phenomenological sense of their self and their experiences. I believe it is possible to understand and illuminate any story in a phenomenological manner that is descriptive and interpretive and this is what makes this methodology unique.

Challenges

> *"Qualitative research is many things to many people. It is a commitment to some version of the naturalistic, interpretive approach to its subject matter … at the same time, the field is shaped by multiple ethical and political positions."*
> *(Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 6)*

Hermeneutic phenomenology is faced with challenges that are similar to any other qualitative human science inquiry. The research presents a dimension of reality that is socially and politically constructed. The data generated are not quantifiable and measurable in scientific terms. There are also other challenges such as the situational constraints that shape inquiry, the value-laden nature of inquiry and interpretive paradigms, notions such as unreliability, subjectivity and individual bias as well as the production of texts that are ambiguous, not precise or rigorous (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; van Manen, 1990). In the following paragraphs I point out some specific challenges associated with hermeneutic phenomenology.

The problematic

Phenomenology as a method is not separable from the essence of what it discloses and hence is both a philosophy and a 'way of doing'. As noted earlier, phenomenology suggests one

always already understands something about lived experience in the meaning that is manifested in the experience prior to any reflective inquiry or thinking. As a method, phenomenological inquiry rests on a "*prior* existential understanding and yet must decide for *itself* the truth about that understanding" (Burch, 1991, p.52). There can be no interpretive or existential understanding of lived experience if there are no experiences to begin with. Additionally, lived experience has always a prior embedded meaning. However, even though participant teachers' lived experience may have a prior existence in the meanings that are embodied in them, a phenomenological inquiry is able to disclose and bring to the fore-front those meanings "within its (the inquiry's) own self-defined limits" (p. 53).

With no clear, pre-set rules to follow, the methodology is a thoughtful procedure of radical inquiry to disclose the truth about being (Burch, 1991, p. 52). Standards of rigour in a phenomenological inquiry are decided and established in relation to what we seeking to understand, the subject matter in question. The inquiry must essentially appropriate itself to what is being sought to be understood. Burch points out that "phenomenology establishes the justification for its procedure in and through its actual process of inquiry into the subject matter and is thus self-defining and self-legitimating" (p. 53).

When we conceive of phenomenology as a method of inquiry that delves into the experiences from the perspective of the participant, challenges associated with subjectivism start to emerge.

Firstly, lived experience descriptions (from the participant perspective itself) are never the same as lived experience itself. Hence, anything other than the lived experience such as recollections, reflections, descriptions, observations are all transformations of the experience. It is not possible to understand lived experience in its original state or form. Describing, recounting or reflecting on lived experience is never the same as when it immediately manifests or occurs. Descriptions and meanings breathes life into the lived experience.

Secondly, others cannot claim to give the same meaning that the self would have given to lived experience, in the same way that others cannot claim to understand someone else better than she understands herself. It would seem that as a researcher, I would never be able to understand or grasp the lived experience of teachers as they live the experience. No amount of phenomenological attentiveness or attitude can bring me to 'know' what it is like to be a second career teacher, since I am not a second career teacher. "It is enough to say that we

understand (others) in a different way, if we understand at all" (Gadamer, 1975, p. 264). Merleau-Ponty describes the embodied nature of our relationship to the world, as body-subjects (1962). The perception of others always develops from my own embodied perspective and thus, I can never share entirely teachers' experience, because their experience belongs to their own embodied position in the world (Smith et al., 2009). Furthermore, I, as the researcher, may not be able to dis-engage myself from the interpretation process of 'objectively' presenting that which is disclosed to me. I may be challenged by my own prior understanding and pre-conceptions.

Given the issue of subjectivism, the challenges for any phenomenological inquiry (that includes an existential understanding and a phenomenological interpretation) are how we know what we claim to know and how we can attempt to disclose and explicate the underlying intelligibility of lived experience that already exists. The task is not to 'discover' a participant or just to report on participants' perspectives or views of their subjective experiences. As Burch reminds us, the self (either the participant or researcher) is always and already implicated in this world in some shared common sense and phenomenology does not "need to reconstruct the conscious intentions and purposes of others" or "put us inside someone's head" (1990, p. 47). Instead, the task for a phenomenological researcher is to attempt to "disclose the truth of selfhood" (p. 48)—that which may consist of a common world of possible meanings—and uncover the essence of 'otherness' through the dimensions of a hermeneutic situation (p. 48). As a researcher, I (hermeneutically) consider the meanings that others give of their lived experience. Hence, when I ask 'what is it like to be a second career teacher?' I am actually inquiring into the meaning of being a second career teacher. The methodology allows me to 'borrow' teachers' experiences (as well as their reflections on their experiences) in order to uncover and understand the full and deep meaning "of an aspect of human experience" (van Manen, 1990, p. 62). No doubt, the meanings that I (as researcher) give will be different from the meanings given by teachers themselves. The important thing is to be open and aware of what I can and cannot bring to the interpretation.

In summary, as a researcher, I am attempting to orient towards teacher participants who are living and re-living their experiences. I have borrowed their experiences and bring hermeneutic meaning to their lived experience. They are lived experience because teachers have lived them and because that is what I (as researcher) hear at present, here and now; they are re-lived experience because teachers' experience that occurred in the past are being re-

lived by them now. While I can imagine what it was like for them when they reflect on their lived experience, I cannot be them; I can get close to their experience but I cannot live their experience in the way they have lived them and in the way they tell me they have lived them. Teacher participants are the story-tellers, not me. And, as we have seen above, even teachers' recounts or re-livings of their lived experience are not the same as the lived experience itself. These encounters and challenges were and will always be a part of my study.

Other challenges

Phenomenological inquiry can sometimes act as a double-edged sword and I have found this to be true in my research experience. On the one hand, the fundamental tenet of such an inquiry is to "let things speak for themselves", while holding at bay all previously held assumptions. However, in the process of pursuing phenomenological research and attempting to understand 'what it is like to be a second career teacher', my assumptions and pre-understandings may come to the fore. It would seem as if I have enough information and "everyday knowledge" through my own existence and interactions with the world to understand and interpret the subject and object of my research even before I have begun the research investigation (van Manen, 1990, p. 46). Hence, though I (as researcher) would like to think that I know very little (which then provides reasons for conducting research), at the same time, pursuing a phenomenological line of inquiry can lead me to believe I already know about what I seek. I believe that anyone conducting phenomenological research cannot escape this dualism that arises because interpretive phenomenology is a human science inquiry. However, as the research progressed and as I found myself orienting towards understanding the essence of being a second career teacher, the path steadily became more focused so that I came to realise the purpose of conducting a phenomenological inquiry. The next section focuses on the kind of academic rigour deemed necessary for this type of research.

Academic rigour: striving for openness and awareness in hermeneutic phenomenology

As discussed above, hermeneutic phenomenology can pose challenges. Hermeneutical understanding is interpretive understanding where human beings who share a common world subjectively interpret their thoughts and experiences (Russell, 2005). It is therefore incumbent upon me as a researcher to strive for a certain academic rigour and quality in my

research study, particularly in the way I use the methodology to understand and interpret teachers' lived experiences.

When one chooses phenomenology as a methodology, one can feel its presence throughout the research journey. For me, the philosophical and existential aspects of questioning filtered into every aspect of the research process including thinking, reflecting, reading and writing, and I found myself immersed in the 'phenomenological way'. To be able to let the 'thing' (or what I was seeking) come to me, it was important that I strive for a certain openness. Hermeneutic phenomenology also requires that the researcher be alert and aware of how the methodology may present itself in the course of the research study. Academic rigour thus constitutes an openness of what is to come and, simultaneously, an awareness and understanding of the various challenges that this methodology can pose. One also needs to demonstrate "sensitivity to context" (Smith et al., 2009, p.180) in a phenomenological inquiry at every step in the research journey, from reading about existing literature to presenting research findings.

The current study is based on a small group of second career teachers and aims to provide a rich source of qualitative data. It requires sensitivity, awareness and dedication during different stages of the research process, such as negotiating access and establishing rapport with participants, during data collection and working with material. In the research, I strived to achieve academic rigour through three methods: critiquing and questioning, bracketing and eidetic reduction.

Critiquing and questioning

As a researcher attempting to describe the nature and essence of the lived experiences of second career teachers in schools, I aim to critique and question that which is familiar in order to see and grasp afresh the world of teachers. The research is more than just a subjective inquiry that presents the subjective experiences of teachers; rather the research aims to have an objective character with a critical spirit. Husserl's famous phrase "to attend directly to the things themselves" means that phenomenology should allow us to be attentive, turning our attention inward to seize the meaning of what is presented in immediate experience, but at the same time, learning to critique and question the meaning itself (cited in van Manen, 1990, p. 184). Turning our gaze inwards is not and should not be a one-off exercise. The inquiry should allow us to return to and re-visit the starting point time and again (Crotty, 1998, p. 85). According to Merleau-Ponty, the phenomenological return to

experience is philosophy—not philosophy as a particular body of knowledge, but philosophy as a reminder that never lets us forget the origin of all our knowledge (cited in Crotty, p. 85).

Inquiring (again and again) into the essence of what it means to be a second career teacher meant that I went back several times to understanding (and re-learning) teachers' historical and social context and this became my source of objective critiquing and questioning as well as access to teacher consciousness. The process allowed me to think and question critically how teachers' past and present contexts were significant (or insignificant) in the understanding of teachers' lived experiences. I strived to maintain an open mind every time I re-visited so that I might be able to detect something that I may have over-looked the previous time. Orienting myself and my thoughts to understanding the history and historical circumstances of the teacher and having that as the focal point also ensures that the study learns and presents more about the teacher as author and their world with less emphasis on the researcher's own pre-conceptions and understanding. I cannot say for certain that I was always able to critique and question; however, my own personal orientation proved to be a reminder to strive for such an inquiry.

Bracketing

In any research study, a researcher will have existing beliefs and assumptions about the topic area. A researcher also keeps abreast of developments in the research space. In my research, I have read studies about teachers and second career teachers and kept myself informed about what is happening in teachers' lives across the world. I also may have made assumptions and come to understand second career teachers in my own way based on what they said and how it was conveyed to me.

A phenomenological inquiry teaches us to bracket or 'turn away' from what we know or claim to know. To bracket something is to suspend or put aside any prior assumptions, beliefs and feelings about the phenomenon being studied in order to be able to experience something in its purest form 'as it is' (Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Russell, 2005). In the research process, bracketing can enable the researcher to experience something in its fullest and purest form with the aim of evoking the concreteness or the essential structures of the world. When self-preconceptions and beliefs about what is real (or that which seems real) are bracketed, the experience becomes a living part of consciousness and leads to a mode of thoughtful attentiveness. Bracketing (the taken-for-granted-ness in the research phenomenon) also means stepping back from the pre-conceptions about how a second career teacher should be

or look like or behave so that one is able to experience an immediate sense of wonder at what is presented. "The way to knowledge and understanding begins in wonder" (van Manen, 2011a). For instance, having changed careers myself, I found myself having a renewed sense of energy and focus to make my (second) career a success. While I was attentive to my thoughts, the process of bracketing allowed me to hear (and experience surprise in hearing) career change teachers' voices and their varied conceptions on how they viewed themselves when they changed careers.

Turning away, however, does not mean one should ignore available theories and bodies of knowledge. Instead, what is needed is to be attentive and to examine theories for any phenomenological insights and understandings that may be hidden and to assess whether they inform experience in a lived or a concrete sense. For instance, I became attentive to other studies that had a phenomenological focus to gain insights and understandings. Such examination and discussion strengthens one's own orientation to the essence of the lived experience as we learn to strip away scientific constructs that may overlay the phenomenon to be studied. Being attentive to the various constructs meant I learnt to distinguish between the many layers of theorising that appeared 'real' and the actual essence of the phenomenon, that is, what it means to be a second career teacher.

I also learnt to bracket interpretations and overcome subjective feelings by reflecting on my own pre-understandings and biases whilst searching for genuine openness. Essentially, this means to practise critical self-awareness while recognising that forgetting is not possible but needs questioning and explication. For instance, I sometimes felt that I might be in a better position to describe teachers' stories because I, as researcher, could relate to what teachers went through and could identify with what they had experienced from my own personal experiences of career change. Whilst it was not possible for me to forget what I felt and what I thought I knew, the awareness of this subjectivity led me to question myself and my understandings.

I slowly practiced the art of being aware and conscious of my own biases and learnt to put them to one side. I attempted to pursue an unbiased openness in the critical inquiry into the nature and essence of being a second career teacher. I attended to reflecting not only on what appeared before me as teachers' lived experiences but I also attended to what I should not reflect, such as what I knew from prior research studies or my own knowledge about teachers. Reflection requires phenomenological 'attentiveness' that is thoughtful. However,

this can be difficult to practice given the very nature of research and research learning. Again, I cannot claim that I was able to completely bracket my prior assumptions or beliefs but it is a goal that I strived to achieve in my research.

Academic rigour through 'eidetic reduction'

A phenomenological interpretive inquiry is also about striving to see past the particularity of the lived experience in focus to move toward the 'universal essence' (eidos). This is not to generalise about human nature but to bring to light possible experiences that are presumed to be shared by all humans (van Manen, 1990, p. 185; 2011b).

The research study is about a certain group of second career teachers with their own particular and unique lifeworlds and experiences. The task is not to focus on bringing out meaningful experiences in a manner that is similar or comparable to other second career teachers. However, it is imperative to demonstrate qualitative rigour. Eidetic reduction helped me to achieve this. In the research, I attempted to use the process of 'eidetic reduction' (and thus inquire into other possibilities) by exploring lived experience in a different setting—understanding the phenomenon of mature age individuals who have changed careers other than teaching. Through researching the literature, I attempted to inquire into possible human experiences for career change professionals in other fields and to understand whether shared meaning or identifiable themes exist that move us closer towards 'eidos'. The idea is to provide insight into lived meaning that may be universally recognisable while at the same time appreciating the uniqueness of this group of second career teachers.

To summarise, I cannot deny my own subjective influences and I do not seek to erase them or present claims about experience and/or knowledge that are free from valuations as these are inevitable in phenomenological research. Furthermore, van Manen (1990) reminds us that there is nothing determinate or fixed about phenomenological meaning—it is always tentative and incomplete. Returning to lived experience again and again means things are always open to question and critique. However, I strived to be conscious and aware of all my influences as well as trying to maintain an openness with a certain attentiveness. Heshusius uses the term "participatory consciousness", to describe "an attitude of profound openness and receptivity: a temporary letting go of all pre-occupation with the self to enable complete attention" (1994, p. 17). While striving for critical reflection does not necessarily mean that it is possible to disengage myself completely, a phenomenological attitude can "subtlety work

to sharpen a lens of objectivity unexpectedly available despite the overwhelming degree of subjectivity embedded in the actual process of uncovering" (Thomson, 2008, p. 4).

To conclude, in this chapter, I have explained my application of hermeneutic phenomenology as an interpretive phenomenology. The methodology is not just a philosophy about our engagement with the world but is also a way of doing. Hermeneutic phenomenology has been called a "praxis philosophy" (Burch, 1990, p. 34). In the remaining chapters of this thesis I demonstrate how I have used hermeneutic phenomenology as a phenomenology of practice to understand, describe and interpret teachers' lived experiences and the meanings of those experiences. I show how I have tried to meaningfully interpret participant's descriptions of their lived experiences. Throughout the research I acknowledge that a phenomenological approach is not without challenges and I have strived to be aware of and attentive to them. In the next chapter I set out the research design and data analysis procedures.

Chapter 4

Research Design and Procedures

Chapter overview

In the previous chapter, I outlined the methodology for the research study. The hermeneutic phenomenological approach taken in the study is both a philosophy and a methodology for inquiring into human science research. Phenomenology gives the methodology a philosophical framework but the methodology is guided by the rules and procedure that are associated with research practice.

While the research purpose and research questions inform the thesis study, the use of hermeneutic phenomenology as a methodology means that every chapter in the thesis adopts an existentialist as well as an interpretive perspective. This includes the present chapter on research design.

In this chapter, I describe the research design and data analysis procedures setting out the details and significance of the process of planning and conducting my research study. In the first section (research design principles), I outline the phenomenological principles that have guided the process of my research study. The interview structure and process (guided by van Manen's (1990) methodological principles and Seidman's (1991, 2013) work on phenomenological interviewing) will be described. I chose to gather the lived experiences of the teachers through in-depth individual interviews. I also provide a profile of the seven teacher participants in the study.

In the second section (data analysis and interpretation), I detail the interpretive and phenomenological processes undertaken in the analysis of the data. I elaborate on how I have analysed the interview texts to bring out well-developed and meaningful themes based on the participants' descriptions of their lived experiences. My final analysis and interpretation is woven around the phenomenological themes of relationality and spatiality.

Later in the chapter I explore the challenges that I faced in the process of qualitative data design and analysis. I outline the ethical guidelines and ethical procedures and conduct adopted during the entire research design process. The chapter concludes by describing the rigour and quality checks that I put in place and which form part of not only the research design process but which apply throughout the study.

Research design principles

Phenomenological principles guiding the study

In a phenomenological inquiry, there is no clear pre-determined path that leads us to our destination. The paths and the destination are to be discovered in the course of the phenomenological research journey. However, while no pre-determined set of fixed research procedures, techniques or concepts exist, philosophers, theorists and practitioners such as van Manen have laid down principles that can be "considered as a set of guidelines and recommendations" to assist in reaching the goal, which is to reveal and clarify the essential nature of a phenomenon (van Manen, 1990, p. 29). This study is guided by the six methodological principles described by van Manen (1990, pp. 30-31):

1. Turning to the nature of lived experience
2. Investigating the experience as one lives it
3. Reflecting on essential themes
4. Describing the phenomenon through text
5. Having a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon
6. Balancing the research context by considering parts and whole

The principles tell us how to conduct hermeneutic phenomenological research, offering "practical approaches" to human science inquiry (p. 30). The steps or activities follow a sequential path and guide the researcher, from identifying a "phenomenological question" to making sense of the phenomenon, through developing existential and meaningful themes with pedagogical orientations (p. 42).

These phenomenological principles have guided me in my research journey with the seven second career teacher participants. They have also served as reminders to be re-visited particularly during the research design and analytic process. The principles served to infuse a phenomenological attitude in me that I carried throughout the study. I view the principles as having a broad significance that penetrated into every aspect of the research study. I believe

that all the principles carry an underlying message: that of orienting towards the essence of the phenomenon, or, that which I am seeking. The principles served as a constant reminder to orient myself to the basic research question in a phenomenological way. What is it like to be a second career beginning teacher? In this sense, the principles are not sequential but should be considered as a whole whose influence is felt throughout every chapter of the thesis.

As well as the "practical suggestions" offered by these principles (van Manen, 1990, p. 34), van Manen emphasises that the critical moments of a phenomenological inquiry depend on the "interpretive sensitivity, inventive thoughtfulness, scholarly tact, and writing talent of the researcher" (p. 34). The principles enabled me to embrace inventiveness and to be constantly questioning the purpose of my research.

The principles were a source of insight into the possibilities of conducting a phenomenological research study. They also guided my analytic process. For instance, the third principle guided me in the process of phenomenological theorising as I continually oriented myself to existentially understanding the lived experiences of second career teacher participants. A necessary and inevitable component of phenomenological research is for the self, as researcher, to think, attend to, reflect and act in a phenomenologically oriented manner to be able to get to the "things themselves" (Husserl, cited in van Manen, 1990, p. 184)- the essence of the phenomenon. I found myself critically reflecting on and repeatedly questioning the lived experience to draw out themes and meanings. The fourth principle helped me represent my thinking and research textually in a phenomenologically oriented way, while principles five and six ensured that I anchored myself in a pedagogical orientation to understand the phenomenological way of being a second career teacher.

The second principle ("investigating experience as one lives it") examines the aspect of borrowing "lived experience material" (van Manen, 1990, p. 53) in research design for the purpose of understanding or making sense of a certain phenomenon. My mode of inquiry and access to the lived experiences of second career teacher participants is phenomenological interviewing.

My research design is based on my choice of methodology and my theoretical assumptions set out in the previous chapter. I seek to understand second career teachers' lived experiences as it emerges and unfolds in everyday situations where teachers are "naturally engaged" in their worlds (van Manen, 1990, p. 18). I believe that the design of the inquiry is also an

opportunity to enrich my understanding of this group of second career teachers and can provide a platform for their voices to be heard.

Participant selection criteria

My sample of second career teachers was selected purposively. The teachers selected were able to provide first-hand accounts and access to perspectives into their lived experiences that are rich, detailed and illuminative (Crotty, 1998; Smith et al., 2009). Teacher participants were selected because they had direct experience of the nature and essence of the phenomenon being investigated. I wished to ensure equal representation of both genders; however, this was not achieved, perhaps reflecting the gender imbalance in the teaching sector.

Seven second career school teachers participated in the research study, five were female and two were male (see Table 1, p. 104).

My selection criteria (based on Eifler & Pothoff's definition of career change teachers as indicated in the literature review chapter, page 18) were that I wished to interview mature age individuals who had entered the teaching profession as a second career and who were older than 25 years of age. Since the research study was also focused on understanding the lived experience of these individuals as new entrants to teaching, I sought to interview teachers who had been teaching for three to four years or less to obtain the beginning teacher perspective. Choosing those who had been in the teaching profession for longer than four years might have meant that they would not have been able to recall how the experience of being a teacher differed from their experience in their prior career. I wanted participants to talk about both the hopes and challenges of starting out as a teacher and about what they bring to the profession as a second career individual and how they see themselves in that role.

Six of the second career teachers—Amy, Tasfia, Matthew, Jim, Kate and Sharon (not their real names)—had been employed in another profession prior to teaching. Elizabeth (not her real name) had not been employed immediately prior to undertaking the teacher training program. Apart from Jim, who was in the fourth year of teaching when he was interviewed, the other participants were either in their second or third year of teaching. The study aims to provide a balance between understanding the second career teacher perspective and the beginning teacher perspective.

I was eager to interview second career teachers who were teaching in a variety of specialist subject areas. In the case of second career teachers, the subject that they teach may or may not be closely related to their prior degree qualifications. Nevertheless, I wanted to be able to get different perspectives based on the subjects they teach at their schools. I was only partially successful in meeting this criterion since four of the seven participants taught either mathematics or physics.

My selection criteria allowed for individuals whose prior careers were from any field other than school teaching. There are many different types of second career individuals who enter the teaching profession later in life and I did not want to restrict my research to a particular group of career changers.

As my primary interest was in understanding the lived experiences of career changers, I was open to participants who had entered the teaching profession as a second (or even third) career, having previously worked in a field or a career other than being a school teacher. A broad definition of a career changer allowed me to not only include individuals with qualifications in another field who had worked elsewhere prior to becoming a teacher but also individuals who had changed careers after having been out of the workforce for some time due to family commitments. I wished to interview teachers from a variety of backgrounds and prior careers to observe how the differences in their prior lives might (or might not) play a role in their descriptions. I believe the diversity in teachers' prior careers provided for richer and deeper perspectives and understanding of career change teachers in the classroom. A qualitative study requires the researcher to be open and flexible, ensuring the sample is wide enough so "that a diversity of types is explored" (Bogden & Biklen, 1998, p. 61). The seven participants who were interviewed for the study came from diverse previous careers before becoming a teacher for the first time. The study has benefitted from the rich experiences and the diversity of these seven individuals who each came from a different background.

I also felt that it was necessary to select teacher participants who had been in a previous career or careers for a certain minimum length of time (in this case, four years was thought to be reasonable) in order to understand their perspectives about choosing teaching as a second career. The period of time in their previous role also ensured that participants were able to draw on their prior experiences in considerable detail and describe how and in what ways they used their prior experiences in their current role. The number of years of working experience for the seven career change teacher participants ranged from four to eleven years.

I sought to select the sample of second career teacher participants from different schools in the state of New South Wales (NSW), Australia. I also sought teachers from both primary and secondary schools in the public and private sector and from schools from various locations and diverse socio-economic backgrounds. While every effort was made to seek teachers in an equal proportion from primary and high school, this could not be achieved, perhaps highlighting the fact that there are more second career teachers in secondary high school than in primary school. Six of the seven teachers in my sample taught at a secondary school. At the time of the interview(s), four teachers (Tasfia, Matthew, Jim, and Sharon) taught in public state high schools in NSW, Australia. Amy was a teacher at a K–12 independent girls' school[1] while Elizabeth taught in a Catholic independent school. Kate was the only second career teacher teaching at a primary level in one of the state's primary schools. She was a Year One teacher, teaching children aged six to seven years.

While I did not have an exact number of participants in mind when I framed the criteria for second career teacher participants, I did not wish to have more than ten participants in order to be able to carry out an in-depth study into their lives and school experiences. While as a group, the teachers are characterised as 'second career' teachers, it is essential to note that each of them possesses unique characteristics and each has unique experiences and varied backgrounds. The only feature common to the participants is that they had all taken up teaching as a second (or third) career. I welcomed the diversity and richness of experiences brought in by participants. I felt it was important that the analysis should do justice to each of the participants, with their stories treated with due respect. My focus is to provide a deep and rich perspective on each of their unique lives with all the complexities that exist in human phenomena. The second career teachers who were interviewed represent a "perspective" that is unique, rather than a population (Smith et al., 2009, p. 49).

I also thought it appropriate not to include second career teachers with overseas teaching qualifications. Including overseas trained second career teachers would have introduced variables that fell outside the purposes of this research. The seven teacher participants satisfied teacher registration requirements in Australia.

[1] The schooling system in Australia begins at Kindergarten (aged 5 to 6 years), with students completing their education in Year 12 (aged 17 to 18).

I was aware that decisions about participant selection were also influenced by the practical problems of locating second career teachers, being able to access them and their willingness and availability. As a researcher, I needed to be pragmatic as well as flexible in terms of the inclusion criteria. All of the teacher participants were teachers in urban schools in NSW, Australia. Schools were spread across a wide geographical area around the city of Sydney.

Defining career changers as someone who is over 25 years or who has substantial life experience including career and family was not to suggest that one criterion was more important than another. It was simply to ensure that participants with varied life and work experiences were represented. For instance, one of the participants (Elizabeth) had not previously participated in the labour force in the same manner as other participants. I felt that she was a suitable participant to be interviewed for the study since she brought varied experiences, including raising a family, to the research and it would still be significant to understand her lived experience as a second career teacher.

To summarise, then, I was successful in meeting all or most of the criterion that I had initially set out based on 'homogeneous purposive sampling' (Smith et al., 2009). The seven participants entered the profession as mature age individuals and with prior career and other life experiences. They were also mature age beginning teacher participants who were teaching in varied schools and had been in a prior career for a minimum of four years.

Access to teacher participants

My main method of gaining access to suitable teacher participants was through contacts or referrals provided through my supervisor and other university academics in the teacher education faculty to which I belong. After obtaining ethics approval and clearance to proceed from the University's Human Ethics Research Committee, I drafted a brief information letter about the research study (based on the criterion outlined above). I gave this letter to academics who had access to second career teachers either directly or through other contacts (Appendix A). The information letter was kept brief to elicit interest in participation in the study. The letter also contained my contact details for those interested in participating in the study. I also have contacts in other universities in their education faculties and made my interest known to them along with the information letter.

In total, I received 12 responses from teachers indicating their interest in participating in the study. Although all of the respondents were second career teachers, four of them did not

fit with the research criteria because they had been second career teachers for more than five years. One teacher later withdrew due to time commitments. The other seven teacher participants were willing to share their experiences. I was aware of the importance of the teachers' willingness to participate whole-heartedly in the study and I appreciated their responses. After all, "meaningful human research is impossible without the full understanding and cooperation of the respondents" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 105).

Access to second career teachers in the study has been limited to the contacts provided by academics at one university and by my contacts in another university. Two of the teacher participants who were interviewed came from the same school but different departments. This may or may not have influenced some of the responses they gave and the consequent analytical themes that came out of those responses.

A hermeneutic phenomenological research with the purpose of investigating the essence of a phenomenon does not in any way propose making generalisations from the research findings. It is not the objective of this study to speak for any other second career teacher or to come to any type of generalised observations from the discussions arising out of this group of second career teachers. The purpose is to represent a group of second career teachers through descriptive and meaningful interpretations of their lived experiences.

The study is based on this group of seven teachers who have changed careers and on their lived experiences in schools. This is their story.

Phenomenological interviewing

What is it? What does it mean in the research?

My research interest in understanding the lifeworlds of second career teachers and my research questions derived from this interest are the underlying foundation for my phenomenological approach and methodology. As van Manen notes, "the lifeworld, the world of lived experience, is both the source and the object of phenomenological research" (van Manen, 1990, p. 30). The description of the lifeworld of second career teachers and the meaningful interpretations that come out of those descriptions occurs first and foremost during the research interview and this forms the basis of the textual and analytic representations.

Interviews are the key to any form of qualitative educational research (Dilley, 2004). I am interested in teachers' stories because they are about people and their experiences. Interviewing teacher participants to understand their lived experience is consistent with my methodology and research questions. Interviews allow access to participants' experiences and provide the opportunity to then describe the world as experienced by the participants through hermeneutic analysis. As Kvale puts it:

> *The qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subject's point of view, to unfold the meaning of people's experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations. (Kvale, 1996, p. 1)*

In-depth interviews can lead to a more conscious awareness of the power of the social and organizational content of people's experiences. (Seidman, 2013)

Interviews allowed me direct and open access to teacher participants' worlds, where they can speak and be heard. I believe that it is important to treat interviews as a research method that can enrich and broaden the "conceptions of knowledge and research in the social sciences" (Kvale, 1996, p. 10). This stems from my own epistemological beliefs about the nature of knowledge being subjective, naturalistic and based on personal experience and insight that is more of a personal nature, rather than objective and impersonal. Through a philosophical approach, my study aims to present alternative conceptions of social knowledge and of meaning and reality in human science research and gain insight into educational, social and human issues (Kvale, 1996, p. 10; Seidman, 2013, p. 13).

Phenomenological interviews have essentially the same purpose as other qualitative based research interviews, that is "to obtain descriptions of the lifeworld of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena" (Kvale, 1996, p. 6). In a phenomenological study, being with the participant provides opportunities to engage deeply with them in order to share and re-live experiences. Such engagement is critical to a deep understanding of human experience and for the gathering of rich experiential material arising out of those interactions. To this effect, qualitative interviews have a philosophical or existential purpose, with underlying themes such as meaning, experience and lifeworld. The phenomenological characteristics make the qualitative interview consistent with the aims of my research.

A phenomenological inquiry provides for a mode of understanding of both the person and the content. My research study inquires into the lived experiences of seven second career teachers and into the meanings they give to their being. Borrowing participants' experiences enables me, in my phenomenological research, to come to an in-depth understanding of the meaning and significance of being a second career teacher. I, as researcher, therefore become more experienced and enrich my understanding (van Manen, 1990, p. 62).

The research study's design and procedures have been informed by the works of Seidman (1991, 2013) and Kvale (1996) and their approach to in-depth interviewing. Their understanding about the nature of a qualitative interview has phenomenological and interpretive themes that are consistent with my research objectives. Since a range of approaches to a phenomenological inquiry are possible, it is useful to set out what phenomenological interviewing means to me in my study and the value it contributes to the discussion on second career teachers. To me, phenomenological interviewing means the following:

- Reminding myself constantly of the purpose of conducting the research and the interview—i.e. to understand, describe and interpret teachers' descriptions of their lived experiences and the meanings that exist in those descriptions. I have striven to constantly keep in mind the fundamental question that I am seeking to understand about second career teachers: What is it like to be a second career teacher? This is the essence of the phenomenon that I am investigating.
- Continuing to develop an orientation towards teacher participants and their lifeworlds so that I am closer to what I am seeking. Being oriented means to be open and attentive to whatever I hear. Being oriented means to be aware of what influences me and learning to bracket my prior knowledge and presuppositions as much as possible so that I can hear the participants' voices rather than my own. Being oriented means recognising the nature of interview and the sensitivity it requires, so that I treat interviewing as more than just reporting on the subjective experiences of the second career teacher participant. Being oriented means not just to inquire but also to critique and question the meaning of lived experience itself to get to the essence of the phenomenon. Being oriented also means recognising that interviews have theoretical underpinnings in terms of the knowledge that is constructed and the enrichment we are seeking (Kvale, 1996). A phenomenological access to teacher participants'

knowledge and the meanings that are generated from within their lived experiences can be used to enhance knowledge production in the fields of education and social sciences.

- Recognising the interview process as a relationship between the teacher participant, myself and the content (that is, teachers' descriptions of experiences) and acknowledging the role of language in this relationship. Interviewers and participants are never equal and their wants (and needs) from the interview process are different. Yet a sense of fairness and justice should pervade the relationship. As Seidman points out, "Being equitable in interviewing research means infusing a research methodology with respect for the dignity of those we interview and value for the words they say because those words are deeply connected to that participant's sense of worth" (2013, p. 111). I have striven to be conscious of the equities (and inequities) that may exist and my role in them.
- Recognising that all the answers I am looking for will not just be revealed in the interview itself. The interview is a means to uncover the 'things themselves' and serves as a resource for developing a richer, deeper understanding of second career teachers. Lived experience that is phenomenologically explored in interview research is then represented textually (which presents a way of gaining access to the essence of experience) through hermeneutic meaning-making. Language, therefore, in the form of data analysis (the art of hermeneutic interpretation to get access to the essence) plays a crucial role in the phenomenological research process. Understanding teacher participants and their lifeworlds goes beyond the interviewing and into how lived experience and the meanings ascribed are hermeneutically interpreted and textually represented.
- Being aware of the inherent challenges that exist in the methodology and what interpretive phenomenology can or cannot achieve during interviewing. I saw the following challenges:
    1. Human experience is reconstructed and re-lived in the fleeting moment of time that is the interview. It is thus temporal and transitory, being effectively an interplay between the past, present and future in that one moment of re-constructing human experience (Seidman, 2013, p. 16).
    2. Whose understanding? As the researcher striving to capture participants' experience from their point of view, I acknowledged that I could not hope to

understand the participants and their experiences in the manner in which they understood themselves.

3. Whose meaning of lived experience? While meanings always already exist in lived experience, the art of re-living experience by participants brings into the open the meanings that exist. In addition, as the researcher, through the art of hermeneutics I attempted to bring out those meanings that may lie hidden or implicit. The subsequent process of interpreting the meaning of these "negotiated interpretations" thus forms the literary text which again may be "conceived as a dialogue with the text" (Kvale, 1996, p. 46).

Interview process and informed consent

The seven second career teachers who expressed interest in participating in the research project were sent a formal invitation letter (Appendix B). The letter introduced them to the project with a brief statement of the purpose of the research, the nature of their involvement including the number and duration of the interviews, and use of information in the thesis and thesis-related publications. The letter explained that their confidentiality and privacy would be protected by the use of pseudonyms in all publications resulting from the research. The letter also informed teachers of the minimal risk factors present in the study while at the same time noting that participants' concerns and feelings would be treated with utmost care and sensitivity during the interview. Participants were also informed of their rights to stop the interview and withdraw participation from research at any time should they wish to do so. My contact and my supervisor's contact details were provided to participants should they wish to ask questions or have any concerns about the research project and their participation.

Once interview dates and location were agreed on, I emailed the participant consent form (Appendix C) to the seven teacher participants. Participants were to bring the signed consent form with them to the interview. All seven teachers signed the consent form. Along with the consent form, I gave participants the opportunity by email to put forward any concerns or queries they might have had about any aspect of the study or the interview.

A few days before the interview, along with the consent form, the participants were also emailed a sample of questions (Appendix D), as well as a brief quotation from Spradley (see below). The objective was to depict the nature of the interview and the framework of the study through the sample questions and quotation. Briefing the participants in advance about the nature of the interview not only provided the opportunity for both the participants and

myself to 'break the ice' but also created a catalyst for participants to reflect prior to the interview if they chose to do so, and to seek any clarification they may have needed at this point. The quotation emailed to the teacher participants was this:

> *I want to understand the world from your point of view. I want to know what you know in the way you know it. I want to understand the meaning of your experience, to walk in your shoes, to feel things as you feel them, to explain things as you explain them.*
> *(Spradley, cited in Kvale, p. 125)*

As the next step, I sought to schedule dates and locations for the interviews. The location and environment where interviews are conducted play an important role when human experience is researched. The participants needed to be comfortable in the surroundings and spatial environment. I was guided by their choice of interview location. Of the seven teacher participants who agreed to the interview, three chose to have the interview at an outside location while four participants were interviewed in their respective schools. The outside location was mutually agreed. In the case of two interviews, this was a local library and in the third case, it was at the university campus where I was a research student. The teacher participant in this case was a recent graduate of the teacher education program at that university. I booked a private room in the local library and in the university library. In the case of the other four participants who chose to be interviewed in their respective schools, a private conference room was made available with the exception of one participant who preferred to have the interview in her classroom after school hours.

I was mindful of the physical location and setting of the interview and was guided by what the participants felt was most convenient and comfortable for them. I was aware that the context of the conversation including participants' descriptions of their lived experiences could be affected by the physical location. Accordingly, I ensured that each of the seven second career teacher participants was made to feel at ease and I adhered to the same interview principles and ethical guidelines irrespective of location. I was thus able to gather rich and unique experiences in that moment in time and place. For instance, in the case of the participant who chose her own classroom, I was able to witness both spoken and 'visual' narrations as she 'transported' herself to describe a certain experience that she had with students in the place called classroom. The interpreted meanings that came out of those 'lived' descriptions proved to be very significant in my discussion and analysis of the data.

Teachers lead busy lives, managing a multitude of tasks each day. I was mindful of the busy lives of my teacher participants when I thought about the interview duration. My study is based on gathering rich and meaningful descriptions from a small sample of second career teacher participants. I wished to be able to have sufficient time to probe detailed and meaningful responses from participants. Guidelines on qualitative in-depth interviews generally suggest about an hour to ninety minutes duration (Seidman, 2013; Silverman, 2010). In keeping with the guidelines, I suggested to the participants an hour to an hour and a half as the duration of the interview. I was aware that some interviews might be either shorter or longer and took this into account in my interview preparation. Almost all of the interviews I conducted were a minimum of an hour. Some went for longer but the maximum duration was one and a half hours. I was also aware that the length of the interview would not be determined only by the moment at which the recorder was switched on. The interview would last from the time when I first met the participant to the end when we said our farewells and departed.

Often, in a phenomenological study, rich information can be disclosed at the very beginning and/or towards the end after the recorder is turned off. In my study, the duration of the interview was sufficient for teachers to reflect and re-live their experiences at various moments and in the manner which enabled me to describe them and draw meaningful interpretations. With some of the participants, their conversations before and after the recordings proved to be insightful for my data analysis. Participants were aware of my use of the data in this way when I sent the entire transcript to each of them to verify and check and they gave me permission to use the data in the research.

Researcher preparation—becoming oriented to interviews

Aside from being knowledgeable about the research topic and the methodological options, a qualitative research interviewer also needs to have a "grasp of the conceptual issues of producing knowledge through conversation" (Kvale, 1996, p. 13). A phenomenological inquiry requires that the researcher in the qualitative interview process is adequately prepared and orients himself/herself to not only what is sought during the interview but to the process of conducting the interview. Preparing and orienting myself to the interview process constituted a form of objectivity in my research. By remaining faithful and oriented to what I was seeking, I attempted to accomplish objectivity (van Manen, 1990, p. 20). Researcher preparation can also serve as a way to maintain rigour and discipline in the research design

process. Power relations between researcher and participant inherently exist in any human science inquiry and I have strived to be mindful of this "privileged access" (Kvale, 1996, p. 125) to teachers' lived worlds. To this end I took the following steps:

- I re-visited the research questions to remind myself what I was seeking to understand. Re-visiting and reflecting on the research questions provided me with a critical frame of reference for the interview. I had also emailed teacher participants a set of questions to familiarise them with the research study. I further unpacked those questions, constantly reflecting on the specificity and at the same time on the spontaneity that I was seeking from teachers' descriptions of their lived experiences.
- I practised scenarios of how to guide the conversation and elicit information from teachers such as asking follow-up questions or following up on promising leads as well as seeking clarification where appropriate. However, I was also aware that in phenomenological research, things present themselves as we seek them but meanings can also emerge as the conversation proceeds.
- As I reflected on the interview setting, I wrote and re-wrote a set of guidelines and reminders. The guidelines included showing empathy and sensitivity at all times, making participants comfortable and being respectful of boundaries. As well, I reminded myself of the inequities in the relationship and the need to maintain fairness and justice, recognising participants as "ends of worth in and of themselves" (Seidman, 2013, p. 141).
- I reminded myself to be constantly aware of the need to listen to the voices (both outer and inner) of second career teacher participants and to "explore, not probe" (Seidman, 2013, p. 86). I needed to allow them to reflect on and re-live the moment in order for me to understand their lived daily world. I needed to be attentive to what was said between the lines.
- I strived to reflect on ways to 'bracket' or put on hold my prior knowledge and any assumptions that I brought to or might develop during the interview. Although "bracketing" (van Manen, 1990, p. 175) in phenomenological research is an ongoing as well as a developmental process at every stage of the inquiry, it can be challenging to achieve during the data gathering process, particularly in a one-on-one interview setting.

- I ensured I was aware and conscious of what is or is not possible, the limitations that can exist in an interview setting as well as the need to keep an open mind to the possibilities that awaited me.
- In the days prior to the interview, I refreshed and practised the interview scenario. In particular, I paid attention to the initial introductions and ethical reminders.
- I took to the interview a 'reminder interview structure format' to refresh my memory both at the beginning and during the course of the interview.
- I also took to the interview a set of prepared questions based on broad categories that I hoped to explore with the teacher (Appendix E).

Ethical conduct during the interview

The closeness in an interview situation can present challenges such as how far to go in the questioning process. It may also lead to unforeseen consequences where the participant may disclose information that may later be regretted (Kvale, 1996, p. 116).

After introductions and obtaining the signed consent form from the teacher participant, I re-iterated the details contained in the formal information letter. In particular, I emphasised that participants' names or other details would not be identified in any way in the thesis and publications and that only pseudonyms would be used. I reminded them of their freedom to ask questions or voice concerns they may have and I noted that they were free to stop the interview at any time. I sought permission from the participant to record the interview as well as write notes as required.

I also strived to maintain good ethical work practices in all my correspondence with teacher participants, taking care to respond with responsibility and sensitivity. The rapport and trust that had been created during the interview continued during my correspondence with participants at all times, such as when I shared the transcripts of the interview with each one or when I contacted participants for the second time by email. For instance, I reminded participants of their freedom to change or edit any part of the interview transcript that I had sent them after the interview. During the second email exchange I reminded participants that their identities were protected and invited them to ask for any clarification or concerns they might have about any aspect of the study. I felt it was important to err on the side of formality rather than familiarity in the relationship (Seidman, 1991, p. 74)).

Interview structure

The interview structure consisted of one-on-one in-depth interview with each of the seven career teacher participants. I had hoped to carry out two face to face in-depth interviews with each of the participants in order to be able to fully comprehend their teaching world and their lives. At the same time, I was mindful of participants' commitments and their ability to take time out for two in-depth interviews. As beginning teachers with a full teaching load, it was hard to ask any more of their time other than what they were willing. After drafting the interview questions, I felt I would be able to gather sufficient rich data in my first interview. Further to the one-on-one interviews with each of the participants, I contacted the participants for a second interview via email a year after the first interview. I received email responses from four participants. This is discussed under 'teachers re-visited'.

The interview structure was developed in light of van Manen's methodological principles as outlined earlier (1990) and framed around the two research questions: What is the nature and essence of experiences of a group of second career beginning teachers in schools? What kinds of influences do second career beginning teachers' past experiences have on their current role as teachers? The interview process was informed by Seidman's (1991, 2013) work on phenomenological interviewing as a means of eliciting and capturing the nature and essence of lived experience in a spontaneous and natural manner. My framework and interview structure including interview questions were guided by his technique. I found Seidman's three-interview series meaningful in achieving the overall research study objective. Seidman (2013) recommends three interviews: one focused on life history of the participant; one focused on the details of participants' experience and one focused on the participant's reflection on the meaning.

I recognised the importance of all three types of focus explicated by Seidman. I felt that the questions in the first interview could focus on both the participants' life history and their experience details. At the same time, I recognised that, having established the foundations for reflective meaning making in the first interview, I needed to give participants time to reflect on the meaning of their lives in terms of the lived experience (Seidman, 2013, p. 22). Hence, I decided on the time gap of one year between interviews for participants to gather their thoughts and share new experiences. I felt that it was appropriate that the questions with a focus on meaning-making be approached in the second interview.

While the sequence of the interviews is significant given the purpose and focus of the two interviews, it was necessary to be open and receptive at all times to hear and pick up on whatever was presented during the interview. Both the interview process and the act of interviewing itself needed therefore to be flexible. Contextual understanding of both the experiences and the meanings contained is crucial (Seidman, 2013, p. 19). In the study, participants were willing to present an aspect of their life history in the second interview and some of them chose to describe details of their experiences in the first interview. Some participants also meaningfully reflected on themselves as human beings and their experiences in the first interview.

The interviews were semi-structured and open-ended with the primary source of data being rich descriptions of experiences as lived by second career teacher participants. A semi-structured format allowed the suggested interview questions to serve as a guide for pacing the interview. I was mindful to develop questions that addressed my fundamental inquiry into lived experience, hence contributing to "knowledge production" in my research (Kvale, 1996, p. 129). At the same time, I was keen for the questions to dynamically promote a "positive interview interaction" (p. 130) so that participants are motivated to talk about their experiences. Questions were open-ended to allow room for participants to describe in detail a particular situation or their emotions and feelings. Van Manen describes the need to keep questions open in hermeneutic phenomenological research but to be constantly oriented to the question "in such a strong manner that one does not get carried away with interviews that go everywhere and nowhere" (1990, p. 67).

The interview framework gave participants the opportunity to provide relevant significant facts from their lives in a time line. I introduced broad categories in the question framework such as past professional work experience, career change decisions, schools and classrooms as a workplace environment and current experience with students and staff. The interview framework had ample room to explore participants' thoughts about being second career teachers in terms of what they brought to the teaching profession, both generally and in their own individual case. I was also interested in how their previous professional and/or life experiences had a role in the current context of being a second career teacher. Opportunity was also given for participants to describe how they perceived themselves in terms of likely future career goals and decisions.

Teacher participants were able to provide descriptive and meaningful experiences through the broad categories. Each of the categories had sufficient space and possibilities for them to provide in detail thick and meaningful descriptions of their lives. For instance, when participants were asked about their 'new teacher' experiences in the classroom, I provided opportunities for participants to share some of their 'enjoyable' and some of the 'challenging moments'. They were able to re-live moments and experiences from their past profession and gave examples of how they viewed being a second career teacher now. The open-ended and unstructured nature of the interview framework meant that, consistent with a hermeneutic phenomenological approach, I was able to adapt and adjust to the particular needs of each teacher participant and their responses, while being attentive and oriented to seeking the answers to the research questions. Below is a brief bullet point list of the interview structure:

- Started with reason for interest in participating in the study as an 'ice-breaker'
- Then moved to providing a time line of their lives
- Reasons for changing careers
- Student teacher and practicum experiences
- New teacher experiences in class with students
- New teacher experiences with other staff
- School as workplace
- View of students
- Changes in self as a result of changing professions to become a teacher?
- Future goals?
- Thanks and any other experiences that can be shared?
- Questions answered
- Recorder turned off.

After the interview

After the interviews, I started the process of transcribing each interview word by word. After discussions with my research supervisor, I felt that participants should have the opportunity to check their interviews for accuracy. Accordingly, I emailed the interview transcripts to each of the teacher participants, requesting that the transcripts be checked for accuracy and any changes or edits made as needed. Sending the transcripts to participants might also have jogged their memory about the nature and purpose of the interview and the study, thus, providing them with the opportunity to respond further about their second career teacher

experiences should they wish. I made this request to participants in my email to them. I also reminded them in the email that I might not use the entire transcript but only parts and that their names would be replaced with pseudonyms to protect confidentiality. I received responses to my email from four participants. There were no changes made to the transcript by the participants and they noted that they were satisfied with the process and content.

Teachers re-visited

The purpose of the second meeting was primarily to give an opportunity for participants to share their school experiences and provide reflective meanings of their lived experiences further to the first interview. I proposed sending out invitations and follow-up questions after about one year. As mentioned earlier, I felt the time gap of one year would allow for sufficient reflection by participants as well as generate sharing of new information based on participants' school experiences. The time gap also provided me with sufficient time to reflect on the interview responses and to clarify, analyse and summarise my own understanding of participants' stories from the first interview. The first interview consisted of rich in-depth material and the length between interviews enabled me to understand and unpack teachers' stories in a justified manner.

Based on my interpretive understanding of the responses gathered and the experiences shared in the first interview, I was then able to draft suitable follow-up questions (Appendix F). The email to the participants contained some of their descriptions during the first interview as well as my interpretive understanding of those descriptions. This enabled teacher participants to carry out a 'verify' and 'check' process and gave them the opportunity to respond appropriately. The follow-up questions centred around whether becoming a teacher had changed them as a person in the context they are situated in and also asked in what ways this might have happened. In other words, I wanted to gain a philosophical insight into their being after becoming a classroom teacher and subsequent to sharing their experiences with me in the first interview. I framed questions that were unique to each teacher participant, taking into account the individual descriptions of their experiences, based upon their responses at the first interview. The questions were situated in the context of participants' lives with an existential angle to them.

Even though I recognised the impact and value of face to face interviews, I also recognised that participants led busy lives and might not be able to find another time slot for an individual one-on-one meeting. Hence, I emailed the questions to them and proposed that

participants could respond via email or ask for any clarification. The email interview process gave teacher participants the time and space to elaborate their own thinking and respond to questions, thus "allowing for a thoughtful and personal form of conversation" (Busher & James, 2012, p. 224). The email also contained a brief update on how my research was progressing and where I was in the process of unravelling the descriptions of their lifeworlds. I received responses back from four teacher participants confirming my understanding of their stories and providing responses to my questions. The responses were significant and provided rich insight into second career teacher participants' thinking and meaning making.

After a period of a few weeks, I attempted to contact the other three participants by email once again but was not successful. I was satisfied with the email responses from the four participants and these, together with the initial seven teacher interviews, form the basis of my discussion and analysis. I believe that the interview structure was consistent with my phenomenological approach. Their self-report on their lives and experiences yielded informative rich and in-depth qualitative material that allowed me to interpret teachers' meanings of their lived experience. At the same time, I acknowledge the limitations in collecting data through these interviews and email responses. The stories as told by the participants at particular moments in time, provided a snapshot of their lives and experiences as second career teachers.

Teacher participant profile

Table 1 below provides a brief profile of each of the seven teacher participants.

Amy

Amy was a second career high school mathematics teacher in a private girls' school in Sydney. She is permanently employed and was in the second year of her teaching at the time. She completed a Graduate Diploma of Education program from a university in Sydney. She had a degree in electrical engineering. Her prior careers are varied and include working as an electrical engineer for building services companies for around five years and then as a recruitment consultant hiring accountants for several years while starting a family. Her last job before teaching was working in accounts administration. A passion for mathematics and finding a job that would suit her lifestyle were among the reasons Amy gave for changing careers to become a teacher.

Name	**Prior career(s)**	**Prior degree/ field**	**School type**	**Subject/grade**	**Number of interviews**
Amy	Engineer/recruitment	Electrical engineer	Independent girls high	Maths	2
Tasfia	IT specialist in bank	IT /maths	Public high	Maths	2
Elizabeth	Engineer drafting	Physics (Hons.)	Independent Catholic	Physics	2
Kate	Manager (government)	Psychology	Public primary	Grade one	1
Matthew	Marketing	Arts/Law	Public high	History/Legal Studies	1
Jim	Construction	Astro-physics	Public high	Physics	1
Sharon	Several careers (flight attendant last one)	Arts (English)	Public high	English/Arts	2

Table 1: Second career teacher participants in the study

Tasfia

Tasfia was also in her second year as a teacher in a state high school when she was interviewed. Like Amy, she teaches mathematics and classified her school as "*severely disadvantaged"*. She completed a Graduate Diploma of Education program from a university in Sydney. She completed her undergraduate degree overseas in mathematics and information technology. Her previous career was in banking in the information technology department as a data warehouse specialist. She had been employed in the banking sector for over ten years. Finding a job that provides a work life balance as well as a passion for teaching students led Tasfia to change careers to become a teacher.

Elizabeth

Elizabeth had been teaching for two years when she was interviewed. She teaches physics at high school level at a Catholic independent school for boys in Sydney. She completed a one year Bachelor of Teaching program at a university in Sydney. Elizabeth was not in full-time employment when she decided to become a teacher. She has a degree in Physics (with Honours). She also worked on a Doctor of Philosophy for a few years although she did not complete it. After starting a family, she was involved in helping family members in

engineering drafting that involved transferring hand-made sketches onto a computer. The desire to have regular and sustained employment as well as conversations with other parents about the lack of physics teachers in schools is what motivated Elizabeth to become a physics teacher.

Kate

Kate is the only second career teacher in the research study who teaches primary school students. She was a year one class teacher at a public school in Sydney at the time of being interviewed and had been a teacher for three years. She had completed a Master of Teaching program at a university in Sydney. She completed a degree in Psychology (with Honours) and her prior career was in a government department as a manager for ten years. Stress and frustration in her career were the motivating factors to change professions. The influence of family members also played a role in her changing careers to become a teacher.

Matthew

Matthew is a social science studies teacher in a public high school in Sydney. At the time of being interviewed, he was in his second year of teaching subjects such as history and legal studies to high school students. He completed a Graduate Diploma in Education program in a university in Sydney. Previously, he completed a degree in Arts/Law and had a "*well-paid*" marketing career for many years before deciding to change careers to follow his inner passion to become a teacher.

Jim

Jim is a second career teacher who teaches physics at a public high school in Sydney. He was in his fourth year as a teacher at the time of being interviewed. He completed a Master of Teaching and been offered a targeted graduate position by the Department of Education. He had a degree in Science majoring in astro-physics. His previous career included working in the construction industry at the managerial level for about five years. A combination of work related stress and the desire to seek a work-life balance prompted Jim to consider teaching as a second career.

Sharon

Sharon is a public high school teacher of English and drama. She was in her second year of teaching in the school when she was interviewed. Sharon completed her undergraduate degree in Arts majoring in English and had a number of customer-oriented jobs following her

graduation, such as in travel and tourism. Although she enrolled and completed a teacher education qualification about ten years previously, she continued to work in the travel industry as a steward for a major airline. Alongside, she worked in primary and high schools on a casual basis when she had time off from her job as a flight attendant. She left this position permanently in the year when I interviewed her and took up full-time employment as a teacher., Sharon brought the career change perspective due to her extended prior employment in other careers immediately prior to commencing full-time teaching.

Introduction to data analysis and interpretation

> *"In everyday life each of us is something of a phenomenologist insofar as we genuinely listen to the stories that people tell us and insofar as we pay attention to and reflect on our own perceptions." (Halling, cited in Smith et al., 2009, p. 32)*

My understanding of data analysis is underpinned by the methodology I have chosen as well as by my theoretical and philosophical assumptions about the world. As Berg notes, data gathering techniques and analysis should not be distinct from the theoretical perspectives laid out in the research (1995). Collecting data in the form of interviews with teacher participants is aligned with my motivations for choosing the research topic and for the conduct of the study. Data analysis involves capturing the essence of experience through reflectively analysing thematic aspects of the essence of the experience. Through a process of constant reflection and clarification, the essential meanings and structures of the lived experience are uncovered and then descriptively interpreted (van Manen, 1990). The process of uncovering meaning is a difficult one as I (as the researcher in my mode of understanding) attempt to construct a possible interpretation of a certain human experience (1990, p. 41). However, it is the characteristic of such a methodology not to have a pre-determined plan of procedures to allow for flexibility and discovery while being strongly oriented to the phenomenon.

My explanations about the phenomenon of being a second career teacher are carefully constructed and interpretively described in text converted from the raw experiences of the second career teacher participants. The analysis is derived from participants' re-living their lived experience in the context of their existence as individuals and in relation with other human beings. My methodology also guided me in the analytic process of interpreting participants' meaning making experiences.

Data analysis is a rigorous process and I went through different processes of analysis at different points in time. In keeping with the interpretive and phenomenological approaches in the study, I oriented towards participants' descriptions of their experiences in a bid to search for significant statements and meanings in the interviews. For instance, if the statement were descriptive (such as if participants used metaphors to describe a certain situation or feeling) and if it tapped into the participant's experience, I reflected on whether and how the statement invoked meaning to the teacher participant when describing an experience (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). The analytic process is also informed by "interpretive phenomenological analysis", particularly the "idiographic" approach as espoused by Smith et al. (2009, p. 29). Idiography is concerned with the detailed examination of human lived experiences. It resonates with human science inquiry, producing a "theory of the unique" (van Manen, 1990, p. 156). An idiographic approach allows me to move from single cases to more general statements and shared themes but still enables me to retrieve particular claims for any of the participants involved, to hear their voices on those themes. My inquiry aims to understand the lived experiences of each of the second career teacher participants as a 'whole', but I am also attentive to the individual participant's stories being 'part' of the understanding and interpretation of the meaning of being a second career teacher. A hermeneutic mode of understanding with idiographic attentiveness is built into the data analysis.

The process of writing forms a critical part in the overall data analysis process, particularly in a phenomenological study that aims to capture essence and meaning using language and text. The activities of researching, reflecting and writing are all inextricably linked (van Manen, 1990). Van Manen notes that "human science research is a form of writing" (1990, p. 111). Lived experience has a linguistic structure because we are able to experience and express it through language. Writing, in phenomenological research, is also seen as a poetising activity in the sense of thinking about the original experience and giving expression and meaning to it.

In my research, I have used text and writing as linguistic media to draw out suitable interpretations via thematic representations. Rich narrative data have been written from these descriptions. The descriptions and their interpretations lend themselves to a hermeneutic point of view. Such interpretations are not only based on the assumption that social reality is socially constructed and subjectively experienced but that it is also the result of human

thought as expressed through language and perception (Opie, 2004). The writing process in my research aims to elicit a vicarious experience in the reader (Johnson & Christensen, 2004): a feeling that they understand what it would be like to be a second career teacher. Significant statements are presented through verbatim extracts (using teachers' voices/actual words). Data analysis and interpretation occurs simultaneously in a hermeneutic inquiry as meanings are uncovered through language.

The interviews with seven teacher participants, their responses (if any) to the interview transcription, the second interview email response from four participants together with my notes form the initial data for my analysis.

I describe below the process that I undertook soon after the conclusion of each interview. In a phenomenological human science study, every process is a phenomenological journey and reflects my orientation towards understanding the essence of what I am seeking.

Note-taking during and after interviews

The initial note-taking constituted my first pathway in data analysis. After greetings and initial introductions, including obtaining the signed consent form, I sought permission from the teacher participant to record the conversation to enable me to capture everything that was said from the start. I had prepared a brief introductory questionnaire for each participant and I completed it with the information each teacher provided. The questionnaire contained name, age, type of school, teaching subject in school, teaching years and details of previous profession. The notes or bullet points that I jotted down during the interview consisted of what I observed and 'heard' from participants at the time. The questions were a reference point for me and I jotted down whatever I thought might be relevant at the time. These points were highlights that jumped out at me at the time and I felt that they might be useful later on when I was in the process of transcribing the interviews. For example, when I asked Tasfia how she viewed the school as a workplace, she responded by bringing out the aspects of the noise level and space in schools. I found this to be immediately interesting and noted down her descriptions. There was no deep thinking or reflecting on my part at this stage of note-taking since that would have taken me away from being oriented to the teacher participants and their lived experience descriptions. Besides, the interview was being recorded, enabling me to capture the story in its entirety.

I found the process of writing notes immediately after each interview particularly significant. This writing was not an attempt to bring me closer to the meaning of participants' descriptions, but to note down what I remembered that I thought might be significant later on in the analysis. I wanted to do this while the thoughts were fresh. I wrote whatever came to mind and attempted not to reflect on or worry about the structure of the sentence. Thus, my notes ranged from my thoughts about the interview in terms of how it went from my perspective, its content and usefulness, cues from participants' visual gestures and expressions, and any other highlights and key points that stood out for me overall. For example, I noted that Tasfia brought out the challenges of being in a difficult school in many of her responses. At the time, I was not sure if and how this might be relevant to my research. Later on, however, some of the notes acted as a "selective filter" enabling me to retain the essential meaning in them (Kvale, 1996, p. 161). In Tasfia's case, for instance, I realized the importance of her unique context and circumstances and the significance in understanding Tasfia as a 'person'. I also ensured that participants were given the opportunity to let me know how they felt about the interview. I sought their views shortly after the interview when thanking them for their time. All of them reported the interview went well. One teacher participant remarked on the length of time he had spoken and queried whether all he had said was really necessary but he understood that a research study might have particular needs and purposes.

Transcribing interviews

After consulting with my supervisor and taking into account the number of interviews to be transcribed, I thought that it would be best to transcribe myself, typing each interview verbatim. Transcribing brought me closer to understanding the richness of the descriptions the teacher participants had given and I came to know the interviews better (Seidman, 2013). Transcribing interviews is a painstaking process. However, because the activity transported me back to the day of the interview, my focus was not just on transcribing but also on being attentive to the details and nuances that were part of the teachers' story-telling. Transcribing allowed me to be absorbed by what I was hearing on the tape. It also gave me the opportunity to absorb and remember each interview (and therefore each teacher's stories) fully and completely. I now describe in detail the analytic process.

The process of data analysis and interpretation

I took time to read each interview transcript twice. I read participants' responses with reference to the interview framework questions. I wanted to engage with the data in its entirety and to have as much openness as possible to the text in front of me. During this process I deliberately did not look at the notes I had written during and after the interview. I felt that it was important that every piece of information was read with care while being conscious of not 'reading too much' into the content. Reading the responses alongside the questions helped me in this process. This initial process gave me increasing familiarity with the transcript (in terms of getting to know the participants and their stories) while keeping me close to the explicit more obvious meaning in the responses.

Guided by the semi-structured questions framework, the interview transcripts began with participants providing a timeline of events of their careers. The responses provided a broad and descriptive understanding of each participant's context and life history (who they are, where they come from and their reasons for changing profession).

In my first stage of analysis, I looked at each response by each participant to the questions I had asked. After an initial understanding of each response, my purpose was to identify similarities or common themes in participant responses to the same question. I began by following this process for each question. I also made sure to look at the entire transcript in case participants had responded at other places, not just against each question. At this stage, I was working only with the transcripts. For each question, I highlighted all of the responses in each of the transcripts.

I began my analytical process by creating 'categories' that were guided by the questions I had asked. The initial categories included *reasons for career change, changing profession to become a teacher, teacher education experiences and practicum experiences*. I took up one category at a time to look for similarities and common themes in the responses. This constituted the first step in the data analysis process. For example, when I looked closely at participants' responses to reasons for changing career, I was able to identify reasons that were 'external' (such as to do with their previous career) and 'internal' (such as participants' desires and beliefs). I then categorised participants' responses according to how they fitted . There were also some reasons that did not fit into either external or internal and I grouped these responses under a separate heading. Common themes were often present within more than one category. For example, both reasons for career change and reasons for changing

professions to become a teacher had common internal elements like '*looking for something different in my life'.*

I recognised the presence of underlying messages that required deconstruction. For example, participants' reasons and motivations for changing careers to become a teacher were not merely descriptive comments but also reflected deep personal reasons that carried meaning for each of them. Every one of the seven teacher participants provided detailed descriptions of their decision to take up teaching as a second career. Similarly, their responses to questions about their teacher education and practicum experience were oriented to their personal contexts and situations.

As I went deeper into the interview texts, I was able to document similar descriptions as well as my interpretations of participants' responses. The questions were intended to elicit participants' lived experience and get closer to the essence of what it means for them to be second career teachers. The questions allowed participants to respond freely. For example, participants described in detail the various kinds of experiences they brought to the teaching profession. They also shared what experiences they had as a teacher, responding to questions from a beginning teacher and a second career teacher perspective. This led me to create categories at a slightly deeper level reflective of their responses. The categories I created were: *drawing on prior experiences and how; drawing on self-experience and how; challenges and opportunities experienced as a beginning teacher; and second career teacher experiences.* The categories contained extensive rich material shaped by participants' verbatim extracts.

I represented these categories visually in circles. I surrounded each 'category circle' with a brief participant response that captured the essence. While it was not easy to represent the responses succinctly around each circle, the process was extremely helpful in sharpening my reflective thinking. I chose to go back and forth between each interview to create as well as break down the categories. This process also provided me with the opportunity to engage deeply and be stimulated by participants' words in the text. For instance, I broke down the category of 'drawing on prior experience' into responses that related to teaching content and those that related to working in school with students. Depending on each interview, participant responses may have contained one or more responses in each category and sub-category. This also involved searching through the whole text for any other connections. I

created similar categories and sub-categories that related to participants' views on school and students.

These initial categories were extensive and detailed in content; however, they required deep engagement and sense-making of the information and were the commencement of a much deeper understanding and hermeneutic analysis. At this stage, I was also mindful of what would be the essential elements of participants' experiences and what could be described as "incidental" elements (van Manen, p. 106). Identifying themes that emerge from data does not imply that all information is evidence of every theme in participants' descriptions. While all the elements are descriptive and provide a rich understanding of participants' experiences, I needed to seek out aspects that would orient me towards the essence of the phenomenon: what is it like to be a second career teacher?

I now engaged (in thinking) with the category circles and the responses. I took time to explore the connections in their responses within each category and across categories as a means of drawing meaningful understanding. Up to this point, I had progressed in a sequential manner, moving from a basic understanding of the material to uncovering the deeper meanings that lay underneath. Qualitative data analysis generally follows such a path, from the descriptive and concrete to the explanatory and abstract (Miles & Huberman, cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). However, my interpretive understanding was also a cyclical process as I moved dynamically between the actual data and what 'came out' of the data through my textual construction, created in categories and sub-categories. I went back again and again to the transcripts of the interview stories as told in the teachers' own words, questioning my previous understanding. I learned something new every time I re-visited the stories. For example, when I looked at Amy's transcript, I noticed her use of language to describe her school experiences, with expressions like "*a beast that needs to be tamed"* and "*school as an odd workplace*". I also paid attention to the ways in which participants made sense of themselves in their new role. For example, each participant spoke of different ways of being a beginning teacher and a career change teacher. Such attentiveness led me to uncover and interpret participants' descriptions from a different perspective.

What followed therefore was a movement in thinking between the transcripts and my textual understanding and interpretation. The result was a fluid description and engagement with the interview transcripts as I immersed myself in participants' voices. I was involved in the process of thinking flexibly and creatively, being aware of looking at the 'bigger picture'

and the finer details at the same time. Moving back and forth in this way from the text to participants' stories served to strengthen my objective understanding of the phenomenon through learning more about teacher participants' and their world.

I went deeper into the text in order to be able to uncover the hidden meanings that exist in them. I oriented myself to reflecting on the original text and the data categories created. This led me to further compress the categories through reflective thinking to reach for themes that emerged at a higher level. I felt that my process of interpretive and phenomenological thinking about the data could be represented visually in the form of a mind-map display. I chose four themes in my mind-map display that were extrapolated from reflectively engaging with the data categories and were shared across the seven teachers. The themes were *the school as workplace, students, the classroom, and the staffroom*. Visually representing the themes provided the opportunity to engage in a dialectical relationship with what existed in each theme as well as across all four themes.

Analysis is not only about going back and forth between the seven teacher participant interview stories but also being able to look at each story independently from others and performing a meaningful interpretive analysis. Each story text can and should also be viewed as a part in the whole understanding of the meanings of a group of second career teachers.

Hence, my analysis attempted to view each participant story sometimes as a whole and sometimes as part of the whole. This way I developed a hermeneutic mode of understanding that can be described as circular in nature, interpreting the same text as part and whole and leading to an enriched understanding than the previous mode (of understanding). Engaging in a single text in this manner was a useful way to question any inconsistencies that may have existed in the story and to be able to better understand the contextual and linguistic meaning of participants' thoughts while remaining close to their voices (Smith et al., 2009). For example, some participants spoke of becoming a teacher as something they had always wanted to do. However, the same participants were not definite regarding their future plans with respect to staying in or leaving the profession. Engaging more closely with each of their stories helped me to better understand their contexts and personal values, thus clarifying my thoughts on the possible inconsistencies that were initially apparent.

Since the aim of the research study is not only to understand the lived experiences from a second career teacher perspective, but also from a beginning teacher perspective, the data

analysis consisted of looking at participants' responses as beginning teachers and developing themes and patterns of meaning from those responses. I unpacked the responses in each interview by aiming to look at the interview with fresh eyes to determine what the participants were saying 'as a beginning teacher'. Through this process, I was also able to clarify their responses as a second career teacher. I attempted to explicate the essential nature of second career beginning teachers' school experiences using various modalities such as *beginning teacher experiences as a second career professional; beginning teacher challenges and experiences during teacher education (as a mature age student), during practicum; and challenges and experiences in the classroom and school.* I also oriented myself to thinking about the teachers as mature age participants and how they look at their self at various points in time. Visually representing the possibilities of either being a second career teacher or a second career beginning teacher was helpful in unpacking the existential themes that were to follow.

The resulting nine thematic aspects that emerged from the above engagement with the data are presented in the following chapter – chapter five. While initially guided by the interview questions, the thematic aspects were the result of the descriptive and conceptual analytic process: such as through the dynamic engagement (reflectively and interpretively) with the visual representation of emerging categories. The nine thematic aspects in chapter five are primarily derived from the four themes of *school as workplace; students; the classroom; and the staffroom*. The thematic aspects also move towards an existential interpretation discussed in chapter six. I believe the emerging themes, resulting from both an interpretive and a phenomenological approach, provide rich and insightful detail into participants' experiences.

Reducing further to reveal

The intention in hermeneutic analysis is to go deeper than participants' own understanding and awareness of the existence of meanings. Meanings and intentions that were hidden are uncovered and made explicit. My analysis discerned common patterns of meaning across participants' descriptions. What followed was a reflective analysis of the kind of phenomenological meaning that can be gathered (and uncovered) from the four thematic aspects. The patterns of meaning were then regarded as statements about the meaning of being a second career teacher represented for instance, by *'one of many careers'; 'shifts from self to other'; 'becoming a teacher' and 'belonging now'*. These statements were a mind-map display of an existential nature, attempting to bring out participants' ways of existence in the

lived world. I was able to bring out the meaning that participants gave to themselves through these existential statements. For example, participants' intrinsic reasons to change career to become a teacher constituted a shift from thinking about themselves to thinking about others. Participants gave examples of how they saw themselves after having changed careers, reflecting on their ways of becoming a teacher.

Teacher participants' descriptions of being a second career teacher constitute how they make meaning of themselves in contexts and situations. I am attempting to understand the essence of teachers' lived experiences not just from an existential angle but also from a pedagogic angle. My research is about second career teachers who are educators, and thus their everyday lived experience needs to be understood in the context of being a pedagogic experience. Interpretive analysis needed to bring to the surface those hidden meanings in teachers' descriptions of how they see themselves as second career teachers and as human beings after changing professions. The meanings were located everywhere, some more obvious than others and, for some teachers, more pronounced than for others. Being a second career teacher is understood to be an in-relation-to phenomenon as teachers construct themselves in relation to other beings. Thus, while participant experience is uniquely embodied, situated and perspectival and therefore amenable to the idiographic approach (Smith et al., 2009), their experience is also a worldly and relational phenomenon.

My phenomenological analysis consisted of understanding and interpreting the meaning that second career teacher participants gave (1) with respect to their relations with others such as students and staff; (2) to the space and environment that they are situated in (that is, the school and classroom); and (3) to time and their journey to becoming a second career teacher. These constituted meaningful understandings. I sought to uncover the phenomenological descriptions that participants gave of their relations with others, of the space that is called school and of their journey—in the past, present and future. I was able to do this by focusing on the research questions and by examining the stories through a phenomenological lens, asking: What does it mean for this person to be a second career teacher? The task for me then, was to be able to represent those meanings from an existential and phenomenological perspective. I achieved this by orienting myself phenomenologically so that I perceived the second career teachers as human beings and attended to the meaningful descriptions they gave of their being with others and of themselves at different moments in time. For instance, I felt surprise and wonder at some participants' descriptions of their school experiences as a

second career beginning teacher. The process of 'bracketing' my pre-conceptions made me attentive to other's thinking.

The phenomenological descriptions were woven in existential terms to include the following: (a) lived human relation (relationality); and (b) lived space (spatiality). These descriptions then formed the lifeworld of second career beginning teacher participants.

My analysis at this point also included using the themes as a starting point from which to draw out participants' meanings in their stories. For instance, I used the theme of 'lived space' to capture the elements that contributed to meaning participants gave to space and surrounds (for instance, 'sharing your personal space') as a work environment both in their prior careers and now in schools.

Data analysis also involved introducing variation into the description. This could either reinforce the theme developed or change the nature of the themes to produce different meaning (Barritt et al., 1984, p. 10). While the thesis's primary focus is the lived experience of second career teachers, I was able to vary the focus by looking at the research from a beginning teacher perspective. The themes that developed from interpreting participants' descriptions of their experiences as beginning teachers (such as the presence of challenges and opportunities; practicum experiences) were varied and led to either confirmation or refutation of their experiences from a career change perspective. Nevertheless, it opened a fresh approach to engage dialectically with the two sets of descriptions of lived experiences of the same teacher participant.

The analysis of the qualitative data is not just a deep understanding of the information in one's own data but is coupled with readings from phenomenological literature (Barritt et al., 1984). Phenomenology thus becomes a way of doing. For instance, reading literature and theses that have used hermeneutic phenomenology equipped me with the know-how to identify in my research study the existential theme of 'lived relation' and other phenomenological themes. I was attentive to participants' phenomenological descriptions of the relations with students and was thus able to see the meaning-making significance within the thematic analysis of 'lived relation'.

My final analysis thus brings together the phenomenological themes of lived relation, lived space, lived time and lived body as observed in teacher participants' descriptions of their lived experiences. I sought to make phenomenological sense of being a second career

teacher through these lifeworld existential themes. These existential themes are discussed in chapter six.

Summary of thematic analysis

The path of hermeneutic analysis and interpretation is not rigid and cannot be predicted but requires "inherent flexibility and adjustment" (Russell, 2005, p. 116) for analysis to emerge. Every new interpretive analysis constituted a more developed and meaningful understanding and interpretation than the previous analysis and came about through a rigorous and cyclical process of critiquing and questioning. This reflects a hermeneutical mode of understanding and interpreting lived experiences. I was attentive to participants' language both during the interviews and when transcribing them. I thus heard participants' spoken language for a second time. The different stages in the data analysis process would not have been possible without a continuous reflective engagement with participants' voices and their use of words in the text.

I used 'thematic reflection' in my analytic process. To do this I reflectively searched for themes and the meaning that was encapsulated in the themes. While "no thematic formulation can completely unlock the deep meaning" (van Manen, 1990, p. 88), the emphasis was on the reflective searching and interpretation of teacher participants' descriptions of their experiences (as second career teachers) in order to seek the meaning that appeared as well as those that were waiting to appear.

The process of reflection occurs at all stages of my research. It occupies a significant place in the process of analysis as I pursue an ongoing reflective and thematic search to describe the essence of being a second career teacher in the words and phrases of the teachers. As I reflect on their stories, the manner in which these are represented textually also evolves as I strive to bring out participants' voices in the way they spoke to me.

Analysing the content at hand is always a work in progress and thus, the 'final' conclusion that forms part of the data writing discussion is not the final and last version but one which can be interpreted further in better and more meaningful ways. The 'final' analysis in my research, which may appear to have been 'fixed' through the act of writing up, is a rich and powerful discussion of the meanings of being a second career teacher.

Challenges during interviews and data analysis

Researcher bias

Researcher bias with respect to what the researcher might bring to the interview is a very real prospect in a qualitative interview. The steps I took during the interview preparation stage, particularly being conscious of the possibility of bias and reflecting on the issue of bracketing, were helpful in my case.

I believe a combination of factors assisted me to be as open and receptive as possible to teachers' descriptions of their experiences.

Firstly, I made a conscious and deliberate effort to be aware of my subjective influences. I did not attempt to shut myself out from my pre-understandings but, by reflecting on those pre-understandings, I acknowledged their presence.

Secondly, learning to be phenomenologically oriented during the entire research design process from participant search onwards also helped me to orient to the teacher participants and their descriptions during the interviews.

Thirdly, I do not have a background or prior experience in teaching (my first career being in a different field). This reduced the likelihood that I would bring any pre-conceived knowledge to the interview. Thus, I was able to take in what I heard with an open mind.

As mentioned in chapter three, bracketing is a continuous process that is essential not just during the interview with teacher participants but also at subsequent stages of data observation and journal writing, data transcribing and data analysis.

Researcher closeness

As researchers, we are trying to make sense of the participant and their experiences (as narrated by the participant), who in turn is making sense of the 'things themselves' (Smith et al., 2009, p. 35). In this type of qualitative study, it is not only my reflection and understanding that plays a part in a hermeneutic methodological approach. Teachers themselves reflect and re-live their experiences during the interview. As Seidman points out, "the narratives that we present are a function of our interaction with the participants and their words" (2013, p. 120). I was aware of the challenge of double hermeneutics as I commenced my research design and interviews. Double hermeneutics thus occurs alongside the notion of

reflection (researcher reflecting on participant's reflective experiences) and timing (different points in time of reflective thinking and interpretation by participant and researcher).

While the presence and challenges of double hermeneutics can be felt in an interpretive phenomenological study, the issue is to recognise and respond in an appropriate way. Interpretation is a dialogue between the past (facts as told by the author/teacher) and present (the researcher's own analysis now). The aim of the research study is not to re-live the past but rather to learn from it and to understand the career change teacher in light of the present.

My interpretive understanding focuses on the meaning of the text as spoken by teachers and "that meaning will strongly be influenced by the *moment* at which the interpretation is made" (Smith et al., p. 27). While I have attempted to be close to describing the teachers' meaning of being a second career teacher, the decision about what constitutes meaning is a reflection of my reading and interpreting the data at various points in time. Teachers themselves at other moments in time could give different meaning to their lived experiences, which would in turn change the course of my reflection and interpretation. The research study is an interpretive understanding of the experiences of this particular group of second career teachers described in a particular context in the course of the interview setting.

Ethics and ethical conduct in research study

> *"By the very knowledge forms we pursue and the very topics to which we orient ourselves, we do in fact show how we stand in life."*
> *(van Manen, 1990, pp. 156-157)*

Moral research behaviour encompasses my personal values and beliefs and is far broader than just being knowledgeable about ethics and choices. Aside from my personal interest in pursuing a doctoral study, I also have a genuine desire to let the voices of second career teachers be heard amongst the education community. Without assuming the role of advocate, I have always strived to keep in mind the pursuit of moral inquiry in the study and the desire to make a contribution to teacher welfare.

A human science inquiry such as phenomenological research can pose ethical challenges at every step of the research process. I believe that ethical decisions arise at every stage of the research process and are not exclusive to the interview process. While it is not possible to identify every situation that may pose an ethical concern, being aware and open to possible ethical issues that are likely to arise during the research study constitutes the first step in

making reflective and informed choices about ethical conduct. Adequate steps must be taken and necessary guidelines followed to minimise or eliminate ethical concerns. I must feel responsible and committed in order to act with integrity if issues arise. Apart from the guidelines that one must follow, personal ethical responsibility starts from the very beginning of undertaking a research study (Skanfors, 2009, p. 2). Protecting human interests should never be overlooked in any study with human participants (Kvale, 1996, p. 110).

Ethical behaviour and sensitivity to ethical issues are required at every stage of the research study, especially when it is a phenomenological and philosophical inquiry into the lives of human beings. For instance, a literature review on second career teachers requires sensitivity to the context in information and this constitutes part of behaving ethically in research. The use of participant data and its analysis requires care grounded in sensitivity and awareness. Teacher participants have given me access to their experiences and thus the act of knowing and interpreting those experiences is an ethical act (Heshusius, 1994). I strived to adopt an open mind with a sense of humility, letting go of the self within when searching, reflecting, describing, and interpreting the participants' statements.

I have attempted to approach every chapter with sensitivity and attentiveness as I believe this constitutes ethical behaviour in practice. I have also grown to be more ethically responsible during the course of the study. The interaction with more experienced researchers such as my supervisors and university academics has also helped me to develop mature ethical behaviour over the course of my research journey. Ethical behaviour does not begin and end when research starts and stops. The research study has led me to question my own moral position and ethical conduct to make informed choices.

The research study fulfilled the formal requirements of the Human Research Ethics Committee at the university where the research was conducted (Appendix G). I also ensured that all records relating to teacher participants such as the information sheet, informed consent forms, tapes and interview transcripts were kept confidential and stored securely on a computer that is only used by me.

Quality and rigour

Research validity in this type of in-depth qualitative research investigation is more to do with the research being plausible, trustworthy, credible and therefore defensible than to do with reliability and validity. The researcher is the instrument and the research focus is on 'how'

and 'in what way'. Researchers have long grappled with what counts as good qualitative research, with standards being suggested (Denzin, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Lincoln and Guba discuss the concepts of confirmability, dependability, credibility and transferability as ways of ensuring the quality of data in qualitative research (1985). On the other hand, the interpretive nature of qualitative data is such that it is not possible to apply the same criteria across all research. The overall research approach and purpose and the researcher's epistemological beliefs should guide the criteria to be used. Understanding second career beginning teachers and constructing meaning from teacher participants' stories lies at the heart of this phenomenological research and implies an attempt to understand teacher participants as human beings. A hermeneutic phenomenological approach teaches the researcher to attend at all times to the research (and research participants) with care and sensitivity as well as with a deep sense of humility. The quality in the research is then to be consistently aware of human feelings and thoughts and to ensure that everything is done to represent participants' voices not just accurately but with the utmost care and sensitivity. Rigour in the research is also brought about by critiquing and questioning. I have strived to constantly keep in mind the purpose of the research from the participants' perspective.

Readers can judge the worthiness of the research from the qualitative themes presented in the next chapter. Readers can then arrive at their own interpretations and unique understanding of the research. The methodology chapter also outlined the steps in ensuring academic rigour in the research. These, together with the qualitative themes discussed below, form the criteria for judging what counts as quality in the research.

Trustworthiness and meaningfulness

In what way is the text meaningful? Can it be trusted? How will the data assist the reader to decide on the trustworthiness of the research? The purpose of the research is to speak the language of the second career beginning teachers. The aim is to have sufficient meaning in the text such that it is not only rich and authentic but also situates the research in the lifeworlds of teacher participants. I have strived to understand and fairly and genuinely represent the thoughts, feelings and experiences of second career beginning teacher participants. My interpretations are grounded in participants' descriptions of their lives. The quality of 'aliveness' (van Manen, 1990) is present as I attempt to bring to life the voices of second career beginning teacher participants, lending credibility and richness to the study.

I was able to verify the quality and accuracy of my initial understanding and analysis with the participants I interviewed. This review of my initial interpretation of participants' statements by the participants themselves acted as a validity check as I sought to clarify my understanding of participants' descriptions. Once I performed this validity check, I was able to conduct a deeper data analysis that led to further description and deeper and meaningful explanation.

I was also able to discuss my analysis and interpretive processes with my supervisors. These ongoing collaborative discussions throughout my research journey provided the opportunity to critique and question my analytical thinking. It led me to clarify the essential nature and meaning of my research.

Resonance

The quality of resonance is pertinent in this research to enable readers to experience a sense of déjà vu as well as to open up new perspectives with the rich and thick descriptions provided (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). While it is up to readers to make up their minds on how they interpret the research, I have made every attempt to provide as much rich information as possible such that it rings true and resonates with readers. The research produced 'deja vu' moments when I presented at research conferences attended by education academics, teachers and teacher education students. The responses, particularly from teachers and academics, demonstrated agreement and indicated plausibility between their own knowledge and the study's findings on career change teacher experiences. Many teachers told me they know of other second career teachers who have had similar experiences as the teachers in my research. I also presented a seminar to a group of second career teachers from schools in Sydney. The teachers in the audience strongly concurred with the findings experienced by teachers in the study and there was a strong resonance amongst the gathering, leading to lively discussion. I felt the presence of what van Manen terms a 'phenomenological nod' (1990). My ongoing discussions with my supervisors on unpacking the teachers' stories also led to feedback that rang true with their own 'beginning teacher' experiences in the classroom.

Connectedness

While the overall aim of the research is to seek unity in meaning and to connect parts to the whole, the research is also seeking differences in meaning that will add to the richness and authenticity. I wished to bring out both the commonality and the differences in the seven teachers' experiences. My research tells the unique story of each of the seven second career

beginning teachers. The stories are individual and unique but are also connected through their being second career teachers and coming into the teaching profession for the first time. The prior diverse experiences of each of the seven teachers are what connect them (as mature age individuals) but at the same time, distinguish each of them as teachers and individuals.

To conclude this chapter, my sample of second career teachers is of second careers who have entered the teaching profession recently. The seven teacher participants tended to closely align their teaching area with their previous qualification and degree. While career change teachers constitute a different group from other teachers, every second career teacher is unique in their own way with different past and present experiences. My research should be read in the context that the second career teachers I interviewed are also beginning teachers and hence provide some common yet different perspectives from other second career teachers and other beginning teachers. Readers should consider the unique aspects of the sample population and their sentiments. The nine thematic aspects derived from the data analysis process are discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

Research Results: Interpretive Analysis

Chapter overview

In the research design and process chapter, I described the process and stages of research analysis that I carried out in order to understand the being of a second career teacher both in an interpretive and an existential and phenomenological sense. I followed a series of reflective and engaging analytic processes to unpack teacher participants' stories. Through these processes, I was able to separate out aspects of participants' stories that were rich and meaningful and which paved the way to an interpretive and a phenomenological understanding of the teachers. This chapter and the following chapter present these aspects of the teachers' stories.

This chapter outlines the research results as 'thematic aspects' that were developed through my interpretive analysis of the interviews conducted with the seven teacher participants. The thematic aspects, while non-existential in nature, allowed me to build an interpretive understanding of participants' descriptive stories. These aspects were extrapolated from participant responses to questions and developed further through the data analysis and interpretation process. Open-ended questions in a semi-structured format allowed participants to provide extensive descriptive information. Not all participants referred to every theme in their descriptions. The chapter does not present the analysis of the research results in their entirety but rather outlines those aspects of teacher responses that are significant for the nature and purpose of the study, by way of "organized narrative" (van Manen, 1990, p. 78). The stories contained within each thematic aspect constituted the first level of engagement with the participants' descriptions of their experiences. Such interpretive understanding and analysis allows me to existentially uncover teacher participants' lifeworlds and the meaning of being a second career teacher discussed in the next chapter. Together this chapter and the following chapter reveal the findings of my study.

As with any qualitative data analysis, the meanings emphasised in the thematic aspects reflect my "readings" of the data as the researcher (Barritt et al., 1984). The thematic aspects are the result of my interpretive understandings of the teacher participants' descriptions of what it is like to be a second career teacher as discussed in the previous chapter. Others who read the data may come up with different themes or a different emphasis. I have derived these nine thematic aspects from the four main themes of *school as workplace; students; the classroom;* and *the staffroom,* as mentioned in chapter four. Each of the nine thematic aspects carries significance to participants' stories of their lives and school experiences.

The nine thematic aspects that were developed are:

1. Motivations for career change
2. Drawing on prior experiences: teaching content
3. Drawing on prior experiences: students and classroom management
4. Drawing on life experience
5. Views and perceptions of the culture of schools and staff
6. Views and perceptions of school as a work environment
7. Views and perceptions of students
8. Beginning teacher perspectives
9. Being a teacher now.

To support each thematic aspect I provide relevant quotations from the interviews with participants.

Motivations for career change

As discussed in chapter two, the reasons career change individuals give for joining the teaching profession generally consist of a combination of extrinsic and intrinsic factors (Anthony & Ord, 2008; Richardson & Watt, 2006). My research found similar results. Six out of the seven teacher participants mentioned aspects of their previous careers when they gave reasons for changing careers. Participants gave reasons relating to stressful working conditions in their prior jobs as well as a pragmatic desire to maintain certainty and stability while searching for a work/life balance. At the same time, the individuals said they were clearly drawn to teaching, motivated to look for a career that is "*rewarding*" "*intellectually stimulating*", "*personally satisfying*" and where one can "*make a difference*". For some, teaching had always been at the back of their minds and was something they had always

wanted to pursue as a career, contributing to the pull factors. Influences from family and friends also played a role in the decision-making process. I have created categories to cover the main reasons but, as will be seen below, participants' reasons for changing careers fell into more than one category. Some participants provided both intrinsic and extrinsic reasons.

Stress related to prior career and the search for balance

Teacher participants spoke of their search for a lifestyle balance and mentioned the different ways in which stress in their previous work and working conditions was a contributing factor in their decision to switch careers.

After describing her career and education path, Kate then went on to say this of her previous job:

> *"I was just tired and cranky and I would dread going to work. I would feel sick at the thought of going to work. I don't remember really making the decision [to switch] but I decided to take leave without pay … to see if I could make a living as a teacher."*

Tasfia said: *"The [previous] job itself was really good but I used to come home about 7pm and with a young family … when I started thinking seriously … maybe I should change my career."* As Tasfia implied, the pressure to change careers was more from external factors, such as possible job redundancies as well as long working hours. While the job itself was something Tasfia enjoyed, her older daughter had started school and the long working hours were proving difficult. She wanted a career that would suit the needs of her young family.

Likewise, both Jim and Matthew describe the stresses associated with their previous jobs as contributing factors to change career. *"Part of my (previous) job was good … I fitted in really well … but I was working 6 days a week … it was high power, high stress job with high rewards …"* (Jim). As a marketing manager, Matthew felt he was looking for something else *"after about six years of working in fairly well-paying but very high pressure and high stress jobs"*. Both of them wanted a career that allowed family time.

Amy also thought about the stresses in her career as she was making up her mind to change:

> *"I didn't want to go through stress if it was a boring little admin job … being stressed about something that didn't really matter to me"*. She chose teaching because she wanted

a *"more professional role that was family friendly and would help me to create a good work/life balance. I thought teaching would give it to me."*

Though Sharon's previous jobs in hospitality and tourism had not been stressful, she had reached a point in her life when she decided to *"get my act together and make some plans for the future"*. Having a young daughter to look after, Sharon was motivated to become a teacher because of the stability it offered compared to her previous careers.

Elizabeth was motivated to join teaching as a career after raising a family and having conversations with friends about the challenges of finding good physics teachers in schools. Teaching *"sounded like a good option"*. She was slightly different to the other teachers I interviewed in that she was not in a paid career prior to becoming a teacher. Having raised a family, she was a 'late entrant' to pursuing a career. Her motivations for entering the teaching profession are therefore closely related to finding a career that would suit her lifestyle and was "*going to be convenient"* to provide the work/family balance. Teachers who enter the profession later in life tend to closely align their teaching area with their previous qualification and degree. Elizabeth took the opportunity that became clear to her when talking to friends about the need for physics teachers in schools: *"It sort of started me thinking that maybe I could do that and it would be good."*

Personal fulfilment and social contribution

Participants also spoke of their intrinsic desire to make a difference to others' lives as they were choosing a second career. There was also an aspect of 'coming home' to teaching, something that was present before and which had emerged as they went through the career change process at this time of their lives.

"I thought with teaching, the personal satisfaction and you are really doing something for the community, you know, making a difference". Tasfia's thinking about what she would derive by becoming a teacher ('*personal satisfaction'*, '*making a difference to disadvantaged kids' lives*') was a motivating factor apart from work and family. She also conveys her belief in her ability to teach due to her past experience teaching others, including family members: *"Teaching was a thing in me anyway … it was my passion, like I know I can teach … I have been doing it to my family members."*

Jim spoke clearly of the motivation to become a teacher as something that was intrinsic. He referred to his passion for the subject and for teaching in general, although external

factors such as long working hours also played a role. "*I felt that I wanted to get closer to science that I had studied originally … so that's the part of me that motivated the change … I have got a passion for science … and it's sharing that … if you look at all the great scientists and physicists like Einstein, they all went to teach, that's what I feel like.*" Jim's original degree was in astro-physics and while he described how using the physics part of his science degree worked well in his previous career in construction, he was able to use *"just a slither of it"* in that role: "*In construction, I never had the time to look at the stars at night … as a physics astronomer, it was one of the things I wanted to get back into."* His passion for astronomy and the inability to use and share that passion in his prior career drew him to teaching. Teaching enabled Jim to be *"closer to science—I always wanted to be a scientist"*—and to be able to share that closeness with others. Teaching featured strongly in Jim's mind as he was weighing up options to change his career not just because of his passion for sharing science but because, like Tasfia and Kate, he had prior teaching experiences ("*I taught at University during my degree … so it was something I had been exposed to before")*. In the case of Elizabeth, although her decision was more pragmatic, driven by what suited her at this time of her life, similarities can be seen with Jim's description in that she also perceived teaching science as enabling her to think and work like a scientist: "*I was trained to be a scientist. In my view, teaching science is like working as a scientist and that's interesting to me."*

Matthew described how he was drawn to teaching for altruistic reasons. Rather than any one defining moment that led him to pursue teaching, Matthew said: *"It kind of developed over the years … it was altruistic and I wanted to do something that made a difference."* With a degree in Arts/Law, Matthew mentioned *"enjoying the social justice side of things … with teaching at the back of my mind at that stage.*" In his previous work, Matthew worked in areas *"that [were] not profit oriented"*, to satisfy his altruistic desires. Matthew was also motivated by what he believed to be the *"enormous degree of flexibility and autonomy"* that teaching provides. While he provided reasons and motivations for becoming a teacher, Matthew's story and thinking focused on what he brought to the profession in terms of values, philosophy and approach and the contribution that he saw himself making as a classroom teacher.

Amy trained and worked first as an engineer, then in human resources and then later raised a family while working part-time. She never envisaged becoming a teacher: "*I didn't see*

teaching as a career when I was at school … didn't see teaching as a career that could take me places, I thought engineering was more appealing." Amy described how her perception changed over time. She eventually chose teaching because she believed the role was more *"professional … more intellectually stimulating"* and one that carried more *"value"* for her: *"I needed something that is more intellectually stimulating … also, I really love maths and I could see myself teaching maths … the concept of teaching maths and the underlying importance of how much I value it as a role … I value teaching more"*. Her description of her passion for maths reminded me of Jim's passion for science.

Participants' intrinsic reasons are significant in my research as I set out to uncover the existential aspect that is present in their responses. This forms the basis of my phenomenological discussion on participants' lived experiences in the next chapter.

Family influences

Second career teacher participants also spoke of family influences and their role in their career change. For Tasfia, family members' influences worked positively in her decision-making process, helping to steer her into the teaching profession. She mentioned the support that she got from family and friends (who were teachers) when she told them of her desire to become a teacher: "*Most of my family members are teachers ...they were really happy and were very supportive and really pushing me to try it [teaching] out."* Jim also mentioned his partner who was in academia and how that also positively influenced his thinking and aided the process. Similarly, Matthew's decision to become a teacher was in part associated with having family members who were teachers: "*I had some very good teachers in both my junior and senior years. My sister is a primary teacher … so, I guess, it was a combination."*

In contrast to the above, family influences initially worked negatively for Kate and Sharon who kept away from a teaching career when they were younger. Kate said: "*I always kind of thought I would become a teacher but I steered myself really away when I was looking at universities, decided I didn't want to do education, I didn't want to do what my mum was doing."* Kate's deliberate choice to 'steer' herself away from teaching to break away from family tradition (she mentions in her interview having other relatives and friends who are also teachers) when she was younger does not preclude what she innately felt she wanted to pursue all along. While she took up another career to steer herself away and *"do something different",* it did not take away her innate desire to become a teacher. The timing needed to be correct. Just as family influences steered Kate away from teaching, an overseas visit and

spending time at a special education school steered her back into teaching as she found herself re-connecting with students: "*I really loved it and found that I had quite a bit of an affinity with the kids and it was quite easy for me … maybe it has always been in my blood."* This 'affinity' as well as her career circumstances helped Kate in her decision to become a teacher.

Sharon also stayed away from the profession due to family members' influences. Instead she chose to pursue different career paths while at the same time she knew that she would 'come back' to teaching at the right time:

> *"My mum had always been pushing me for years, 'you will be a good teacher' … but it wasn't the right time. I had a very 'do what I want' approach for twenty years … now, it feels like a very clear demarcation for me in what's happening for my employment and career … teaching was at the back of my mind all along but I wanted to do other things … I kind of knew all along … I did work experience at the primary school … because of the [career] experiences I had with people under 20 … school is definitely the right choice".*

In a sense, in becoming teachers both Kate and Sharon 'came home' to what they had innately felt drawn to.

In summary, the seven participants' stories revealed both similarities and differences in their motivations to change careers to become teachers. While current personal circumstances such as stress at work impacted strongly on their decision to change careers, intrinsic factors such as personal fulfilment and contributing positively to others' lives were equally important. Influences from family members impacted either positively or negatively in their lives but contributed towards the change. The desire to teach the subject that they enjoyed as well as pragmatic reasons such as lifestyle also played a role.

While the motivational factors that led participants to teaching are significant in understanding their thinking processes behind their career change, this research is also focused on understanding the paths and the approaches that these teachers took in the school and classroom as mature aged individuals from varied backgrounds. The following themes helped me to unpack this.

Drawing on prior experiences: teaching content

Teacher participants were asked whether and how they used their prior work experiences in the classroom. Participants provided examples of ways in which they drew on their prior skills and experience once they became classroom teachers. They either provided real-life examples (to explain concepts that they are teaching now) from their previous job or degree qualification or drew upon their general experience and what they felt was important for students to know after leaving school. Even if their previous job did not directly relate to their teaching content, teachers were still keen to share the *"outside world"* or *"real-world"* perspective with their students. Teachers brought their knowledge and experiences from their prior career, from their speciality degree (particularly when they moved into teaching the same subject in which originally qualified) or from past experiences and knowledge gathered from schools where they may have taught earlier such as in practicum.

Prior career and subject knowledge context

Jim described in detail how he connected his previous work experience as well as his knowledge of physics (Jim's degree was in astro-physics) to teaching content to students. This is yet another example of someone who was keen to relate their prior work to current classroom teaching. As we saw in the earlier theme, Jim's passion for his subject extends to being able to share that passion with students, as this description demonstrates:

> *"I think my construction background was really helpful. Because you have a lot of students that are going to TAFE[2] to do apprenticeships, you have got a lot of students in physics, everyone wants to be an engineer or a pilot … so in the engineering aspect of it, I could say, 'when we are on a job, we are building a suspended slab, the forces were this, the design had to be like this'. I could speak about direct issues that I had known which I thought made it way more relevant than the books were saying, so I could pitch directly to them as potential engineers, based on my experience teaching first year engineering and also in construction, I thought that really worked well with physics. I always hoped it would because I know I was using forces and things like that in my construction work, so, it seemed like I would be able to apply a lot of that skill in physics and it did. I think it*

[2] TAFE—Technical and Further Education—is the vocational education provider in the Australian tertiary education sector.

really makes a difference. So, in that aspect, it gave me something different. I had this experience that I could share with them regarding that."

As a maths teacher with an engineering background and having worked in accounts, Amy gave examples of how she used her knowledge of maths in the classroom in terms of explaining a concept to her students. Amy spoke of how the *"real numbers"* made the connection *"valuable"* and *"meaningful"* to the students: *"I use real-life examples from my previous career, to explain things like consumer arithmetic, salaries and commission-based payments … that's really connecting with the kids. I could see that they got something out of that and enjoyed that."*

Prior schools context

Sharon was an English and drama teacher at the time of her interview and had previously worked in diverse people-focused fields. Her trajectory into teaching was slightly different from the other teachers interviewed in that she had made the switch to teaching a few years before while still working in her previous career as a flight attendant. As a casual teacher, she had exposure and experience in different schools. It was around the time of the interview that she permanently left her previous job and became a classroom teacher. Sharon talked about mainly drawing upon her experiences in various schools, particularly with respect to teaching content: *"Like if I have taught Year 8 before, like the techniques, similes, hyperboles etc and if I have done a good class on that, I will use the basic memory of that to the next class in that age group."* Having had experience in both high and low achieving schools, Sharon also talked about the *"process of continuously improving your grasp of the content"*. She mentioned how she improved by observing teachers as well as having conversations about content with ex-colleagues at previous schools, thus drawing on their expertise.

Outside world perspectives

There was also an emphasis by teacher participants on providing their students with perspectives and views about what lies outside school. Participants shared their views in different ways based on their own experience and what they regarded as important for students.

For instance, by referring to his prior involvement with other jobs before becoming a teacher, Jim felt it would greatly benefit the students to think about what they may or can do after school: *"The benefit that they [second career teachers] bring, in general, but also to the*

kids I think. It makes [it] a lot more relevant [that] you can speak about, 'In the job I did, it wasn't teaching, it was another job and this is what we did, this is how I am relating and I am trying to teach you about a job that you might want to do.' … you can say to students, 'there are things that are bigger than the school … it expands their horizons a lot." He was able to talk about his experience of managing people to his students when discussing various trade-related occupations.

Matthew felt it was important for students to have appropriate writing and other skills to be able to perform tasks successfully when they finished school and entered employment. Matthew's previous career was in marketing and sales. When asked about whether and in what way he connects his previous experience with content, he talked about how he wished there had been a focus on skills when he was a student. He also mentioned having had experience with other *"senior*" people in his marketing career who (according to Matthew) may have been lacking in written and organisational skills. He thus gave reasons for, and saw the value in, teaching those types of skills to his students: *"I have never thought about it before but probably wish that there had been more focus [on skills] when I was a student … I guess helping these kids along the way can only benefit them.*" He saw the importance of drawing on his past experiences to teach what he believed were the skills that students would need outside of school:

> *"I focus more on skills … if you are telling students that I am delivering the content to you through teaching you and assisting you with these skills and these skills will be relevant whether you leave at the end of Year 10 to go and be an apprentice builder or … what about if you start your own business, down the track, you need to know how to do a quote, advertising, marketing or whether you go on to tertiary education or further education … it is that explicit teaching of skills. 'This is how you research, this is how you go about referencing an essay, this is how you write an essay, this is what introduction is, this is what paragraph is' … all those kinds of things."*

While Amy felt she could directly relate some of her previous work to teaching mathematics, she too stated the importance of providing a real world context to students:

> *"Rather than giving concrete examples, it might just be the throw-away line that you give in class and that gives your teaching credibility or provides a context. For example,*

teaching depreciation to students, just saying that accountants do this all day [because I have been there before, doing it] brings a different context for students."

Amy's response indicates her eagerness to relate her accounting experience to the present moment in the context of content teaching. She described *"being able to find the most relevant thing that will be helpful in teaching the students".* This reflects career change teachers' beliefs that they have something meaningful to contribute as teachers.

Highlighting the importance of an outside world perspective to students was also significant for Tasfia, who was constantly challenged by behaviour and discipline issues. Whether and how much this might have been possible under the difficult circumstances is a separate issue. The thesis does not intend to cover this aspect. Tasfia was teaching in a severely disadvantaged school at the time of the interview and her stories recounted the challenges she faced as a teacher. She dealt with student behavioural and discipline issues on a daily basis, in a context where teaching content might not be achieved to the required level: *"You plan to get that lesson covered in the classroom and when you get there, not even half of it gets done.*" In spite of this, Tasfia felt the importance of sharing and bringing the *"outside world perspective",* although she admitted it was not easy. She mentioned being able to share her content experience in mathematics with students. Tasfia's original degree is in Maths and she drew upon this knowledge as a maths teacher:

"The thing is I have moved in the outside world. I keep giving practical examples to students of how things are going to be in the outside world. Whatever I teach, I try and bring the outside world perspective and how the concept is related to the outside world. I am really focused on that, especially with my year 11 and 12, I keep on drilling that … how is that content related to the outside world? My real focus is 'how is the concept related to the outside world'. For example, if we are doing 'radiant' or 'slope', so when I am doing my lesson plan, I make sure I incorporate all of those."

Tasfia's response may be reflective of second career teachers' persistence to share their other experiences when they become classroom teachers, even when school circumstances make that challenging.

Teacher participants in the research drew on various aspects from their lives when teaching content to their students. They recognised the need to impress upon students their perspectives, knowledge and views of the world outside of school. For some participants, it

was easy to draw on examples from their prior career or their subject knowledge. From this study is not clear to what extent and for how long teachers might continue to bring this outside world perspective or draw on their prior content knowledge and experiences. A separate study tracking second career teachers' experiences beyond the initial beginning teacher phase may help to answer this question.

Drawing on prior experiences: students and classroom management

In the interviews I sought participants' views on what it is like for a career change teacher to face a classroom of students. Participants had not been exposed to such an environment prior to becoming a teacher. This thematic aspect relates to ways in which participants may have drawn on their prior experiences when dealing with school students for the first time. While I recognised that mature age adults may not have had the opportunity to interact with school-aged children in their prior career, the research explored if the career changers drew on their prior experiences in any way in situations with students (other than when teaching content). Although not all participants were able to relate their prior work experiences to students, those who responded gave interesting insights. Participants' prior work context and what work they were involved in was relevant in this response as they related the ways in which they used (or could not use) that work experience with students. Their descriptions of situations involved aspects of student management and behaviour. Participants described situations and gave examples of how they applied their educational skills and experience from their prior career in managing students in the classroom.

Informed by prior career and other contexts

Kate, who had previously worked as a manager, spoke of her role as one where she successfully managed challenging situations with clients. She described how she used those experiences to manage student behaviour. Her role and position enabled her to defuse confronting situations and she applied those same principles with students:

> *"There was a lot of aggrieved people who would make complaints and I would have to go out and calm them down … .and I think all that conflict resolution stuff that I did so much of in my previous job, really helped me with difficult children."*

Kate's background in psychology and her research on childhood aggression further helped her to understand the behaviour patterns of her class of primary school children and to deal with the children's disorders such as ADHD, Asperger's Syndrome and autism. Through

examples, she pointed out the advantages of a degree in psychology in helping her to *"understand the differences"* between children:

> *"I know about anxiety disorders and I understand when a child is being naughty because he/she is anxious as opposed to when he is just naughty and feeling a bit cranky or being cheeky … because I have done work on anxiety disorders, I can see and understand the differences. So, a lot of the psychology stuff is being so helpful. I am much more observant of what's going on … I can see when friendship groups are breaking down … My honours thesis on children and aggression and anxiety has been really helpful. I also did a lot of work on Asperger's and autism and ADHD, so none of those things are foreign to me … I know what they are going to be like, know what to expect, know how to talk to them. I am familiar with all those kinds of diagnosis. I also studied and know about intelligence tests and so I can spot a bright kid or … spot a kid who although not necessarily mastered the fine motor skills for writing but is making connections … like other forms of intelligence. I can see all that happening."*

Sharon had previously worked as a flight attendant and in the hospitality sector. She spoke of drawing on her overall experience in the service sector dealing with various kinds of people of different age groups. Sharon's experience in her prior careers also involved interaction with *"young people*" when she was involved as a bus and coach tour leader for people *"under 20"*. Moreover, the school environment was not entirely new to her, as she had done *"work experience"* when she herself was at school. She spoke of how all her varied work experiences equipped her as a teacher and how to deal in school situations. For instance, she said:

> *"If I move the students or do something with the students or take them out on the oval or something like that, those kind of group dynamic type of things, definitely I use those [from my prior experience]."*

Sharon's response indicated a level of confidence with students that had come from interacting with different people through her varied careers:

> *"I have definitely used the 'not worrying about the exact line formation of movement' that I got from being a coach tour leader. I use the flight attendant stuff experience if you need to sometimes pull someone into line but not necessarily go too [far] … when I did the*

family day care job … .I used that kind of experience of just going through the steps with the students."

Like other beginning teachers, Matthew referred primarily to his practicum experiences and observations to give him knowledge about students and student behaviour:

"I found that a lot of my reflection came from watching other teachers … during my prac and also other student teachers. I found that it really assisted my development and also with my master teacher, we would sit down and you know talk through … mainly to do with classroom management strategies".

As mentioned before, not all teacher participants felt they could draw on previous work experience to help manage students but some drew on their recollections of their own schooling. Amy said: "*I mainly draw on experience from my own schooling days because that's the environment I am working in now … not the specifics of what I have learnt at school but the environment I was in, I suppose is what I draw on".* This response needs to be read in conjunction with Amy's view of students, discussed under a later thematic aspect.

Differences and adjustments

Jim's descriptions of how he may have drawn on his work experience in school situations are interesting. They highlight the struggles that some second career teachers could face due to having minimal interaction with students until their changed careers. Jim acknowledges the initial discomfort he felt when faced with teenage students since (as a construction engineer) he was only used to a *"male-dominated work environment*" where he interacted with and managed adults, some of whom were *"tough guys, even ex-convicts*". He described the school as an '*alien environment … never worked with children before … was a whole complete different set of dynamics of working with teachers and students … that whole thing was very alien to what I was used to*". He talks about coming into teaching thinking that *"management in terms of getting kids on task … would be very similar to what it would be with an adult".* Jim had to make significant adjustments once he realized the differences and could not actually draw upon experiences from his prior work as a construction engineer in the context of school students owing to, *"big difference between them".*

To be in charge?

Jim's prior work also included a short term role as a security guard and he contextualised that experience in the school environment with students. He talked about how he applied the skills

that he had learned in those previous roles, even though the environments had been completely different and un-related to the school environment:

> *"Being a security guard/bouncer, I learnt a lot about body language … I learnt of strategies which then I had to draw out years later as a teacher … in terms of knowing how to control a situation, knowing how to pick out people in a group that may cause trouble and dealing with it in a way that is not going to escalate it."*

His responses also indicate that he viewed control and authority as part of managing people/students—perhaps was reflective of his previous roles. He goes on to say:

> *"You control it (the situation) before it gets out of hand, things like that … even if you are going to have a talk with a student, it's going to be the right place to have it, positions where you can be in control and assert your authority".*

Like Jim, Amy mentioned managing adults in her previous career but acknowledged that *"management of adults is very different from the classroom"*. Her use of descriptive language of how she viewed a classroom full of students provided an insight into her thinking. For example, she said: "*The classroom is a beast that needs to be tamed. I had no experience that I really could draw on to learn how to do that apart from actually doing it … However, just like any other job you learn on the job and while doing it."*

Career change teachers may need to make many adjustments when they become a teacher. Having had prior work and life experiences, they may feel that they are better equipped and have the knowledge to deal with situations. On the other hand, they may also have entrenched views and perceptions of students and situations and how schools should be run. These factors come into play when they enter the teaching profession and can influence their school experiences. Jim's description of how he draws on his prior work experiences with students should be understood in the context of his perceptions of school and students which come later as part of the thematic aspect of 'the views and perceptions of the culture of school and staff'.

Second career teachers also have life experience gathered over a period of time, and my research explored whether and in what ways the teacher participants in the study drew on their own experience when they became a teacher.

Drawing on life experience

On the question of what kind of experience other than that from prior careers or degrees they bring into the teaching profession, teachers' responses were varied and interesting. Some referred to their own strengths and their personality and described how that may have prepared them for the teacher role. Elizabeth mentioned the experience of being a parent and noted how raising teenage children assisted her as a teacher.

Confidence

Matthew's responses indicated a high regard for second career teachers in general: *"Probably some of the best teachers that I have seen in my experience so far have been second career teachers.*" He saw value in teachers' life experiences as they have *"got a perspective of what the real world is like*". He described the second career teachers he had known as *"far more enthusiastic and have a more flexible creative approach to both teaching and pedagogy and also to their students".* In his own case, Matthew believed his experiences gathered prior to school—including his interactions with people at his prior workplace—made it possible for him to be *"confident, flexible, creative"* in his teaching approach but also enabled him to *"set my approach to the kind of teacher I would want to be"*. He pointed out that as a second career teacher with life experiences, he brought *"flexibility of both approach to the students and also to the syllabus"*. He acknowledged that his prior life and general experience had helped develop his values and approach to life and as a teacher: *"You know who you are as a person and what your values are and how you would want to see those reflected in your teaching, how you want to be perceived (by others)"*. Matthew stressed the importance and gave instances of making connections, building relationships and showing compassion and care to students. He provided examples of challenging situations and indicated how his skills and experience had helped to achieve a positive outcome. His responses indicated confidence and he emphasised consistency and empathy in his approach with students.

As with Matthew, Jim was also strongly of the view that second career teachers *"bring a lot of life experience because you have worked in a different environment, you know that schools aren't the whole universe in that sense, you can go out and things are done differently"*. Jim felt second career teachers in general are able to bring in the outside world perspective and are able to share their work and life experience with students: *"I can say [to students], 'well, if you are a tradesperson … you could talk about the issues with them because I ran a team of 50 tradespersons … I was able to break down that barrier that often*

develops." Jim referred to first career teachers who may *"not offer much in terms of life experience"* which can result in barriers being created between teacher and students. He said: *"I think it was really useful. I think teachers in general should have more life experience."* Jim's ability to communicate effectively with students about his prior work-related experiences showed ease and confidence. He was able to transform work-related content to suit student needs. He felt that his prior work experiences *"and dealing with other adults in a work environment"* enabled him to be confident as a beginning teacher amongst other teachers and colleagues.

Both Amy and Tasfia provided instances when they felt confident as a teacher due to their life experiences. Having worked in a corporate environment, Tasfia believed she possessed people skills and knowledge and was able to be confident and professional at the same time: *"Coming from private sector, I feel confident where to allocate more time and resources in terms of the curriculum … More confidence and professionalism when addressing colleagues, students and others."* She sums up what someone coming into teaching later in life may bring when she says:

> *"I am not fresh from uni but my experience with my kids and just outside experience, I think you try and see things in a bit of a broader context, so it does sort of help … I think when you are old, you have all the worldly experiences."*

Likewise, in the context of describing staff conversations with other teachers, Amy conveyed a strong sense of being confident in her dealings due to being a mature aged teacher. "*Having had work experience and dealing with other adults in a work environment, I felt confident in dealing with other teachers"*. At the same time, she mentioned the challenges of being a beginning teacher: "*I felt inexperienced but confident."* I explore this further under the thematic aspect of school culture and staff.

Sharon also mentioned being confident to take on more senior roles and felt her prior experience in managing multiple tasks has stood her in good stead now as a teacher.

Kate described the confidence that came from her prior experience in her approach with staff and parents:

> *"I am glad that I had the prior experience. Makes me much more thankful for this and I am much more comfortable with parents and with other staff members and I quite quickly fitted in and came out quite popular."*

As someone who came into teaching after raising a family, Elizabeth gave examples of how she drew on her parenting experience in the classroom. Being familiar with behavioural changes that teenagers may go through and having knowledge of their current interests allowed Elizabeth to be confident in understanding students' behaviour and how they engage in the classroom. As a parent of teenage children she felt equipped with skills and experience to be a teacher:

> *"I suppose the fact that I had teenage children, I felt, gave me a bit of an advantage. Was able to keep in touch with more of the stuff they were interested in. For example I knew what episode of the Simpsons they referred to to illustrate some particular point, I knew what radio station they were interested in if we were talking about working out the frequency of a radio station … things like that. I suppose just that bit of familiarity with the things they talk about, the things they are interested in … because of having teenage children of my own."*

Other attributes

Most teacher participants felt confident coming into teaching as a second career. Having experience and maturity also meant participants thought about themselves as teachers from a different perspective, with a mature disposition. This impacted on their everyday engagements as a classroom teacher. For instance, Kate talked of being a second career teacher in this way:

> *"Age has made me more relaxed in the way I deal with children [Kate gave an example]. I don't let things get me down. I don't let failure send me to my bed. I don't get as stressed by the kids, like, they are pretty good, they are pretty easy … I think I have a thicker skin maybe, I have got a higher tolerance for naughtiness … I have more of an 'armour' now. More patience, more enthusiastic, lower expectation of the kids' behaviour, like, I am not expecting them to be perfect all the time".*

She drew on her attributes and strengths (which she believes are gathered through life and general experience) in her role as a teacher.

There is no doubt that career change participants brought something that they considered of value to their teacher role. Participants' stories portrayed a strong sense of confidence in themselves. Responses indicated that they saw this as an attribute that they possessed already and/or one they owed to their previous lives before becoming teachers. Matthew drew on his

flexibility and creativity, Elizabeth on her parenting experience and Kate on her experience and attributes such as patience and enthusiasm gathered over time. Although every second career teacher participant brought unique experiences when they joined the teaching profession, similarities such as confidence, enthusiasm and maturity could be detected in their descriptions.

Views and perceptions of the culture of schools and staff

This thematic aspect explored the views of the seven teacher participants about working alongside other staff members. The research investigated participants' perceptions of the staffroom, of other teachers as colleagues and of the school and classroom as a place of work. The responses often covered more than one aspect. For instance, some participants described the workplace environment in terms of school and staff culture, while some described working in the school in physical terms such as noise and space. However, the responses were rich and insightful and suggested two thematic aspects. This thematic aspect and the following one therefore overlap in that they revolve around the common theme of teachers' perceptions of school as a workplace environment. Like the rest of the thematic aspects, they generate valuable insights into teacher thinking as well as aiding in the development of further interpretive analysis.

School culture vs prior work culture

Amy, just entering the teaching profession, described the differences in terms of one driven by cost and profit and the other driven by service. She put this down to the culture of the school and staff, which she saw as having a *"different mindset from the business world"*. Amy admitted that it was difficult to pinpoint why she felt that way but continued:

> *"I think it is because they are all teachers and they are into education … And where I have been before in the commercial world is all about the dollar … that's the bottom line … how much will this cost? How much money are you making? Like in recruitment, how much money you are making … in engineering also, bringing the project in on time and on budget … everything was cost, cost, cost … and although there is an element in education that you can't spend this, you can't spend that … it's all about teaching … it's all about marks … it's all about how well your students are doing."*

Amy, who had worked in a corporate environment, perceived the differences as being between the purpose and motivations of each sector. The contrasts could be stark for

someone who had been in a different environment for a long time, being particularly profound during the initial years of teaching. Amy said she felt those differences between the two cultures more in the first year of teaching and less in the second year, which may indicate her adjustment.

Jim's description of the differences was slightly different. He felt being a teacher was difficult to measure in performance terms in contrast to his prior role which had clear-cut, measurable results that were performance driven. *"Previously, I was building something tangible. I could measure my performance by how much of the building has been constructed whereas teaching was this grey zone. It was very hard to get tangible results and that was also very alien."*

Career change teachers' views of the culture of the school are unique not only to their contextual circumstances but are also strongly influenced by their personal philosophy and beliefs.

Mindset differences

While Amy and Jim described the differences between the two cultures in broad terms, Kate described her views on school as a workplace in terms of the differences that exist in people's *"mind set"*. Jim also expressed a similar view in another part of the interview and both of them provided an interesting insight into how they see the school as a workplace. Kate depicts a sense of shock and being taken aback by school culture, given what she had been used to. Jim's descriptions are lengthy and he indicates the challenges he faced adjusting to these differences:

> *"They (teachers) can be still in their school mind set … it's very kind of almost communism where everybody must get the same amount and sometimes their (teachers) sense of entitlement is uh … takes you back a bit. I don't understand it because in other workplaces, you get what you are given and you are thankful for it and if someone else gets more, it's because they are working harder than you are" (Kate).*

> *"When you come into this environment, there is not a whole bunch of resource sharing. Teachers tend to want to own what they have created … they don't want to give ownership away."(Jim)*

Jim's descriptions focused on the culture of working with other educators and getting through the school system:

> *"Staff often get treated the same as students and I can see how that can happen because the more you are in teaching … teachers have a reputation of talking loudly, lecturing other adults … and things like that, so I could see how that could happen … Definitely as an educator, as you go up, you start to see people below you on a similar level as students. I have come from a very mature environment. I ran a seven million dollar job ….and I could blow thousands of dollars on equipment if I thought we needed them and then I come into teaching and I wanted a whiteboard marker, I was allowed only one … I just thought this is ridiculous … Often there is a lot of lecturing from my senior executive to staff and I have never experienced that before … yeah, it was a funny environment, in terms of that, it was very different."*

Jim's experiences may also be reflective of other second career teachers who have worked in corporate environments. They see the priorities, goals and ways of running an organisation as being very different from those of schools. Their views and beliefs require adjusting to the differences that exist in the two work environments. Kate made reference to teachers' lack of knowledge about working in the outside world, expressing her disbelief:

> *"I don't think they realise, specially teachers who have never had another career before, you don't realise how wonderful this job is. They have no idea the kinds of cut-throat pressure there is in, well, I worked in private industry for only two years but even in the government, especially in the hierarchy that I was in, it's just constant. You are constantly fighting a co-worker, you are fighting with clients."*

However, Kate's remarks were made in the context of the collegiality that she found to be existing in teaching in contrast to her previous career. Collegiality is discussed next.

Presence/absence of collegiality

Second career teachers' views on collegiality are interesting as these are from people who have worked elsewhere with different work colleagues and in different and sometimes challenging circumstances. Kate made reference to her prior career:

> *"[I] found teaching to be a much better choice. It is the collegiality that you have with teachers … teachers are like … dropping things to help you and asking 'do you need help*

with that?, I'll get that for you, I'll do this for you' … so different to my previous work environment where you had people stabbing you in the back … whereas, here, it is all kind of one level."

Amy, Elizabeth and Tasfia also made reference to a *"supportive staff environment*" in their interview response. On the other hand, Jim found a lack of collegiality when he started as a teacher and gave instances of lack of *"resource sharing"* to make his point. He added that when he first started teaching, it was *"literally a sink-or-swim type of adventure and … in terms of support, it was very tough"*. Jim's remarks on the lack of collegiality resonated with feelings of *"isolation"* that he experienced as a mature age teacher, discussed in a later section.

Collegiality was also associated with forging friendships (with colleagues) and the differences that existed between schools and the participants' prior workplaces. In their descriptions, there emerged a voice of isolation and the absence of social connectivity with colleagues. Jim, Kate and Tasfia described the differences in interactions with colleagues between their two careers. While they were able to interact socially with colleagues in their prior workplaces, they were all challenged by the inability to pursue social relations with other teachers, thus leaving them feeling isolated:

"I do miss that a little bit, yes, I mean you do get a little bit of that [adult talk] in the staffroom but all we ever talk about is kids. I think that my old job is much more social. Like we would get together in the lunch room and just chat or if I was feeling a bit bored, I would just walk down to my friend's office and we all just sit around there for 15 minutes and have a big gossip about social things. Whereas here, it's not really that social." (Kate)

"In my other career, everyone would be involved in, you know, sitting around … it doesn't seem to be that sort of community here … Three o'clock Friday everyone disappears. And I know there are lots of reasons for that but yeah, it just seems a bit different to what I am used to. That was tough starting a fresh job." (Jim)

"I think what I missed was not the job but actually my colleagues. You know, because at my previous workplace, there's always things happening and every now then, you go out with your friends." (Tasfia)

All three participants pointed out how they still kept in contact with their former colleagues, catching up on a social basis. There was acknowledgement, however, that school circumstances are different and that the type of *"social"* conversations they were previously engaged in were not possible in the school environment. Jim also felt that the staff environment was like any other workplace, where relationships are built depending on mutual rapport.

The same point was echoed by Matthew. He described how his prior work experiences and corporate environment helped him to forge friendships with teachers from other faculties. He says that the staffroom is like any other workplace with its own politics and conflicts, where one tends to form relationships with some and not others:

> *"Wherever you go, I think there is a certain amount of conflict, you tend to form relationships with particular groups of people … coming from a corporate background, you have got the ability to walk 20 metres and associate with people from a different faculty if you wish, so that probably made the transition for me quite easy."*

Participants' language to describe differences

One relevant point to note here in the case of Amy (as well as other participants) is the use of language to distinguish between the school and what exists outside school. Amy's use of the expression *"real world"* to point out the difference between school and outside school is reiterated in other places. For instance, Amy refers to her conversations with staff and how she sometimes felt like saying*, "'hey, this is not done like this in the real world' … I feel that teaching is a little bit removed from the commercial world"*. Matthew and Jim expressed similar sentiments at various points in their interviews. For instance, Jim referred to the teaching environment as *"very alien"*. He also said he had to *"bite his tongue sometimes"* when he felt like saying *"we don't do this in the real world"*. Tasfia expressed the same language in an earlier theme about her desire to instil in students the skills needed for the *"outside world"*. She makes a point about the vast difference with respect to working environment: "*They are two different worlds altogether.*" Both Amy and Kate referred to school culture as an *"institution"*. The use of such language in the context of school as a workplace may be reflective of how participants distinguished themselves from other teachers.

School context and circumstances at the time of the interviews were crucial determining factors in many of the responses and participants gave reasons and examples for their choice of response. Some of the responses related to the issues and challenges they faced as beginning teachers. Again, their responses were based on their particular situations in the schools they were teaching in. Beginning teacher perspectives are mentioned later in this chapter.

Views and perceptions of school as a work environment

This theme explores the dynamics of the school as a workplace environment and how career change teacher participants perceived it, having been in other work environments in their previous careers. The theme helps to understand how easy or difficult it was for the participants to adjust to their workplace surroundings and in what ways this contributed to or restricted their overall school experiences. Participants' descriptions of the differences in the two work environments are varied, ranging from aspects of space and noise to their views on the kinds of freedom and flexibility offered in each of the environments.

Space and noise

Spatial and audio-sensory aspects are particularly relevant to someone coming from a different career and environment with different working conditions and different spatial and noise levels. Tasfia, who had worked in the banking sector, mentions how difficult it was to get used to the noise in a school with kids talking and squabbling. She expressed shock and frustration as she adjusted in her role as teacher:

> *"Where I worked before, you have your own personal space. It is so quiet; everyone is so quiet. You just get used to that quietness and you have your own personal space. But at school, even walking in the corridor, you are sharing your personal space with so many. There is so much noise. You are sharing your own personal space with so many. There is so much noise everywhere. It was very difficult and challenging in the beginning. I used to have headaches. It was just the environment and the noise level. You really have to get used to the noise … kids talking, squabbling whatever. It is just constant."*

However, she also mentioned that she got used to the noise and space aspects later, as evident in this description: "*During the school break, I always go and say hello to my friends … when I went there, oh my goodness, I found the place so quiet. I guess in teaching you are up on your feet all day long. I guess you just get used to it.*" As a beginning teacher, Tasfia was

clearly challenged by differences in the environment but whether that continued to impact on her later and to what extent is not clear.

Jim's description of the school as a workplace (in terms of space) was similar to Tasfia's. However, rather than distinguishing the school from his previous workplace, Jim commented on the changes in the school environment and classrooms since the time he left school:

> *"I was surprised. I thought [the classrooms] would be bigger. They were very small. They have bunched in a whole bunch of students in a very small space … the classrooms, as a workplace, hasn't changed."*

Jim remarked on entering the school as a beginning teacher: *"Being locked in a tiny room with children screaming, yes, it took a while to be comfortable with that. I find the classroom, it's not claustrophobic but it feels incredibly small."* However, he was not perturbed by the noise.

In contrast to Tasfia, Matthew responded positively when questioned on the differences in the noise and space aspects between his prior work environment and the school: *"I quite enjoy that dynamic of you know, the kids coming in and chatter and the noise and then you carry on with them once you are sitting down."* Having worked in corporations with big open plan space setting, Matthew took advantage of the *"larger staffroom"* setting in his school to build relationships and develop friendships with teachers from other faculties.

Constant and ongoing

In comparison to her previous career, Kate described working in school where "*you are always on*". Kate's description of school as a work environment was not just in terms of the workload but as a place where one could never completely switch off or feel the task had been completed. She described her previous work and talked about the differences in her approach and thinking to explain her point:

> *"In my previous career, I might have to stay there till 8.30pm but once I closed my office door and left, I didn't think about it again until I went back the next day. Whereas, here [in teaching], it will be Sunday and I will be at a barbeque with friends, but at the back of my mind, I am thinking, 'what will we do for news topic talks next week? Or have I really given this girl enough work with her reading? Or I can plan for the next unit for next term?' You are always on and I have always this low level guilt and anxiety that I*

shouldn't be having fun, that I should be preparing more … it is constant work … I work harder, I work more constantly and I am always thinking about it. I don't switch off at all."

Kate reiterated the last sentence, saying how she was satisfied with herself and her performance in her previous career but that feeling never occurred in teaching. She pointed out the differences in the stresses and challenges that came her way in the two careers and how the stress and pressure was a constant feature in teaching because it is *"internalized"*:

"I put stress on myself and challenge myself more in this [teaching] job … It doesn't matter what I do … I am never happy and I never think it is okay … it is not me that I am letting down, if the students are not getting it right, I think 'you didn't do better as much as you could have or if you had just explained that in a different way.'"

Kate's response gave the impression she was being a bit harsh on herself, although she also mentioned that other teachers she had known also felt the same and agreed it had never been *"good enough"*.

Kate provides an interesting perspective of what it means to be a teacher. Her reference to "*always having a low level guilt"* and *"never good enough"* could be interpreted as viewing teaching as never complete or fully accomplished. This is not just from a career change angle but for any teacher.

Jim's response to how he viewed teaching echoed Kate's comments in terms of being constant and ongoing in his thoughts as well as never feeling complete or satisfied. We also saw in the previous thematic aspect Jim's description of the school environment as *"alien*", a place where it is hard to get tangible results, unlike his prior career where he could see *"improvements"* in his work. Jim described being a teacher as an "*ongoing battle*":

"In construction, there were greater challenges in the sense there were projects to be completed … concrete is put, building is up, you go home and sleep. Next day, you are worried about other things … You could find increments of improvements everywhere. Teaching is something I definitely take everywhere I go … The lesson part is never complete, there is always growth in terms of lessons … I don't think you ever stop in improving your lessons … You look at it and you go, 'that's not perfect, that could be revised, that could be enhanced' … So I always worry about that … It never stops, it is a

very demanding job. I'd say of all the jobs I have had, this is the most demanding in terms of you never sleep, you always worry about things."

Freedom and flexibility

Amy's perceptions of school and staff culture were discussed in the previous thematic aspect. Having been part of the business world, it was difficult for her to get back "*in the life cycle of the school"*. She viewed the school as *"removed from the outside commercial world"*. Amy's description showed her struggle to understand the workings behind the school system. She described the school as an *"institution with rules"* that gave her a sense of discomfort and lack of freedom: "*I found the whole school environment very different from any other work experience I have had. Because it is an institution and because of the rules and regulations, you are going by the clock, it is so rigid, you can't just walk out ...the nature of dealing with students, it is just not part of the business world ...some of my experiences are at odds with how things are done at school"*

Jim had similar views on the school as a work environment. He spoke of *"being controlled by a bell, seemed very childish to me as an adult to have to follow the same rules."* He again described a sense of bewilderment coming from a different work setting. Even though teacher participants have been in a school environment themselves (as students), the time gap and exposure to other experiences caused them to be puzzled by the nature and workings of the school.

Sharon's view of the school as workplace environment was unlike Amy's or Jim's. She enjoyed the freedom offered by the school environment. She made reference to her previous career (s) to highlight the inflexibility and restrictions that came with those jobs and to point out how teaching brings autonomy and flexibility:

"I really like the aspect that you run your own day … Whether you have a good day or a bad day, you run your own day. And get to do whatever you want to do, I really like that aspect. how organised you are, how much you get time, how much time you have got left and what you do with it is up to you is the fantastic aspect."

Matthew, like Sharon, also enjoyed the dynamics and flexibility of being a school teacher. Matthew's response on the school environment reflects his overall approach to his career change. He approached teaching *"with the inner determination that I was going to do it and do it well"*.

Views and perceptions of students

In the interviews I sought teacher participants' views about how they viewed students. Participants' responses were diverse and were informed by their previous career experiences, their current school student context, and references to when teachers themselves were students in school. For most of them, it was the first time they were teaching a class and most of them spoke to students as adults. For some of them, this was a challenging experience. As they described their views of students they were led to also describe their experiences with students as a beginning teacher. Connections are evident between this thematic aspect and the aspect of drawing on prior experiences with respect to students. How teachers draw upon their prior experiences is closely related to their views and perceptions of students. The age of the students may also influence teacher responses.

Career contexts— differences and adjustments

Sharon's responses reflected her prior perspective as a flight stewardess and in her other careers. She talked of how she viewed her students more like *"clients"*, and the positive and negative impacts of this view. She was able to display confidence in the classroom due to her experience dealing with large groups. Treating students as clients and having experience in the hospitality industry meant she developed a thick skin and was not easily offended. She also mentioned the negative impact, for instance, when dealing with student issues:

> *"I think of the students as clients, that comes through my head quite a bit … due to the clientele thing … Luckily from years at hospitality, I don't take anything from the students, the clients personally. I have been a flight attendant for so long, so smiling is part of it. So, I had to be careful of that because I had one student who thought I was not taking their problem seriously, I had to watch that and I wasn't really aware of that at the beginning."*

Previous thematic aspects showed us Jim's views and perceptions on school and staff as well as his views on classroom management. Jim said: *"I probably treat them too much like adults."* Jim needed to adjust both in his thinking and his approach. As Jim put it, the classroom presented "*a whole different spectrum of behaviour management, task management … and the pedagogy and teaching [students] how to do things, getting the message across, even communicating with them, it was completely different … I thought [communicating with students] would be similar to an adult. Obviously, it is very different … and it takes a long time to really be able to manage that space really well."*

As the only primary school second career teacher participant in the study, Kate's views provided an interesting insight into how she viewed the young students. She believed that children are capable of sustaining an adult-level conversation. Her views reflected her prior background and experience:

> *"I talk to the kids, even though they are only five, I talk to them as colleagues … I don't tend to baby them at all … It's hard to describe and looks like I am blowing my own trumpet here, but I think that talking to them like I did with my old colleagues, … they kind of rise to meet me … I joke around with them the same as I would joke around with people I was managing.".*

Kate also differentiated herself from other teachers who may have a different approach because they *"only talked to children"* whereas she drew on experiences "*I learnt in psychology, conflict resolution skills and my prior career".*

Tasfia *"talked and respected them like adults. I don't think you can relate your experience from one school to the other because the kids are so different … You see them as adults and you do give them respect."*. Her responses are indicative of a career changer whose primary interaction had been with adults until now. This had encouraged her in the view that *"you see them as adults and give them respect"*. Tasfia also mentioned that the age of students determined her views, and she believed in treating the *"senior students as adults"*. However, teaching in a challenging school meant Tasfia was not always able to put her beliefs into practice and found it difficult to treat students as adults. She spoke of having to *"raise my voice, sending letters home, give them a lecture to keep them grounded"*.

School contexts and changing views

Amy described her views both when she first started and later when she was in her second year, which was at the time of her interview. Her views have changed over time. We can recall that Amy mentioned drawing mainly from her own school days. Her views on how she first met students as a teacher are thus based on her own experiences and expectations when she herself was a student. The responses at first are more focused on Amy as self—what is important to her and what she wants as a teacher. In her second year, there is a change in tone as Amy focuses on the student and student learning. While not indicative of career change teachers in particular, her response depicting change is reflective of a beginning teacher journey and development, moving from self-focus to student-focus:

> *"[When I first started] I think I viewed the students a little bit like, remembering back to when I was a student and like I was then, so, looking back, they were like 'little me's' back when I was at school … I wanted them to like and respect me as a teacher, and I wanted to teach, I wanted them to be able to learn from me. So, I looked at them in that sort of context and caring about how they did, eh, and caring about what they thought about me as well. Now, that has changed a lot … I care less about what they think about me, it worries me less if they think I am harsh …I care more that they learn … I care more about them doing and learning Maths. So, that's how much has changed."*

Matthew's response did not necessarily come from a career change angle but reflected his overall values and philosophy as a teacher. His beliefs and expectations about what students are capable of determined his overall approach to students:

> *"Students who like the teachers like the subject and they like to do well in that subject. It is also the relationships you build as well. I think if you approach the students not necessarily as children, certainly not as adults, you don't speak to them in the same way, but if you give them a clear idea of explicitly what the expectations in your classroom are [both for behaviour and from an educational point of view] and if you maintain that consistency … and also combine that with a little bit of knowledge about them personally, it is about building relationships."*

Second career teacher participants' views of their students when they first stepped into their schools and classrooms provide interesting insights into their behaviours, practices and approaches as teachers. It may seem that most participants initially tended to treat students as adults since most of their interaction in their prior career had been with adults. However, this was not always the case as the study shows. Second career teachers also needed to make adjustments to deal with students and student behaviour.

Beginning teacher perspectives

Participants were given the opportunity to discuss their views and experiences, both during their practicum period and as a classroom teacher. The beginning teacher interview questions leaned more towards the challenges that teacher participants may have faced and whether and how being a second career teacher impacted on their beginning teacher experiences. Participant responses were informed by contextual factors such as the type of school they were placed in. Six of the seven teacher participants had more than one practicum experience.

Beginning teacher perspectives during practicum

Teacher participants were asked to share their first time experience of teaching and how they felt when they first walked into the classroom as a second career student teacher. How do career change teachers view their practicum experiences, having gone through the teacher education program as mature age individuals? Responses were mixed and teachers summed up their overall practicum experience in various ways such as *"pleasant", "difficult", "nerve-racking", "stressful"* and *"eye-opening"*. I do not go into detail about all aspects of their description but describe only the most relevant.

Challenges

Participants described their practicum experiences in the same language and tone that any other student teacher would, with all its complexities and tribulations. Their descriptions were heavily influenced by the type of school they were placed in for their practicum experience as well as the support they received (or did not receive) from their supervisor and other teachers. Except for Kate, all of the teachers had had two or more practica and they described their experiences in both schools. Six of the seven teachers placed in a public school for their practicum said that they *"struggled"* with classroom management issues. Some of the schools were described by the teachers as *"difficult", "under-funded", "severely-disadvantaged", "poorly managed"* and *"in decline"*, with students coming from a range of different socio-economic backgrounds. Students in these schools were described by the teachers as having *"behaviour problems"* or *"discipline issues"*. Amy gave an example to demonstrate the *"serious behaviour issues"* she encountered during her practicum. She said she found it very challenging and difficult when one of the students *"slams the door so hard that the glass breaks and the door frame comes off"*.

Participants also referred to the role of their supervisor and how this influenced their early career teaching experiences. Amy and Elizabeth both referred to the lack of support and understanding by their supervisor and school management while Matthew credited his success and approach to his master teacher who was also a second career teacher: "*A lot of my teaching approach has been influenced by him in both what I would do and what I would never do."*

Teachers' experiences during practicum also played a role in their choice about where they wanted to teach after practicum completion. For instance, for Amy and Elizabeth whose experiences were stressful, both preferred not to teach in a school with *"discipline issues"*.

Overall, the study did not find that participants' responses to practicum challenges reflected a career change perspective in particular. Participants did not indicate whether it was more or less of a struggle due to being a mature age individual.

Sharing expertise

From a mature age perspective, Jim and Tasfia gave examples of sharing their knowledge and expertise with other teachers when an opportunity arose during their practicum. Both the participants described that experience as something they valued and enjoyed, particularly since they felt their expertise was appreciated by colleagues. Jim's practicum afforded him the opportunity to train teachers to use new technology.

> *"Being a slightly older teacher, going in there … I'd come from construction, I had never done teaching, to tell them how to do their job, I had come from industry, that's how they perceived me, teachers tended to open up … so they were more open to listening and it was very good for me as well because I enjoyed teaching teachers in that regard. It stood out as an experience because it got me to deal with a faculty of teachers and interact with the school, its dynamics etc."*

This perception was evident in all of Jim's account as he narrated his relationship with school management and his expectations about how he would be treated as an experienced career change individual. Similarly, Tasfia's prior experience in computers meant she felt confident about sharing her expertise and helping other teachers with the technology. Her relations with colleagues thus strengthened with mutual respect.

> *"I was doing bits and pieces on the computing side and if there were any issues on that front, they knew where to come. And there were so many teachers who knew nothing about computers, so I was there to help them as well. So, I guess it was like a give and take, kind of a mutual agreement."(Tasfia)*

Positive view

Another interesting aspect was the emphasis some teacher participants placed on their practicum as a positive and beneficial learning experience, even when faced with a challenging and difficult practicum. This may be reflective of a second career teacher coming into the teaching profession with life and general experience and tending to view things with a mature disposition:

> *"I was afforded the opportunity during my Praticum to watch other teachers and also to view other student teachers. I found that it really assisted my development … also with my master teacher, we would always sit down in the end of each day and you know, talk through … though I was really glad not to get placed in one of those schools, the [challenging] school prepared me … was really positive as well". (Matthew)*

> *"It was a real effort to teach. Kids were unmotivated and things like that. But it was interesting to see what worked and what didn't and I think I learnt a lot in that particular prac." (Jim referring to one of his practicums)*

Sharon was in fact grateful to have been placed in a challenging school and the experience it offered:

> *"I am so thankful I didn't go to a school [for practicum] where people are so well-behaved … It was fantastic because it gave me an idea of the bell-curve of behaviour … kids having a fight outside the classroom and staff locking themselves [in], so it was really quite good to go there and see so that I could have some sort of realistic view. I really liked seeing different ways of doing things."*

Beginning teacher perspectives as a classroom teacher

As a second career beginning teacher commencing teaching in a classroom after completing their practicum, classroom management issues still existed and were raised by the teacher participants. However, participants also spoke of specific challenges associated with being a mature age individual and coming into the profession as a career change teacher.

Inexperienced but confident

Although Amy felt the presence of a collegial working school environment, she also expressed a view about how she felt in her communications with other staff members. Her descriptive words captured the way some second career teachers may feel when they first begin teaching—a juxtaposition of confidence (that comes with experience) and struggle (that comes with being a teacher for the first time):

> *"I think the thing that was difficult was starting again, you know you are like a new bee and you have got no idea what you're doing and with [teaching] staff who are competent and capable and can teach … At times, it is difficult as an older person because you have had status and experience in other fields and to start* again *not having the status and*

experience in the staffroom … I felt confident in dealing with other teachers. I felt inexperienced but confident."

Amy's comment resonates with references to second career beginning teachers as "expert-novices" in previous research studies (Williams, 2013, p. 22).

Lack of support and feelings of isolation

Kate mentioned how the lack of support she received may have been to do with being mature age, with other teachers assuming she has been teaching for a long time and was *"doing fine"*. Moreover, she was not sure about what others would think of her if she asked for help and this prevented her from requesting support:

"I had been in the school two months and [other staff] just assumed that I had come from another school … so they think that I had been teaching for 13 years. And when I said, 'I have no idea, this is my second month teaching', they all kind of went, 'Oh, I thought you had been teaching for like 10 years'. Which is a compliment, I guess I was faking the confidence a little bit but it would have been nice to get support … and you don't ask because you don't want to look like you don't know what you are doing … So, you kind of keep quiet and wait for them to make an offer … I have seen the way we support this another girl who has just come from university … Nobody offered any of that to me …. It's not offered as readily because they assume you are doing fine … I have to kind of fight to go on courses because they don't believe I don't know."

On a similar note, Jim also pointed out the challenges he faced in the context of professional development workshops for beginning teachers where he was *"being lumped in with all the new-scheme teachers*" and felt the need for *"specific professional development or conferences or forums for second career teachers".* Kate also felt the same about the need for beginning teacher conferences that catered for mature age teachers.

Jim, who considered himself "*towards the older end of beginning teachers*", felt isolated when he first started. There were not many mature age teachers to talk to. Feelings of isolation are also related to the aspect of collegiality and support discussed earlier:

"I suppose I am in this sort of limbo zone, in the sense of being older than say other new teachers but not old … I am not 50 years old … you are like the second class citizen because the majority of teachers seem to be these young 21/22 year olds and they have very different sets of values and different view on employment."

Lack of recognition

While not particularly related to the beginning teacher perspective, mature age teachers who have had experience communicating with adults at different levels may find it difficult to comprehend the workings of school management. Career change teachers can also view themselves differently from other beginning teachers and expect to be viewed in the same way by others. For instance, Jim looked for recognition and acknowledgement from senior management rather than being *"subject to lecturing"*. His response indicated frustration and a distance between himself and the senior management:

> *"Being lectured by executives, and senior executives about how to do things, you know, I am not a 21/22 year old. I have experience, I have managed 50/60 people on site before, so in terms of being in that level … like, it was a step down … in terms of responsibility and management, it was a step down from where I was … I am not credited for what I have done previously and that does bug me."*

He suggested improvements in the school system such as a different and improved approach by senior management that takes into account the background and experience of second career teachers:

> *"Second career teachers are going to have different views [about] the system to what many others teachers will have. Managing a second career teacher is very different to managing a 21 or 22 year old beginning teacher. Second career teachers may have 10 or 20 years' experience and so, it is a different management thing. You need a different approach to dealing … I think also guiding executive and senior executive on managing second career teacher may be the way to go."*

On the issue of lack of appropriate support for second career teachers, Kate has similar views to Jim. She pointed out that *"principals should know [that you are a mature age] and take note of the fact … That might make them more aware."* The point being made by both Jim and Kate is the need for principals and school executive to be aware of the presence of second career teachers when they join their schools

Financial issues

The issue of financial and monetary rewards can be a concern for career change teachers who were often in well-paying careers in their previous employment. Previous literature also discusses second career teachers' concerns about salary (Richardson & Watt, 2008).

Matthew, Tasfia, Amy and Jim all raised the issue of their salary now as a teacher. For example, Matthew, whose previous salary had been significantly higher, felt *"the only backward step in the journey [of being a teacher] has been the financial one"*.

In her second interview, Sharon talked about how she became painfully aware of the pay/reward system for teachers. She felt *"the inability to see a clear pathway to promotion*". There is a general feeling of frustration and discomfort in her tone as she hesitatingly allows herself to be someone who teaches now *"at a second year teacher level as that is what I get paid for*". She went on:

> *"I've really struggled this year with the school's set structure. I have been discouraged by an inability to see a clear pathway through to promotion and have felt affected by a malaise brought on by the fact that when I give my all and above … I have seen no improvement in position and in financial payment."*

While Sharon's comments relate to her specific circumstances, it also reflected her frustrations at coming from a non-teaching background, knowing what she was and could be capable of earning elsewhere. Her comments also capture the unequal relationship between the demands of teaching and the pay system and reflect issues that face all teachers, second career or otherwise.

Coping mechanisms

We saw earlier that participants drew upon their life experiences to cope with beginning teacher challenges. Their general maturity and personal coping mechanisms may also serve as strategies when dealing with issues and behaviour. Kate and Sharon shared similar views, and although Sharon's response has been mentioned before under a different theme, it is repeated here to show the similarity with Kate's view:

> *"My expectations of them as students have been tempered with time as well with my aging. Like I don't expect to be able to get every student and get them to a point where I would like them to be at or to do something that is closer to perfection. They are just individual people and that's what it is going to be. Not everybody is going to fit some mould that doesn't even really exist." (Sharon)*

> *"Age has made me more relaxed in the way I deal with children [example provided]. I don't let things get me down. I don't let failure send me to my bed. I don't get as stressed*

by the kids … more patience, more enthusiastic, lower expectation of the kids' behaviour, like, I am not expecting them to be perfect all the time." (Kate)

The stresses in her previous career made Kate appreciate teaching and also seem to have provided her with the coping strategies she needed. In this context, she mentioned other beginning teachers who faced challenges and who wanted to quit teaching. She felt other beginning teachers *"who have never had another career before don't realise how wonderful this job is*".

Being a teacher now

Participants were asked about how they saw themselves after having made the transition and what it meant for them to be a teacher at this point in their lives. This thematic aspect also explored their plans for the future. For instance, Amy and Jim were interested in pursuing further education to hone their intellectual skills in ways that would benefit students. Matthew and Sharon indicated their interest in developing their skills beyond the classroom by exploring further leadership opportunities in the school.

Teacher participants' descriptions detailed below relate to their thinking about becoming a second career teacher and how teaching as a career impacted on each of them as a human being. The quotes below also provide a glimpse into teachers' thinking about how they see themselves now and in the future since their career change. These descriptions are relevant to multiple themes. The existential themes that have been invoked by participants' rich descriptions are explored and interpreted more fully in the following chapter:

"I care less now about going places and I care more about being happy and satisfied with myself and what I am doing. Maybe a change in view and getting a bit older and wiser … I see myself as being a little different in that I have done lots of other things and teaching is what I am doing now." (Amy)

"I am still in the thick of it in terms of sorting out my story … I still haven't got it together but I feel more confident that I will now though." (Amy)

"I think I have changed since becoming a teacher. I have become more patient with my own children and better able to have a positive and encouraging attitude towards them and I think that is because I have developed those qualities as a teacher." (Amy)

"The way I see myself, well, at the moment, I think I am sort of person, even if I am teaching for one year, I really want to give it my best shot, like as difficult as it may be, I really want to make a difference in these kids lives … I like being up on my feet. Sometimes, it gets very tiring … but it is rewarding as well. Yes, it is quite rewarding." (Tasfia)

"Becoming a teacher sure has changed me … made me a better person, much wiser and more patient … has made me appreciate life and what we have currently much more … made me more considerate towards everyone." (Tasfia)

"Working with children … it's so much nicer. It's impossible to be depressed about your job. Or I find it is impossible. Just looking at them, you know, little smiles or when they get a concept that you didn't think that they could get and they look at you and they are proud and you're proud and it's all just … it's filled with kinda little life affirming moments … every day is really wonderful. I am a teacher forever now, I can't believe I waited for so long … It's like opening a present on Christmas morning, just to have their little brains open and to see the meaning made for them." (Kate)

"I am glad I had the prior experience. I am glad I didn't come in early. Makes me much more thankful for [being a teacher] and I am much more comfortable with parents and other staff members. I quickly fit in."(Kate)

"Because I am used to taking charge … being a teacher has made me feel a bit more 'authoritative' somehow—find myself organising things and explaining things to people, probably more than they need. I don't think this is any different because I am a second career teacher. I don't think anyone in particular has contributed to this change." (Elizabeth)

"The enjoyment that I found in teaching, both from a classroom face-to-face point of view, in playground during duty, developing a relationship with a wide range of students … the ability to make a connection and wanting to make a difference is something I enjoy. And also the ability to be involved in a wide range of activities away from the classroom, whether it is coaching sport, whether it is being involved in aboriginal education, in peer support, those kind of things. I found it incredibly rewarding … I would never go back to my previous career." (Matthew)

> *"It is watching the lights get turned on, it's something that really motivated me … It is the ability to tell them how big the universe is … that's the really rewarding part for me. I think the students really respond to the fact that I had this experience from elsewhere." (Jim)*

> *"I find probably the most frustrating part is dealing with staff and senior management … I don't know where to go with that … better communication maybe … It needs to be addressed" (Jim)*

> *"Yes, I think I have changed as a person but maybe it's because of age. It is not because of teaching. I think I changed as a person because of age and then teaching was a product of that change … I think just life and life experience brought about a change. I think it was 36 for me and that changed my focus, so teaching was a product. Even though I had done all the groundwork and I knew that I was doing the groundwork when I was doing it, it was still no impetus for the change until, like last year, when things did change." (Sharon)*

The final thematic aspect of "being a teacher now" attempts to bring out the essence of being and becoming a second career beginning teacher. Some responses show a deeper understanding of the self while being mindfully in touch with others (the students). Amy and Tasfia talked about the human qualities they have developed as teachers. Participants' wisdom and experience permitted them to look at themselves in a more meaningful way than before. Their experience also allowed them to see these changes in themselves now as teachers, compared to their previous selves. They have learned more about themselves through reflecting on how they live now and through their experiences. There is a mindful awareness of the changes. This genuine awareness is reflected in turn in their everyday teaching as they go about their business with the students in many different ways. The awareness may also be reflected in the confidence and creativity they display as classroom teachers.

Resonance with previous studies

> *"To establish a strong relation with a certain question, the researcher must … remain animated by the question in a full and human sense." (van Manen, 1990, p. 33)*

The purpose of this research is to understand the nature and essence of being a second career teacher in the light of participants' rich descriptions of their experiences, through further meaningful analysis of all of the thematic aspects. The results of the study expounded in

teachers' descriptions—while rich and informative—are also messy and the interpretations are informed by this 'messiness' of participants' lived worlds.

I observed there were some aspects of teacher participants' descriptions of their school experiences that resonated with findings from previous studies on career change teachers. I have chosen not to present participants' thematic aspects alongside previous findings as I felt this might take away the richness and aliveness of the participants' stories and the 'fullness' of their lived experiences (van Manen, 1990).

I will now highlight a few findings from previous literature on career change teachers below, that are relevant to my research:

- Drawing on their prior work and life experiences to enhance students' teaching and learning in the classroom has been reiterated in studies such as in Chambers (2002) and Marinell (2008). Chambers' study found participants expressed the value of and took efforts to "connect the classroom with the outside world" (p. 216). Helping students to apply and understand the real-world applications of the subject at hand was emphasised by the participants in Chambers' study. Similarly, Marinell's study (2008) on second career science and mathematics teachers also revealed participants use of real-world examples from their previous experiences to help students connect with subject content. In my study Tasfia, Amy and Jim talked about giving examples from the real-world in their roles as mathematics and science teachers.
- The participants in Chambers' study (2002) believed they used their life experience skills, reporting that their age and experience have given them personal qualities such as being compassionate and tolerant, making them more effective in the classroom (p. 214). Amy, Tasfia and Matthew echoed similar comments. Chambers' study also indicated participants having 'realistic expectations" (p. 215) about students due to the wider perspective they have adopted as a teacher. This resonated with comments by Kate and Sharon in my research, indicating their maturity and life experience.
- In Powell's (1997) comparative analysis of a first and second career science teacher participant, it was found that even with extensive real-world science experience and non-textbook oriented practices and beliefs about teaching science, the textbook became the central frame of reference for the second career science teacher towards the end of the year. The study suggested not having beginning teachers teach in classrooms that have limited or no resources and facilities. Reforming practices in

schools should be such that they do not "cause teachers to compromise their beliefs about meaningful teaching and learning" (p. 354). This resonates with Jim in my research who felt frustrated by the school system as well as by the lack of adequate resources needed to teach science (e.g. limited use of projectors etc). While Jim did not talk about losing his passion for sharing science with his students, Powell's study raises parallels with my research and indicates the need for reforms in schools so that the career change teacher's potential is not inhibited in any way.

- The isolated nature of teaching came up in teachers' responses in Marinell's study where participants mentioned fewer interactions with work colleagues compared to with their previous co-workers (2008). Kate and Jim both spoke about the same issue when discussing the nature of school as a work environment.
- The issue of collegiality has been raised in Williams' (2010) study. The teacher participant in the study knew and understood the staffroom politics and the dynamics that exist in any workplace having worked elsewhere (p. 645), thus echoing a similar point made by Matthew.

Following an interpretive analysis, this results chapter has discussed the seven participants' descriptions of their experiences as second career beginning teachers, organised under thematic headings. The descriptions and analysis also opened a window to the lifeworlds of each teacher participant. While the nine thematic headings were initially developed and interpretively analysed from the interview questions framework, teachers talked about various aspects of being a teacher at different points throughout the interviews and I have captured this in each of the themes.

Such an interpretive analysis to teachers' stories about their career change paths and school experiences has allowed for existential themes to emerge from the data. I explore these existential themes in the next chapter.

Chapter 6

The Phenomenological and Pedagogic Sense of Being a Second Career Teacher

Chapter overview

In the previous chapter, I discussed nine thematic aspects that emerged from interpretively analysing the rich descriptions of participants' experiences as second career beginning teachers. The thematic aspects allowed me to discover the essential meanings and qualities of participants and their lived experiences. Reflectively engaging with the participants' stories allowed me to uncover the existential sense of being a second career teacher and this is discussed in this chapter. Since the phenomenological inquiry is practice based, I also aim to understand the nature of the teacher participants' 'pedagogic' approach. I engage with certain of the thematic aspects to understand the lifeworlds of the seven teacher participants.

I discuss the phenomenological and pedagogic sense of being a second career teacher under three existential sections. The first, **An existential perspective on reasons and motivations**, provides my understanding of career change teachers' reasons for entering the profession from an existential perspective, referring to my own data and published studies. To develop the existential argument I unpack the intrinsic reasons given by career change teachers and their descriptions about their inner search for meaning during the process of changing careers to become a teacher.

The second section, **Teacher participants' lifeworlds,** is a discussion of teacher participants' lifeworlds using the existential themes of lived relation and lived space. I have sought to describe the nature and essence of being a second career teacher through these two existential themes and by phenomenologically engaging with teacher participants' stories about their school experiences.

Finally, under **Becoming**, I bring together the arguments made in the first and second sections to understand teacher participants' journeys in their ways of existing in the school and in the world after changing careers.

The discussion chapter also sets out the connection between quality teacher characteristics and the attributes of career change teacher participants. This analysis builds upon and situates the observations made in the literature review chapter regarding links between teacher quality and career change teachers.

At this point, I reiterate the significance of the terms used in this chapter that carry more than everyday meanings. Concepts such as 'meaningful', insightful', 'understanding', 'ways of existing', 'awareness' and 'becoming' are full of meaning in phenomenological research. These concepts thus need to be read with a 'phenomenological' lens, as I make clear in my discussion below.

An existential perspective on reasons and motivations

Teachers' reasons and motivations for changing careers are generally understood from a pragmatic perspective, where a number of factors are associated with their decision to change careers. I believe individuals' reasons and motivations for choosing teaching as a second career can also be understood from an existential perspective. Observing teacher participants' reasons and motivations existentially is one of the rationales for using hermeneutic phenomenology as my research methodology. This existential argument arises out of a phenomenological interpretation of what it means to be a second career teacher.

An intrinsic understanding of career change teachers' reasons and motivations from an existential angle leads to the argument I develop around the second section, teacher participants' lifeworlds. There I argue that teacher participants entered the profession with an already existing existential awareness of lived relation (or being with students) in the same way that the lived quality of an experience is "always already understood within experience itself" (Burch, 1990, p. 133). This existential awareness led participants in turn to a 'pedagogic' understanding of students (as in mindful care) and an enhanced understanding of themselves when they became teachers.

A phenomenological perspective has a philosophical dimension, relating to how we live and search for what brings meaning to our lives. While Heidegger inquires into human existence and the purpose of living at an abstract level, he also brings such inquiry into the

practice of ordinary life and ways of living. Moreover, the principles of human existence can be understood "in the practical—to do with the living and embodying an ontological self-understanding in our everyday practices" (Thomson, 2004, p. 443). In my research, participants have situated themselves as classroom teachers and I am attempting to understand their ontological and epistemological existence in their practice of living as teachers.

Heidegger's ontological perspective on our ways of being in the world is informed by how humans are absorbed in a mode of "average everydayness" (Krell, 1978, p. 60), being engaged or lost in routine everyday activities that need to be completed. The self is thus lost to the present moment as we live our everyday and familiar lives in a mindless fashion, without questioning ourselves. The inquiring mind and the possibilities that can exist for the self thus remain either undiscovered or concealed in its deficient mode of everydayness. Participants, like all of us, were engaged in completing their routine tasks and activities carrying on their lives in a mode of average everydayness.

While such existence is inevitable, Heidegger described the normal everyday mode of being as "inauthentic"' (cited in Dreyfus, 1991, p. 27), precluding us from attaining clarity and knowing our true self and the possibilities that are open to us in terms of what we want to become. It is through self inquiry, questioning and thoughtful reflection that we are able to own up to ourselves and are thus able to discover pathways and possibilities for "authentic" existence" (p. 27). The process of confronting or questioning ourselves, put simply, is self-understanding and taking responsibility for our self in what exists for us.

Heidegger's use of the term "ownedness" (Thomson, 2004, p. 444) is construed as humans taking responsibility for wanting to understand ourselves. Becoming aware of and inquiring into how we live in the world thus constitutes the first step as we seek to question what we are at present, while, at the same time knowing that other possibilities exist. This process of awareness (or an "un-covering" as Heidegger puts it) and recognition of the possibilities of becoming (what we want to become) is inward looking. It means to understand ourselves (now) in terms of the possible ways of becoming in the future (Heidegger, 1962). The process of 'transformation' (of the self) occurs through awareness and looking inwards at ourselves. It involves questioning our ways of living in the world, leading to ways of becoming informed. Heidegger (1962) likens the process of the becoming of the self to a 'coming home' or 'returning back to the things themselves' because it matters

to us who we are and how we become. One attempts to re-connect to the world in an authentic manner (Thomson, 2004, p. 455). However, this process of 'reflective awareness' to transform ourselves is not easy. Heidegger terms this a "formation" or "education" (*Bildung* in German) in the true sense of the word (as cited in van Manen, 1990, p. 7). I will come back to these concepts in the second part of this chapter in an effort to tie together all parts of my argument.

Here, I am arguing that the stories of some of the teacher participants in the research (Amy, Tasfia, Matthew) depicted an awareness and understanding of the possibilities open to them through searching and self-inquiry, in the sense espoused by Heidegger.

The participants conveyed a feeling of disappointment at living their lives in an everyday mode of existence in their previous careers, whether due to stress or other circumstances. They realised the insignificance of being stressed or worried about seemingly trivial aspects of their prior career: *"being stressed about something that really didn't matter to me"*, as Amy put it.

This everyday mode of living led participants to a process of self-inquiry and questioning about what they wanted to become, not just in terms of the next job, but also in terms of what that next job or career would do to them and their ways of existing in the world. An inquiry into the possibilities that can exist for the self emerged because Amy, Tasfia and Matthew had been in an everydayness (such as a stressful work environment) mode, carrying on with their routine activities. Contemplating changing their careers at this stage in their lives not only included participants thinking about the new career in worldly terms but also included at the same time, contemplation and questioning of their self and ways of existing in the world (now and in the future). When Tasfia or Matthew or Amy were thinking about changing their careers to become teachers, their ways of thinking included questioning what the change would do to them intrinsically. Their inward reflection also included attempting to understand the deeper significance of such a change and what it meant to them in terms of how they wished to live in the world. Such reflection was not possible so long as they continued to live in their everyday mode (of being and existing) in the world. It was the career change decision process that led them to explore these meanings about life:

> *"I wasn't getting much out of the job, like, you know the personal satisfaction … It was because, you know, when I started thinking seriously, I thought with teaching, you are really doing something" (Tasfia)*

Changing careers and reflecting on becoming a teacher opened up ontological ways of understanding and taking responsibility for the self and gave meaning to their existence. This involved recognising a lack of something in their present career and then inquiring inwards in a search for a desire to improve from their current circumstance. For Amy, this looking inwards meant searching for a career that provided for the *"intellectual stimulation"* that a career in teaching offered. In the case of Matthew, Tasfia and Amy, the inward search was driven by their everyday mode of being in their current career and circumstances as they oriented to other possible ways of existing. Kate and the others pointed out this aspect when they described their prior career and combined their description of it with the reasons for choosing teaching:

> *"Looked back a lot and compared it and found [previous career] lacking and found teaching to be a much better choice" (Kate)*

Once participants became aware of possibilities (through changing their careers to teaching), they were able to "turn away" (an existential term used by Heidegger to describe the process of owning up to oneself) from their everyday mode of existence.

Participants recognised that teaching was able to fulfil their inward search and give more personal and intrinsic rewards. Each participant had a view of what being a teacher meant to them, depending on their circumstances and experiences. They recognised teaching to be able to take them away from their everydayness. Participants articulated their intrinsic reasons to become a teacher, expressed in words such as *"personally satisfying and rewarding"* (Tasfia) and *"intellectually stimulating"* (Amy). They had an awareness and a knowing of teaching being a career that would provide personal fulfilment:

> *"I thought with teaching, the personal satisfaction and you are really doing something for the community, you know, making a difference" (Tasfia)*

This was something that their prior careers could not provide. There is also evidence of this in Jim's descriptions of his career change motivations to share his passion for science with students. He cited scientists like Einstein who were both great scientists and educators:

> *"I have got a passion for science … and it's sharing that … if you look at all the great scientists and physicists like Einstein, they all went to teach, that's what I feel like." (Jim)*

Matthew articulated his desire to follow his inner altruistic voice. He felt that becoming a teacher would give him the possibility to transform students' lives:

> *"It was altruistic and I wanted to do something that made a difference." (Matthew)*

An existential understanding of what it means to be a teacher can also be argued in a pedagogic sense. I am referring to pedagogy as a form of human inquiry and understanding education from an ontological perspective (Dall'Alba, 2009). Our inquiry into ourselves is a form of pedagogy in that we become educated about who we are. As I oriented myself to understanding the motivations and reasons of the second career teacher participants, I was drawn to the meaning that they provided in their descriptions. Van Manen (1982) suggests that when someone says they are being called to teach, that calling itself represents pedagogy in a phenomenological sense. Teacher participants like Kate, Sharon and Matthew described how they were called to pedagogy and responded:

> *"I always kinda thought I would become a teacher, like that was the career path that was set out for me before I even started looking out for a career." (Kate)*

Kate's description could be interpreted as revealing an ontological dimension of pedagogy that consisted in a "re(cognition) of being called upon to educate*" (*van Manen, 1982, p. 288). Being 'called' or 'pulled' to teaching (Manuel & Hughes, 2006) demonstrated teachers' ways of responding to their inner voice and provided a pathway towards self-transformation.

Matthew, Sharon and Kate's stories suggested an innate teaching desire that had remained concealed in them and to which they now responded when reflecting on career change. To be a pedagogue is to "change one's self" (Langeveld, cited in van Manen, 1996, p. 43). Participants listened to and recognised their inner voice and took up the pedagogic calling to change the course of their lives. Matthew, Kate and Sharon all had well-paying jobs but responded to the inner call of *"wanting to do something that made a difference"* (Matthew). When participants said they always wanted to be a teacher, they were responding to the call of pedagogy or their inner voice that was always and already present in them.

Previous literature on career change teachers refers to such teachers as 'home-comers' (Crow et al., 1990). For teachers like Sharon and Kate ("*teaching was at the back of their*

mind", as Sharon put it*),* the 'coming home' was like returning to the pedagogic call they had always heard but to which they did not respond until now. Even prior to the career change decision and while still immersed in their everyday mode of being, participants were already aware of the possibilities to transform themselves from being un-informed to becoming. Then at the time of career change, the pedagogic call that had lain dormant until now took over and opened up possibilities of becoming. "Phenomenology requires a continuously beginning anew, a return to the lifeworld" (van Manen, 1982, p. 288). Sharon and Kate's pedagogic calling reiterates what was always and already existent in them, prior to any other epistemological choice as they now oriented themselves to the source itself—that of the pedagogic life of the pedagogue or, to use Husserl's phrase, "back to the things themselves".

An existential interpretation on the career change decision to become a teacher can also be made from previous studies. Career changers offer different ways of explaining their intrinsic or inner reasons to go into teaching that reflect their greater life experience and changing ideals. A changing perspective on life and realising that teaching is better suited to one's personal values and priorities features strongly in the literature (Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003). Career change teachers tend to successfully want to align their professional goals with their personal philosophy and thinking (Williams, 2013). They believe the teaching profession will satisfy their inquiry into their personal and moral dimensions where such an opportunity was not present in their previous careers.

This process of reflection could be construed as showing that participants recognise and understand that there are possible ways of becoming, as they search for something that is meaningful to them, while being able to see the mis-match between their previous profession and personal goals. The lack of fulfilment and dissatisfaction in their prior careers leads to "substantial soul-searching and contemplation" (Powers, 2002, p. 304). Looking inwards and listening to their inner voices pointed the career change individuals towards opening themselves up to the possibilities of becoming a teacher, helping them towards what Powers (2002) refers to as "personal fulfilment" (p. 313). This reflective awareness, being able to hear and question their inner self, demonstrates an existential approach, showing they desire to make meaning in their lives through their existence.

The language used in the literature to depict career changers' personal philosophy at the time of career change includes expressions like "personal fulfilment", "personal commitment to give of themselves" (Powers, 2002, p. 313), the desire to "pursue meaningful work"

(Lerner & Zittleman, 2002, p.7), responding to "personal and moral dimensions of the reward structure" (Watt & Richardson, 2008, p.423) or to "pursue important personal, intellectual and emotional goals" (Williams, 2013, p. 59). These descriptions suggest that career changers recognise opportunities they could not respond to previously. Choosing teaching opened up ways to let those voices emerge, leading to an awakening of an 'un-informed self', as Heidegger would put it (Dreyfus, 1991).

At the same time, the literature echoes the participants' recognition that the need for personal fulfilment was accompanied by a desire to make a difference to students' lives and to contribute to humanity (Powers, 2002). Career change teachers' intrinsic reason for changing careers is always associated with a concern for students. Career change teachers generally see teaching as intrinsically fulfilling and meaningful but something that can be achieved through 'giving' (of themselves) to others, termed "altruism". As Powers mentions, these individuals could have entered any other field of employment but they *chose* teaching because they felt it fulfilled something "deep inside them that needed to be expressed" (p. 313). They sought to create meaning for themselves through making a social contribution as a teacher by helping students. These individuals also looked beyond themselves in the search for meaning—through sharing and transforming students' lives—and perceived themselves as "becoming agents of social and educational reform" (Chambers, 2002, p. 214).

The intrinsic reasons identified in the literature centre around making a positive contribution in the lives of others, helping children and adolescents understand themselves and their place in the world, while at the same time undertaking something that is personally rewarding (Chambers, 2002; Haggard et al., 2006; Watt & Richardson, 2008; Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003; Tigchelaar et al., 2008; Williams, 2013; Williams & Forgasz, 2009). Career change teachers look to "shape the future of children and make a social and contribution" (Watt & Richardson, p. 420, 2008). They recognise that becoming a teacher affords rewards of a type not always inherent in other occupations, and they derive a sense of existential significance from their work (Watt, 2008). Powers' (2002) refers to career change teachers having a "desire to subtly make a donation of themselves" (p. 312). This suggests, from a phenomenological perspective, something that already existed deep inside them that then emerged when they sought to become a teacher.

The point about teachers' thinking altruistically about students has been discussed in beginning teacher and teacher education literature. For instance, based upon the teacher

development model by Fuller and Bown (1975), Conway and Clark discuss shifts in teachers' thinking from self to concern for their students (2003). Published literature suggests that the journey undertaken by beginning teachers can be seen as a shift, moving from either thinking about the self to thinking about students and/or vice-versa (Conway & Clark, 2003; Fuller & Bown, 1975; Fuller, Parsons, & Watkins, 1974).

In the case of my research, Amy, who pursued a teaching career for personal and intellectual stimulation, was an example of someone who as a beginning teacher, initially focused on herself but who later came to focus on students and what they could achieve. Interpreting this from an existential position I argue this means students are always and already present in teachers' intrinsic and altruistic motives and in their desire to understand themselves. This is irrespective of whether a teacher's thinking shifts over time,

To summarise, my observations in prior literature studies as well as my articulation of some teacher participants' reasons for choosing teaching as a career, brings to bear an existential understanding and argument. Career change individuals' motivations for choosing teaching later in life are complex and personal. However, a common thread is the intrinsic search, and career changers' decisions to embark on a teaching career are made with reflective thought, inquiry and questioning. Their inquiry into becoming a teacher came about because they lacked personal fulfilment in their previous careers and because they became aware of what they wanted from life now. At the same time, they recognised teaching to be able to fulfil what they lacked in their previous lives and careers. Even before they entered the profession, a phenomenological perspective can be observed as they searched for meaning. I further extend this existential argument in the 'lived relation' existential theme to demonstrate participants' meaning making as a classroom teacher in their engagement with students and their becoming.

Teacher participants' lifeworlds

Introducing the themes

An existential understanding of career change teachers' motivations constitutes an important foundation for unpacking the phenomenological and pedagogic sense of being a second career teacher. An ontological perspective is demonstrated in the stories of participants like Tasfia, where even before she entered the profession, she was aware of what it meant to be a teacher and she was searching for meaning in her life. My participants' responses to what

made them change careers and become a teacher at a certain point in their life gave me an insight into their lifeworlds as they went through the decision-making process.

Teacher participants' responses are based on their lifeworlds, that is to say, their everyday experiences in everyday situations and relations. As human beings, we all have multiple and different lifeworlds depending on where we are at points in time in our lives (van Manen, 1990, p. 101). The participants in my study, who had been elsewhere prior to becoming teachers, also discussed their experiences contextually and temporally as their thinking moved from their past lives to their present and their future. Understanding their lived experiences here and now required me to probe how different their lives were now under different social and environmental conditions compared to in their prior career and lives.

I have sought to understand the lifeworlds of teacher participants using the existential themes of **lived relation and lived space.** I have also briefly discussed lived time as an existential theme that pervades both lived relation and lived space. Identifying participants' lifeworlds under the two existential themes of lived human relation and lived space provided the phenomenological framework and guided me to understand how they exist as human beings. Van Manen points out that these existential themes "pervade the lifeworlds of all human beings, regardless of their historical, cultural or social situated-ness … and [are] especially useful as guides for reflection in the research process" (1990, p. 101). Teachers' current experiences are built around their social environments and in relation to others as well as in the context of their previous social and relational environments. A change of career to become a teacher changed participants' worlds in terms of who they worked alongside and where their workplace was situated, as well as how the participants made sense of those changes. The existential themes stimulated and guided me in contextually understanding, describing and interpreting participants' lived school experiences as second career teachers.

These existential themes also opened the path to a deeper existential understanding of participants becoming teachers. The process of attributing meanings to participants' stories through the existential themes involved going back and forth between understanding participants' stories and their lifeworlds, clarifying the existential themes and constructing a coherent argument. Qualitative human science research where the methodological approach has both a philosophical and a practical perspective can be challenging as one engages with the messy chaos of the lived world (Smith et al., 2009). However, I believe that what has

come out of being attentive to the messiness is a unique, rich, and insightful understanding of second career teacher participants.

To outline the connections between the themes, I briefly introduce each one before discussing each in detail. Introducing the themes enables us to observe the inter-connectivity and together-ness that exists in them as part of an individual's lifeworld.

Lived time as an existential theme explores the meaning of "subjective" (van Manen, 1990, p. 104) time or temporality for a human being and their ways of being in the world at various points in their lives. This theme carries a sense of pervasiveness as we are surrounded by time and we create meaning for ourselves at various moments in time. Teacher participants reflected on their life journeys and experiences at various points in their lives. Teacher participants' stories describe events that happened in their past lives and career and how they see the past intertwined with their present life and career as a teacher. Participants also spoke of how they perceive themselves in the future after having changed careers.

The notion of time is significant as teacher participants went through the process of changing careers to become a teacher at a certain point in their lives, after a soul-searching exercise that motivated them to become a teacher. Participants such as Amy and Matthew saw the possibilities that existed for their becoming as they reflected on career change and recognised the change that was required from their past career. According to Heidegger, "we are our past" (cited in Dall'Alba, 2009, p. 39). Matthew's understanding of his past and what it offered (at that time) is what enabled him to seek the present as a teacher. At the same time, the past is re-interpreted under the influences of the present and as we see our future taking shape. Participants perceive time in terms of their 'belonging' to school and 'becoming' a teacher and as a journey of growth as a human being. Participants saw themselves as teachers at this point in their journey of life. Some wished to continue on the same journey while others were not sure. Their school experiences and whether they perceived themselves as 'belonging' to the school determined their continuity on the journey of becoming a teacher.

Participants re-invented themselves in their present career of a teacher as they saw the possibilities for themselves towards their becoming. As a teacher at school, lived time was described by participants as immediately experienced pre-reflectively (van Manen, 1990, p. 9).

The other two existential themes of 'lived relation' and 'spatiality' cannot function without 'lived time'. Lived time and lived relation are connected because participants drew upon their past (career and life) experiences with students in order to make connections between present (the school) and the future (after school). Through their past teacher participants were able to be aware of the potentialities that existed for their students' futures.

Lived time is also embedded in the existential theme of spatiality. Participants not only narrated their perceptions of differences in occupied space between their previous and current career but also clung to the past (in the present) as they oriented to the new spatial environment that is school. Teacher participants made sense of who they are in their relation and in their 'dwelling', now as a career change teacher. Temporality played a significant role for the participants in their role as a second career classroom teacher.

Through **lived relation**, human beings are able to make sense of themselves in and through the relations that exist with others. The theme carries significance in my research because I am attempting to understand teachers' lifeworlds in their everyday engagement and relations with others. Participants gave meaning to themselves and to their experiences at different points in their lives with different others. Participants had to make many adjustments when they became teachers due to the differences in who the 'others' were in their lives. The participants primarily interacted with adults in their prior careers whereas, as a classroom teacher, students were the significant others in their lives. Participants had various views about their experiences with the students and the staff as work colleagues. This existential theme has allowed me to unpack the existence and significance of participants' pedagogic relations and explore how these pedagogic relations with students assist them in their meaning making as well as in their development as a human being. This theme builds on my previous argument under the first section ('an existential perspective on reasons and motivations') and on evidence in the literature to bring an existential perspective to career change teachers' reasons for entering the profession.

The theme of **spatiality** or lived space is also particularly relevant in my research as I explore participants' descriptions of space and dwelling from a phenomenological perspective. Again, the spatial differences that existed for teacher participants between their previous workplaces and their schools led them to various perceptions about schools as a workplace environment. Through an existential unpacking that required care and sensitivity, I

was able to understand participants' insights on the differences in space in their two work environments and whether they felt a sense of belonging in the school environment.

Spatiality is the final link to understanding the meaning of being a second career teacher. In the last existential section, I explore the ontological questions: Who or what am I becoming and how do I exist in the world? I extended the theme of spatiality to show that participants "dwell" in school which then led to an existential interpretation of participants' "becoming". The themes of spatiality and becoming brings together an understanding of the phenomenological and pedagogical sense of being a second career teacher.

The theme of lived relation

Human beings understand themselves and each other through their relations with others. Identifying the theme of lived human relation is an existential approach to unpacking this fundamental way of our being in the world. This theme forms an essential component in the overall phenomenological interpretation of teacher participants in my research. Lived relation is significant in my research because of the participants' shift in relationships with adults to students. In their previous careers, participants' perception of themselves was different based on the adults around them. As a teacher, the students in their classrooms influenced their ways of understanding themselves. The theme is also significant because they chose teaching being aware of the meaningful possibilities that existed for themselves and for their students' becoming. The ontological question that I am seeking to understand within the lived relation theme is 'Who are others and what do they mean to me'?

As argued earlier, teacher participants have an already existing (existential) awareness of being with students prior to becoming a teacher. In lived relation, I uncover the ways in which participants continued to recognise and develop a pedagogic understanding of students and of themselves after entering the profession and becoming a teacher. The terms 'relationality' and 'lived relation' have been used interchangeably. I begin by defining the theme.

What is 'lived relation'?

We live our lives in and through others so that our understanding of who we are and who are others is inter-subjective (Williamson, 1998). We make sense of ourselves and each other through our relations. Understanding ourselves in lived experience terms "is not a self-understanding divorced from all relation to other beings" (Burch, 1991, p. 59). Our ways of

thinking, communicating and doing are shared and also change with time. This shared, overlapping and relational nature of our engagement with-in the world is what is referred to as inter-subjectivity in phenomenology (Smith et al., 2009). The teacher participants in my research made (and continue to make) sense of themselves in the various relations they have had in their professional and personal lives. Having changed careers, they left one 'community of practice' (Wenger, 1998) for another, finding a different set of workplace colleagues and developing new relationships.

Our lived relations with others and the inter-personal space we share with others are fundamental to our existence, constituting the relatedness to the world. The ontological interpretation of our human existence is called 'dasein' in phenomenology. It refers to how we exist, rooted in the "everyday world and its manifold relations with people and things" (Heidegger, cited in Krell, 1978, p. 22). Dasein (human existence) means we are always and already thrown into this pre-existing world of people, objects, language and culture and cannot be meaningfully detached from it. The self is always in relation or 'being-with' someone. We live our lives in the relations we have with others. In existential terms this relationality theme captures our search for what is meaningful through communality. Communality here refers to shared inter-subjective understanding. The self looks beyond or transcends itself in ways so that it is able to observe others with greater understanding. As a consequence, our own understanding of our selves is enhanced by the mutual and social sense of purpose and belonging that we share with others. Indeed as Burch puts it, "the lived experience in and through which we ourselves come to be also constitutes our basic ontological understanding of other beings encountered within the world" (1991, p. 59). Although it may sound personal and individual, the existential meaning of one's lived experience is never idiosyncratic but always communal and shared.

Thus, individual people interpret and construe the manifold forms of shared meaning that exist between and within beings which is defined in communality. It is in relation that individuals come to be or become who they are (Burch, 1991, p. 60). Through meaningfully understanding others around us, we understand ourselves better. Communal understanding leads to enhanced self-understanding. While it is therefore inevitable to speak of the increased awareness of the self in the lived relation theme, the purpose of this theme is to focus on the meaning that participants created of their lived relation with students.

The concept of shared meaningful understanding through lived relation is significant for teacher participants in my research. The changed nature of their relations and who they interacted with (from adults to students) as they moved from one career to another meant their understanding of themselves also changed with time. New ways of seeing themselves and the world evolved due to the shifts in relationality as they negotiated differences and made adjustments. Teacher participants were able to re-think themselves and considered how to create meaning in the communal relation shared with others.

It should also be noted that who one is depends on *where* one is around others (Burch, 1991, p. 59). Thus, relationality and spatiality are closely connected as participants attempted to make sense within the new space and in the new relations around them. I have argued above that participants entered the profession with an existential awareness. I will now discuss how participants in my research come to experience lived relation with greater understanding and meaning in their everyday engagement as teachers having had the prior awareness of what it is to be a teacher.

Lived relation in my research

Participants' ontological search for possibilities through becoming a teacher meant they recognised what it *means* to be a teacher and were aware of the possibilities that existed for students' becoming. Lived relation is thus argued from a pedagogical perspective in the context of teachers and their lives. I view pedagogy as a form of phenomenological human inquiry in terms of educating ourselves about who we want to be. Van Manen's references to pedagogy are significant in my research. I have also referred to Dewey's understanding of education as experience to argue participants' awareness of students' becoming. I have been guided by the processes of phenomenological theorising, reflection and interpretive meaning-making to develop my argument.

The following existential description of what it means to be a teacher articulates my argument of lived relation in a pedagogic and phenomenological sense. This existential definition of a pedagogue also reflects teacher participants' meaning-making in their lived relation

> *"Pedagogy as a form of inquiry implies that one (the pedagogue) has a relational knowledge of children, that one 'understands' children and youths: how young people experience things, what they think about, how they look at the world, what they do, and,*

> *most importantly, how each child is a unique person. A teacher who does not understand the inner life of a child does not know who it is that he or she is teaching … a pedagogue is an educator who feels addressed by children, who understands children in a caring way, and who has a personal commitment and interest in children's education and their growth towards mature adulthood." (van Manen, 1994, p. 139)*

Existential pedagogy can only be understood when it is contextualized with-in the pedagogical relationship that exists between teacher, student and subject matter. A phenomenological orientation to pedagogy enables us to see the implicit and explicit meanings contained in participants' lived relation and in their ability to be aware of being a teacher.

I have unpacked the theme of lived human relation through two headings: 'care' and 'awareness of students' becoming'. These sub headings characterise participants' phenomenological and pedagogic ways of being a teacher. They are a pathway to understanding the essence of the pedagogic experience that takes place between the pedagogue and his/her students in the classroom in pedagogic situations. The essential meaning of care is brought out under a further three sub-headings: genuine-ness; questioning; and experiencing wonder.

Care

> *"When my caring is directed at living things, I must consider their nature, ways of life, needs, and desires. And, although I can never accomplish it entirely, I try to apprehend the reality of the other." (Noddings, 2003, p. 14)*

The role of a teacher, according to Noddings, is first and foremost one of caring (2003, p. 176). Caring is central to the act of teaching. Care is often spoken of by teachers when they invoke the importance of being there for the students. To care means to *care for* someone, thus being grounded in individual relationships between persons (Noddings, 2003). Teachers' care and concern for their students can take different forms, encompassing teachers' personal definitions based on their beliefs and understandings. For example, a group of teachers described 'caring' in terms of "acting in the best interests" of their students such that the students become successful learners (Eaker-Rich & Van Galen, 1996, p. 98). The authors described caring to mean providing student empowerment and responsibility, developing a sense of self, teaching self-reliance, self-confidence, being aware of students' personal

circumstances and background, helping students to acquire social skills to succeed beyond school and the like (p. 98). The authors also understood how teachers went beyond the 'successful learning' definition of caring to include the concerned understanding of the whole being of a student.

As my aim is to situate care in a phenomenological plane, I will briefly introduce the existential meaning of care to bring out its significance in my research. My methodology is based on Heidegger's interpretive phenomenology, where human beings always and already exist in the world in relations with other people and create meaning in situations. Heidegger's use of terms such as being-in-the-world uses hyphens to capture the inter-connectedness that human beings have with the world (Krell, 1978). For Heidegger, we are always *in* the world and cannot exist outside of it. Our involvement with the world is such that our existence is always a concern for others and this interdependence can be described as a "concern-ful involvement" in relations (Donnelly, 1999, p. 935). Such concern-ful involvement not only already exists but in a Heideggerian perspective can also be existentially interpreted as an "involvement whole" that "human beings have with each other and in their world" (Dreyfus, 1991, p. 92). Most of the time, we are absorbed 'amidst' in the world, living a mode of average everydayness. Our everyday life of concern can be construed as what we need—"a concern for our existence in a tangible sense" (Brook, 2009, p. 49).

However, when we strive to understand the purpose of our existence, or when our being-in-the-world starts to become an issue for us, such a situation is grounded in *care.* Rather than having connotations with love and caring, the term care from an ontological perspective signifies "that which opens a clearing in order that it gets to me" (Dreyfus, 1991, pp.165, 239). Care, in an existential sense, opens up (or clears the way) to the possibilities of being 'authentic' (in terms of owning up to oneself) now, as we live a life of everyday concern. In other words, we are able to see the possibilities of where we can get to from our present existence and ways of living. Care is also a notion that grounds our sense of "being-with others" (Brook, 2009, p. 49). Our inter-connectedness with others in the world means that we are also "performing an activity of clearing, both of [our]selves and of [our] situation" (Dreyfus, 1991, p. 165). Our own awareness of the possibilities that are open to us (care for ourselves) also implies that such care includes others. Since we exist in the world in relation, our care is others' care too.

The existential argument put forward in the previous section of this chapter had elements of care in it. Some teacher participants' awareness of the possibilities for themselves (as a result of changing careers to become a teacher) signified a performing of an 'activity of clearing' and constituted care, not just for themselves but also for others too. Care existed in their *choosing* to become a teacher, recognising the possibilities that will be open to them in their lived relation with students.

Care can also be explicated in a pedagogic sense, particularly when pedagogy is interpreted as a form of human inquiry. Understanding pedagogy will automatically bring out the significance of care. It is for this reason that the definition of a pedagogue was presented at the beginning of this section.

Van Manen (1982) points out that pedagogy, in a phenomenological sense, is not something that one possesses as a set of skills to be observed in instances of pedagogic teaching. It cannot be assessed in empirical situations by analysis or other instruments. Pedagogy must exist in *every* situation and in *every* moment (p. 291). Pedagogy is, in fact, care.

> *"A great deal depends on how the teacher adjusts his perspectives … how he chooses himself as a teacher, how he decides to act on what he has come to know." (Greene, 1973, p. 65)*

In existential terms, a teacher is a pedagogue when they have the awareness of who the student is and the possibilities that exist for the student. Pedagogy, in this sense, is thus understood to mean more than the normal process of teaching and a teachers' knowledge of the subject. However, it may not always be possible to 'see' this kind of pedagogy in normal school and classroom activities. Paradoxically, frameworks and theoretical overlays are constructed to identify more clearly the significance of pedagogical practices, yet the real meaning and significance of pedagogy can remain concealed behind those very frameworks. The real meaning of pedagogy can remain hidden "by virtue of its own activity—in the process of showing itself, it also shows its hidden character" (van Manen, 1982, p. 291). This is the real character of pedagogy: that it is present and absent at the same time.

The essence and excellence of pedagogy, according to van Manen, is pedagogical thoughtfulness and tact (1991, p. 130). Thoughtful pedagogy is context specific, sensitive to the needs of students and respectful of the child's individuality. Rather than viewing

pedagogy as something that can be possessed by the pedagogue, pedagogical thoughtfulness requires the pedagogue to continuously and reflectively act with awareness and sensitivity during every educational moment. Every moment needs to be re-captured as it were through reflective, thoughtful action. When pedagogic thoughtfulness is translated into action that is caring it becomes tact. Pedagogic thoughtfulness and tact can be said to constitute elements of care.

In the methodology chapter, I discussed my interest in investigating whether participants in my research possessed a certain kind of 'knowing' in their pedagogical approaches as a teacher. I wanted to understand whether there was awareness and sensitivity to classroom moments and situations and whether and how participants reflected on issues such as students' becoming.

The sub-headings of genuine-ness, questioning and experiencing wonder bring out examples of situations that displayed elements of care in participants. The examples need to be read in light of the teacher participants' intrinsic and altruistic motivations for entering the profession and the existential argument I put forward in the previous section. The elements of genuineness, questioning and experiencing wonder are significant because participants came into the profession with an existential awareness to 'become' a teacher.

Genuineness

One pedagogical situation where a pedagogically thoughtful act is evident is seen in Matthew's case when he recalls his experience with some of his students. Matthew's approach and ability to speak to them about challenging situations and educate them about the fundamentals of right versus wrong and acceptable and non-acceptable behaviour reflects his genuine efforts to build relationships while showing care:

> *"helping to turn these boys who can be trouble in different classes into young men and you know … and I spent 40 minutes with them about it and again knowing some of the personal stories with the kids … So, I guess when they know that you care about them, not just care about their content."*

Matthew took time to understand the actions and behaviour of his students and to talk it through with them. By giving students the opportunity to reflect for themselves about their actions and behaviours, he was able to demonstrate the genuine care he felt for them. His pedagogical approach was also influenced by his own philosophy of life, education and

human nature and by his thoughtful approach to assisting his students to develop those human qualities. He is intuitively aware of the need to build relationships and trust.

A pedagogical relationship is, as van Manen points out, a fundamental guarantee that the teacher is there and can be counted on (1991, p. 38). Matthew is very aware of making known to his students his level of commitment and expectations. He demonstrates this in the following:

> *"The most important thing is to be … seen as someone who can be trusted, someone who is always going to give their best and someone who will be consistent with their expectations but [students] can also expect a lot from me as well."*

Matthew also conveyed his beliefs about second career teachers generally and their ability to bring perspective, flexibility and creativity "*to both their teaching and their pedagogy but also to their students"*. He had a genuine desire to *"make connections with students*", providing them with an environment where they could be themselves. By creating the classroom as a home, he was able to create a space for openness and trust—so vital in building pedagogical relationships—while also preparing his students to be 'at home' in the world in the sense of their formation as adults.

In his stories, Matthew also gave examples of students for whom he was prepared to be-there. He described the difficult experiences he went through with a couple of students but which later turned to be a worthwhile experience both for him and for the students:

> *"Another kid who I had in my Year11 legal studies class who again got asked to leave but, I'd constantly try and support him … and you know that will go back to the principal's reports and when he is leaving. Once he had left the school, he ended up writing me a letter to thank me. So, you know, from two boys who were generally not overly interested in school to take the time out to do that was very rewarding."*

Matthew's genuine attempt to nurture the 'whole' being of the students by drawing them to the right path reflected his overall beliefs as a teacher to help students question their own purpose and meaning in life. His ways of being a pedagogue involve an attempt to draw out the "good" in his students. Matthew therefore gives meaning to himself as a good teacher by "doing things right" when it comes to educating children (van Manen, 1982, p.291).

Indeed, as van Manen points out, it is understanding the good that gives content to the meaning of competence when we speak of an adult as a "good" teacher (1982, p. 292). Matthew's response also indicated his attempt at 'character education' or the cultivation of desirable human traits in his students . Rice (1996) points out that the development of desired character traits in students should be promoted in ways that are more active and participatory and as a regular feature of classroom situations (p. 363). While the school constitutes only part of the children's environment, Matthew's consistent efforts to foster character building by responding meaningfully to situations as well as by engaging thoughtfully with his students demonstrated his awareness of moral education as a pedagogue. His intrinsic and altruistic reasons for entering the teaching profession constituted his motivation to genuinely care.

Questioning

Thoughtful pedagogy is also about questioning reflectively and perhaps having doubt in oneself. Pedagogy in a phenomenological sense is to question one's thoughts and actions, theorizing as it were about the meaning of what we are doing and what we are seeking. Van Manen points out that one must actively "listen" to pedagogy, in terms of inquiring, in order to be able to act in a pedagogically better way in the future (1982). In her interview Kate pointed out numerous times how being a teacher meant always developing and being better tomorrow than today. She reflected upon her ways of being a pedagogue by constantly questioning her actions to come up with better ways of doing things:

> *"Like you think, 'Oh, [name of student] would have got that if you had just explained that in a different way' ... I have never had a day where I have gone home and thought, 'Oh, you did everything right today, that was wonderful, good on you, good job, have a bit of a lie down'. I always go home and I take notes and I think, 'oh, next time you do the reading lesson, you just do this bit first' ...At [Kate's previous job], the job is done or it wasn't done ... it was kind of like the issue gets solved ... with teaching, you are always constantly looking to get better."*

Kate questioned herself and her actions all the time in the process of becoming the teacher she aspired to be. In the larger existential sense, she questioned the meaning of being a teacher and the purpose of her existence. Her prior career experiences also served as impetus to think about what teaching meant to her now in her life. Kate recalled and reflected on her lesson plans and strategies at different moments and situations in time to find ways that could

improve the educational outcome of her students. She constantly strived to be a better teacher in her questioning and thinking.

> *"In the back of my mind, I'm thinking, what will we do for news topic talks for next week or have I really given this girl enoug*h *work with her reading or at 3pm, I am thinking, 'ah, I can get up now and plan for the COGS unit for next term."*

Her pedagogic thoughtfulness involved acting with awareness and sensitivity in every educational moment. The pedagogical competence of the teacher also manifests itself in reflective theorising as Kate demonstrated, "reflectively bringing to speech the meanings of pedagogic thoughts and actions" (van Manen, 1982, p. 294). Kate's response is characteristic of most teachers and shows care and concern. What was evident was a pedagogical mode of caring as she oriented herself in the pedagogical relationship to provide the best possible learning opportunities for her students. Thoughtful pedagogy is thus more about being aware of oneself as a teacher and of one's orientation to teaching so that pedagogy is recognized as 'always becoming' and 'never already there'.

Amy too talked about how she questioned herself on what pedagogy meant to her as someone with prior experience: *"I also view teaching pedagogy through the lens of an 'outsider' and am always questioning what I do in the context of a world beyond the classroom."* Such reflective questioning could be viewed as a form of pedagogic theorising and may lead to changes in her teaching practices. To see pedagogy beyond what can be seen through the naked eye and still be inspired by it is thoughtful pedagogy. Thoughtful pedagogy seems to assume more significance when, like Kate and Amy, teachers come into the profession with an intrinsic desire to teach. As Amy put it: *"Teachers are always developing—which is daunting but also very exciting. To think that in 20 years' time I'll still be developing as a teacher is inspiring to me."*

Experiencing wonder

> *"Philosophy always begins in wonder." (Greene, 1973, p. 21)*

"Wonder lies at the heart of what it is to be human" (Hove, 2011). Thoughtful pedagogy is about being aware and experiencing a sense of wonder in the classroom. One such "pedagogical moment" (van Manen, 1991) could be seen when Kate reflected on and recounted her *"everyday little buzzes"* in school. She found extraordinary qualities in her children in the very ordinary moments of the day. Everyday moments, when her students

became really engaged and when she could see their feelings of achievement in their eyes, turned those moments into wonderful moments for Kate. "*it's like opening a present on Christmas morning, just to have their little brains open and to see the meaning made in them".* Her wonder at those pedagogical moments showed a pedagogic care towards her students. Her pedagogic calling at the time of her career decision enabled her to experience wonder in the classroom. She was able to 'experience' wonder because she recognised the possibilities open to her when she made the decision to become a teacher. Through the existential argument I developed earlier, I suggest we can now observe what gave her the lens to experience wonder—the meaning of being a teacher:

"To wonder is to be engaged in the current of familiar experiences" (Hove, 2011). Kate's attentiveness to seeing wonder in pedagogical moments revealed a new richness in the everyday situations in the classroom. Kate always knew that one day she would become a teacher. Being called to this place called school created life-affirming moments for her in her caring relations with her students. She is where she should be:

> "*You see, that kind of thing, it just when they … when you do … I am explaining something and they are really engaged and then you let them go ahead and complete a task and they just fly and they come to you with their work and their eyes are big and they are proud and they look at you and say, 'Aren't I wonderful' and they are wonderful and you just … ah, that's making me a little teary … it's like opening a present on Christmas morning, just to have their little brains open and to see the meaning made for them."*
>
> *"Just looking at them, you know, little smiles or when they get a concept that you didn't think that they could get and they look at you and they are proud and you're proud and it's all just … it's filled with kind of little life-affirming moments … every day is really wonderful."*

Teachers, like Kate, who reflect upon wonder in their own lives are able to "appreciate the subtlety ...of wonder more fully in the living experience of children" (Hove, 2011). As an educator for five to six year olds, Kate was attentive to what she could do for her students. Her pedagogic care was reflected in her constant orienting towards being a teacher. Kate's "*constant looking at ways to get better*" is how she perceived herself in lived relation. Her open-ness to letting herself being challenged in the job shows her commitment to "*being a teacher forever now"*. As Hove puts it, "To be receptive to the persistent possibility of

wonder may cultivate a manner of *being present* for students that encourages 'true wondering', and wonder, in them" (2011).

Teacher participants' pedagogic care manifested itself in their genuineness in orienting towards students, in their thoughtful questioning and in their experiencing wonder in pedagogical moments. Participants' descriptions of their pedagogic experiences with students displayed thoughtful awareness and intuitive knowledge that translated into action that was full of tact. Participants were drawn in lived relation with students with a greater understanding because they were pedagogically thoughtful and oriented to caring.

Awareness of students' becoming

"Pedagogy is a fascination with the growth of the other." (van Manen, 1991, p. 13)

While pedagogy is fundamentally connected to the central processes of curriculum and teaching, it is also about empowering children who are constantly in the process of becoming. The challenge for any educator is thus to provide meaningful educational experiences to the child such that education "remains a rich human and cultural activity" (van Manen, 1996, p. 4).

The pedagogic care expressed by participants is closely linked to participants' awareness of students becoming adults. Matthew's genuine understanding of his role in character building in his students is a direct response to his recognition of students becoming adults and his orientation towards that journey. Kate's thoughtful questioning of ways of being a teacher is closely aligned with how she viewed students' growth and development and their ways of becoming. Having prior career and life experiences meant that participants were keenly aware of students' lives beyond school and of their contributions to helping students grow into adults. For second career teacher participants like Amy, Tasfia or Jim who had engaged with adults in their prior lives, connections between school and after school were obvious. They were able to see who the child or student is in "temporality", that is, who the student is becoming in his "futuring" (Vandenberg, 1971, p. 7).

This argument that participants orient towards students' becoming can also been made in a non-existential, pragmatic fashion inspired by Dewey. Dewey broadened the meaning of education to emphasise students' individuality and experiences (1938). His philosophy of education and educational growth was based upon life experience. He believed an individual's own experience can provide the pathway to a full education or the "full

development of the individual" (cited in Archambault, 1964, p. xxii). Dewey was interested in how past experience can be effectively translated "into a potent instrumentality for dealing effectively with the future" (1938, p. 23). Van Manen (1996) also refers to Dewey's thinking to highlight the practical significance of pedagogy through life experience and the potential teachers have to make available their own life experience to students. Dewey referred to the "maturity" of experience of educators in terms of their ability to make appropriate judgments and direct those experiences that assist the student in moving forward (1938, p. 31).

Teacher participants had prior career and life experiences before entering the teaching profession. Their prior experiences gave them knowledge of a world outside school and the relationship between the outside world and students. We saw in chapter five how all seven teacher participants drew on their prior experiences in some form or other, including parenting experiences as mentioned by Elizabeth. They were able to draw on their experiences because of their own knowledge and awareness of the outside world combined with the present and constant awareness that students will one day become adults and step into that outside world. They were aware of the students' becoming.

Participants seemed to possess what Dewey termed greater "maturity for experience", thus enabling them to evaluate and enhance continued growth among students (1938, p. 31). Such dynamic experiences, derived less through knowledge and more through "practical wisdom", enabled them to make wise and mature judgements when they became teachers (Field & Latta, 2001, p. 885). They were able to take up their relevant past experiences and suitably and selectively 'apply' them (as Dewey puts it) in the current context and conditions of being a teacher. Dewey saw education as a means, invoking growth and continuity of meaningful experience as an end (1938).

When participants applied their past experiences in the classroom with mindful awareness of students' educational growth there existed a certain continuity in those experiences, as they were applied from one situation and context to the other. What participants learnt by way of prior knowledge and skill in one situation then became an instrument to meaningfully construct future situations as a teacher with students. In fact, the ability to connect past learning situations to new material and to assist students to see continuity in their learning is a quality that is attributed to effective teachers (Masters, 2012). Participants were able to orient towards the growth and becoming of students by drawing on their life and other experiences. Their own personal experiences provided real-life examples to be shared with students. As

educators, they found practical pedagogical moments in their daily teaching and offered their experience-based interpretation of pedagogical thinking. Every experience offered to students constituted a pedagogical experience.

In this context, Dewey frequently stressed the role of the educator in preparing students for meaningful experiences and educational growth. "The fuller and richer the experiences of the teacher, the more likely he will use them in a liberating way" (cited in Archambault, 1964, pp. 155–156). Since teacher participants in my research were able to see beyond school life to students becoming adults, they not only valued education for what it meant now but for what it would bring to the students in the future and they were able to provide pedagogy that best prepared each student to face the world. Van Manen brings out the existential significance of "pedagogic competence" when he observes that it is not just teaching children about history or maths but also being able to "help the child grow up and give shape to life by learning what is worthwhile knowing and becoming" (van Manen, 1982, p. 292).

Matthew's beliefs and expectations of the teacher that he wanted to become were thought out well in advance when he made the career decision. *"You know who you are as a person and what your values are and how you want to see those reflected in your teaching."* He wanted to give meaning to those values through student growth and development. He stressed the importance of nurturing the humanness in his students now and beyond school.

Matthew recognised the importance of knowing and understanding students' personal stories in order to build genuine caring connections. Like Tasfia, he felt it was important to display and 'live' out his care through listening and communicating, thus helping to empower his students to be better human beings.

Tasfia also displayed an awareness of making students' lives meaningful and believed it was crucial that students had an *"outside school perspective"*. As she put it: *"I just keep giving them practical examples of how things are going to be in the outside world. Whatever I teach, I try and bring the outside world perspective. I think it is very important."*

Tasfia's understanding of the students' becoming went beyond the transfer of content knowledge to suit the needs of the outside world. It was the becoming of students into adults who can then go on to live productive and meaningful lives that occupied Tasfia's mind and that was reflected in her concern. She demonstrated her sincerity and genuine care for her students by repeatedly reminding them of the importance of completing school: *"Sometimes,*

it makes me so worried, 'what are you guys going to do when you leave'?" Matthew and Tasfia recognised the need to nurture and develop students' whole being, beyond content teaching. Their intrinsic awareness and search for an informed self and their recognition of what it means to be a teacher gave them the tools to enrich students' lives.

Van Manen (1982) also noted that educators should display pedagogical competence that involves the "anticipatory and reflective capacity of fostering, shaping and guiding the child's emancipatory growth into adulthood" (p. 293). Jim was motivated to not only share his passion for science with students but also to meaningfully use his prior working knowledge and expertise to enthuse his students in their own becoming as scientists.

Participants were able to relate here and now (in the present) what life is like after school by engaging students with their past and about the future (in the outside world). The teacher's personal and practical engagement with their life experiences meant students could readily picture in real terms what is 'out there' when they leave school. Students could see themselves becoming adults through the eyes and 'worldly' descriptions of their teacher. Teacher participants had the ability to make meaningful connections with students and successfully bridge the gap between school and society through their past and current experiences.

> *"Teaching is even more difficult than learning. We know that; but we rarely think about it. And why is teaching more difficult than learning? Not because the teacher must have a larger store of information, and have it always ready. Teaching is more difficult than learning because what teaching calls for is this: to let learn. The real teacher, in fact, lets nothing else be learned than—learning." (Heidegger, 1968, p. 15)*

As a final point, Dewey calls for the full development of the student individual in his educational philosophy. He was concerned with preparing students for the world beyond school, not just in terms of lessons and learning skills but also in terms of life and character building skills and the "formation of emotional and intellectual attitudes" (1938, p. 35). Dewey's philosophy resonates with what is being called for by employers in the current society. Employers in the 21st century are keen for their workforce to possess highly developed personal and social skills that encompass holistic aspects of human nature. They are calling on schools to develop students' skills and capabilities and pay attention to the social and emotional dimensions of intelligence (Hunter, 2011; Skilbeck & Connell, 2004).

Lived relation summary

The theme of lived relation extends from an existential understanding of teacher participants' intrinsic motivations to choose to become teachers. Participants' thinking about the student's becoming came from 'within' in their search for a more authentic self. It is something that educators could not have been taught formally but in fact is represented in "the most personal embodiment of a pedagogical thoughtfulness" (van Manen, 1996, p. 9).

Vandenberg suggests that the role of philosophy in education when viewed as a pedagogic task is twofold:

> *"(1) to waken people who are becoming teachers to awareness of their own being (how they wish to be as teachers) and (2) to enable pupils to choose for themselves who they will be." (Vandenberg, 1971, p. 10)*

In their pedagogic relation, participants recognised the student for who s/he is now and also for what the student will become. Participants' thoughtful inner search during their career change decision and their view that teaching provided the pathway to an informed self made it easier for participants to be aware of and orient to students' own becoming into informed selves.

The recognition and awareness itself was a pedagogical understanding, a kind of "embodied knowing" or "mindful embodiment" (Field & Latta, 2001, p. 885) that transformed itself when they entered the teaching profession. Through their own existential journey, the career change teachers perceived students' becoming not just as adults who live lives beyond school but as meaningful adults.

Becoming a teacher revealed the pedagogic awareness that lay dormant in some participants. They now had a purpose—to bring meaning to students' lives in the classroom—and they displayed that meaningful awareness in the form of care for students' becoming.

Care and awareness of students' becoming can be seen to be teacher participants' ways of being-in-the-world and ways of becoming a teacher. This is the ontological basis of the lived relation theme. Having raised a family, Elizabeth's care was displayed as she connected with her teenage students at different levels, drawing on her practical experience as a parent to make those connections. Matthew's genuineness in building relationships, Kate's and Amy's questioning and constant desire to improve as teachers are all qualities of pedagogic care

arising from the participants' intrinsic motives. Kate's description of constantly challenging herself (as a sign *"to not let her students down*") in contrast to her previous career is an example of the way she embodied the practice of teaching in caring. Her genuineness for student care is thus manifested in the deeper truth of the statement "you are what you teach" (van Manen, 1982, p. 296) as she lived what she taught.

Tasfia's hesitancy in not being able to clearly see the future of her students' becoming was a sign of genuine caring in her relations, as she lived out her concern for them. Brooks (2009) argues that the formation of caring relations consists of teachers being able to render such care transparent (p. 55). Participants lived their care for students in their everyday engagement and involvement as a classroom teacher. They also used their prior life and career experiences to meaningfully enhance the lived relation and the students' becoming. Participants embodied an ontological perspective with students by being caring and thoughtful and by looking beyond school life in their lived relation.

The theme of spatiality: negotiating differences

> *"Space is in essence that for which room has been made, that which is let into its bounds." (Heidegger, cited in Krell, 1978, p. 332)*

The space around us affects us and our feelings in many ways. Like lived relation, the existential theme of lived space helps us inquire into the ways we experience everyday affairs of our existence. Lived space is what we 'feel' rather than what we can see and hence it is more difficult to verbalise (van Manen, 1990, p. 102). The theme of lived space is significant in my research because participants' change in career have caused a change in their work environment. Their notion of space and their ways of living has undergone transformations. In my research, the ontological questions I am asking through this particular theme are 'Where am I in the space now?' and 'Have I become the space I am in?'

Under the theme of spatiality, I seek to uncover the ontological meaning that teacher participants gave to their working environment and how they made sense of themselves as a teacher and human being in the space called school. I explore participants' understanding of their optimal or preferred spatial level. I also seek to understand the descriptions participants gave of their spatial environment as career change teachers and the differences and adjustments they made due to those spatial changes. Career change teacher participants' thinking about space provided unique insights as they had transitioned to school from

different environments. Their construction of the meaning of space was diverse as well as unique to their individual circumstances.

What is lived space?

Lived space inquires into how we experience our everyday affairs in the space we are in. By seeking to understand our existence in lived space, we uncover the meaning of the fundamental dimensions of our lived life (van Manen, 1990, p. 103). Our existence is always situated *in* the world, which signifies the ontological interdependence or engagement between human beings and the world. The lived body is *in* the perceived world and thus we understand Heidegger's expression of being-in-the-world. Existentially, the body is 'always and already' existing within its world and not outside of it. We understand ourselves through our lived experience and through how we orient ourselves in the world we are in. We also understand the world in spatial terms because we inhabit it by means of the body. Existential space is what the lived body feels and experiences.

In existential terms, spatiality is the understanding of our being (or who we are) in terms of our situatedness (where we are). While we may not reflect on lived space, it shapes us in the space we are in. Lived space is thus one of the primordial expressions of our being-in-the-world. It is like a room that allows us to understand our ways of being in the world. Thus, the existential theme of lived space or felt space involves an ontological understanding of ourselves in the space we are in, affecting the way we feel (van Manen, 1990, p. 102). It is unlike describing space in mathematical terms such as distances, locations or dimensions.

Merleau-Ponty uses the theme of spatiality to connect space with the lived body and the perceived world such that existential spatiality "before being a relation between objects, is based on my relation to things" (1962, p. 286). He adheres to a notion of space as a form of perception that connects the body to the world in the phenomenological experience of being-in-the-world (1962)

The lived body anchors itself towards the world that it is most comfortable with and this is when we can say that the lived body is spatially "at home" (Talero, 2005, p. 444). The spatial level (that is, where the lived body places itself in situations in the environment) is determined by the body, depending on what is most appropriate to its existence in the world. The body chooses those spatial levels and perceptual experiences that are better suited in terms of its ability to 'grasp' or "get a maximum grip on" what it seeks (Dreyfus, 1991,

p. 133). This spatial level then becomes its preference and the body spatially orients itself within this environment (Talero, 2005). Merleau-Ponty also describes the existential shifts that occur in our preferred spatial level due to changes in our perceptions, for instance, how we think of space in a room during day and night, or when there are changes to our physical location and geography (cited in Talero, 2005). The shifts can alter our whole sense of how we orient ourselves to life (Talero, 2005).

Our everyday being in the world is related to the space we occupy and the meaning we give to ourselves in that space. Spatiality is always existential but pragmatic spatiality or the descriptions and experiences of physical space provide a pathway to uncovering existential spatiality. In other words, understanding how we 'physically' live in an environment can help us unlock how we "dwell" or exist in the world (Dreyfus, 1991). For example, we feel isolated or communal, comfortable or stressed, free or constricted depending on where we are and how we perceive space. We are also understood by others in the context of where we are.

Space connects us to the environment that is outside of us and gives us a sense of belonging, depending on the kind of experience we have with space. The situations we are in and the experiences that occur can cause us to alter our whole sense of how we orient our lives (Talero, p. 453). Thus, as van Manen says, "we become the space we are in" (1990, p. 102).

Spatiality in my research

The theme of spatiality is particularly significant for career change teacher participants in my research because they have experienced a shift in their preferred spatial level after changing their work environments. Each of the teacher participants worked in different work settings in their prior careers. Tasfia worked in a bank; Amy worked for a small company in accounts; Matthew was a marketing manager; Kate was a manager in a government department; Jim managed a team in the construction industry; Elizabeth worked part-time from home; and Sharon's last career was in the airlines.

In their previous work environments, their preferred spatial level was determined according to what was most suited to their being and how they perceived themselves in their body in the situation. The body had anchored itself to the world and the environment that it was situated in. A shift from their preferred spatially oriented level occurred due to the physical and geographical shift when they changed careers.

Each of the teacher participants entered the teaching profession with their own meanings created about what work space is, depending on their previous roles and contexts, their own experiences and how they perceived the school as a workplace. They also had established habits in their prior career environments. At the most basic level, the differences lay not only in the physical structure of space but also in the relations that existed between the participants and the people and space they were situated in.

The structure of school buildings, consisting primarily of classrooms and catering to the teaching and learning requirements for students, was different from participants' previous workplaces. Specifically, the classroom as a workplace environment was fundamentally different to their previous workplaces. Participants needed to mentally and physically adjust to the setting that is the classroom. The nature of the classroom, too, in terms of size, shape, furniture type, available resources and room arrangement would have had an impact on the thinking of teacher participants and how they perceived themselves in this new spatial environment.

"Our body and our perception always summon us to take as the centre of the world that environment with which they present us." (Merleau-Ponty, cited in Talero, p. 453)

The school as the spatial environment had now become the centre of the world of the bodily being of teacher participants. The lived body then needed to *adjust* itself in the course of determining where its preferred existential spatial level was. However, the process of anchoring or gearing itself to the new optimal spatial level to create new meaning in this existence was both challenging as well as liberating, depending on participants' experiences.

I use three sub-headings to highlight examples of situations from participants' descriptions of their school experiences that invoke the theme of spatiality: 'Bells and rules', 'Personal space' and 'Beast that needs to be tamed'. From these sub-headings I develop an existential analysis of spatiality to argue the phenomenological and pedagogic sense of being a second career teacher.

Bells and rules

Participants' work habits and everyday routines in their previous careers were significantly different from those of being a teacher. Although this varied according to each participant's context, in their interviews they highlighted the differences. Schools work to set times for classes and activities. As a place of education, the structure and geography of a school with

classrooms and playground are different from other workplaces. Teacher participants such as Amy, Jim and Kate spoke of the challenges associated with working in a school environment, such as having to follow school timings and rules at specific times during the day or when instructed by a certain outside medium called the bell. Participants' previous work experiences did not require such compliance, making it harder for them to adjust in the space that is school.

Amy had worked in an office and her role as a recruitment consultant had involved meeting clients, which gave her considerable flexibility and freedom in the way she organised her day and schedule: *"You have to organise meetings to go and visit clients, so I'd be around here and there, you know."* She was able to take breaks when it suited her. Her work appointments with clients were flexible and she did not have to strictly follow any set time frame in terms of when to start and finish work. She had oriented herself to an optimal spatial level in that work environment, creating meaning to her existence.

When she came to the teaching profession, Amy considered the school to be an *"odd"* workplace with the need to adhere to *"rules and regulations"*. She lacked personal freedom in the manner in which she went about her work:

> *"I found the whole school environment very different from any other work experience I've had. Because it is an institution and because of the rules and regulations, you're going by the clock, it is so rigid, you know, you can't just walk out and go to the toilet. You have responsibility to be there with your class."*

She was challenged to negotiate ways in which she made sense of herself in the space. Amy felt confined by the rules that govern the school environment . Becoming a teacher reminded her of when she herself was a student in the space called school and classroom:

> *"It's been twenty years, I have had work experience that has been outside of that realm. And it was really odd to go back in that life cycle of the school … In some ways, you feel like you are the student again. I am not a student, you know, I am grown up and I can choose what I want to do, when I want to do but at school, you can't. You have to follow the timetable, do things a certain way because that's the way it is."*

After leaving school and doing other things as an adult, she needed to adjust to the school's different spatial, human relations and temporal demands. The spatial level that her lived body inhabited had been stable until now but became uprooted with the changes in the

environment and the body no longer felt spatially at home. Amy's feelings of constrictions as a school teacher affected her perceptual experiences and the way she connected with the world around her:

> *"Whereas in the work world, you get yourself to work and if you are late, you are late. You can take lunch at this time or not, eh … that's my experience in the work world, obviously it's not the same for everyone … You have a lot more freedom. I think that's the thing. Actually, that probably is it, the freedom. You don't have as much freedom in a school, if we are going to leave the premises to go and get a cup of coffee outside, we have to sign out. I can understand all those requirements but you don't have to do that at work."*

Her use of language to differentiate the *"work world"* from *"school"* suggests she perceived the spatial differences that existed between the two.

Jim encountered a similar form of inflexibility after becoming a teacher and spoke of the challenges involved in following a particular regime every day. His prior work environment as a construction engineer allowed him to take breaks at varying times. He perceived his working space as one that provided freedom and flexibility and where he could determine what suited him to achieve his desired work outputs:

> *"Biggest thing in [school vs work environment].we could have one and a half hours of lunch in a social environment but discussing some work issues and whatever. But you would be able to have these breaks, maybe once a week, maybe once a fortnight. You'd be able to set your own breaks and … then to be controlled by a bell, seemed very childish for me as an adult to have to follow these same rules and … You had to be in a certain place in a certain time."*

In an existential sense, the parameters of school time spatiality made Amy and Jim feel "restricted or boxed in" (Talero, 2005, p. 452). They felt a lack of freedom, changing their configurations of their self and their world. Both Amy and Jim then had to find new ways to orient to the space that is school to find a new sense of stability and connection. They learnt to re-negotiate meanings now as a teacher and in the space belonging to school. The lived body thus required a certain gearing or spatial adjustment.

However, for Sharon, the space called school meant freedom where such freedom in her spatial environment had not existed in her previous career. She too learnt to re-negotiate and

orient herself in the school spatial environment and spoke of adjusting herself to suit the working environment while keeping some core part of self unchanged such as *"being professional and mature*".

Sharon considered the school as *"any other workplace"* where it is possible to take breaks just as in any other work environment: *"You sign out, get in the car, go to the coffee and come back."* She believed individuals respond in suitable ways depending on where they are. Sharon's descriptions of space and how one occupies it were in terms of personal freedom and growth and the possibilities that existed as a teacher in the space of school and classroom.

Personal freedom could be interpreted as a personal choice that participants like Sharon made to become a teacher and was thus reflected in her responses. However, her depiction of feelings of constriction in her previous career is significant in understanding the role of space and environment in her personal growth and freedom. For Sharon, being a teacher provided the flexibility and autonomy to be able to *"run her own day"* the way she wanted to, unlike in one of her previous jobs where she was required to do what she was told. She aptly captured the restrictive feeling felt in one of her previous work as if confined inside a *"cupboard"*:

> *"Actually, I really like the aspect [at school] that you run your own day. Whether you have a good day or a bad day, you run your own day. And get to do whatever you want to do, I really like that aspect. I have had some temping jobs where my job between nine and lunch was to file all the medical files, that ain't good, and a job where, you know, temping jobs where I had seriously gone in the cupboard … the fact that [in school] you run your own day and how organised you are, how much you get time, how much time you have got left and what you do with it is up to you is a fantastic aspect."*

Classroom space worked well for Sharon, in contrast to Amy and Jim's perceptions. It resonated with her philosophy and with what autonomy meant to her in temporal terms. She felt free as her lived body settled and stabilized itself in the spatial setting called school . Rather than viewing classroom teaching as confined to one single space, Sharon extended her feelings of freedom of space and flexibility to her students by taking students *"out to the oval for a period"*. Through this she extended her feelings and experiences of what school space meant to her—in terms of freedom and personal growth—to her students.

Personal space

Lived space consists of forming our being—creating meaning for ourselves—in the space we are in. It is how we construct ourselves, whether we are alone or with someone else. Tasfia and Kate expressed their spatiality and shifts in lived space through the concept of personal physical space. Non-existentially, the term personal space refers to the region surrounding a person which they regard as theirs. Maintaining a certain physical 'proxemics' or distance helps to create a bubble, thus shielding oneself from others. We may consider it an encroachment on our personal space if that distance is violated although this could vary depending on who the others are in our near proximity. The space we occupy is also affected by how we feel about the buildings we are situated in, including the physical characteristics such as the size and type of buildings or rooms we occupy.

Personal space and physical space could be an issue for those coming into teaching after having been in another profession. Space could take on a whole different meaning when they come into the school environment. Career change teacher participants like Tasfia and Kate were challenged by having to share their personal space with students. They had to share their bodily being-in-the-world space or embodied space with students in the classroom and felt their personal space being constantly encroached on during all their work time, both within and outside the classroom. While we know we exist in the world with others as in being-in-the-world, sharing our personal space is more rooted in the physical connectedness we have with others.

Tasfia found it challenging sharing her personal space after being in a *"quiet"* working world where she simply got on with her own work in an office where she had her own desk and chair. She was forced to confront her inability to shape or personalise the classroom. She spoke of the challenges of having to negotiate the differences in personal space and her feelings of shock and frustration:

> *"You are sharing your own personal space with so many … kids talking and squabbling … there is so much noise everywhere. It is just constant … at my previous work, it was so quiet; everybody did their own work … You get used to that quietness and you have your own personal space, but at school, even walking in the corridor, you are sharing your personal space with so many."*

Tasfia's vivid descriptions of the differences in the buildings (*sleek and neat* in her previous workplace versus *dirty with graffiti on walls* in school*)* also brought to light the challenges she faced in the physical space she was situated in. As she spoke of going back to visit her *"old office and desk"*, where *"everything was so quiet and peaceful"*, it was as though her lived body still 'hung on' and was connected to its perceived world formed at the previous spatial level.

Kate also described her struggles when she came into the school and classroom. In her previous career she had created her own optimal spatial work environment that was *"personal"* and made for her. Now she had to make adjustments after the shifts that occurred in her spatial level:

> *"When I was at my previous work, I could just close my office door and spend time reading emails and having a cup of coffee, so you have break. Here [at school], you never sit down and just go 'ah, … that's a nice little relaxing break.'"*

Like Tasfia, Kate found her personal space being encroached upon to the extent that she could even hear children's voices in her sleep: *"I would go to sleep and I would just hear in my head, 'Ms P, Ms P, Ms P' … It was like little peckings in your brain and it was just constant."*

Kate's description of the differences between what personal space meant to her in her previous career (sitting alone in her office; taking breaks) and how that personal space was taken over in school such that there existed no such thing as personal space is poignant and highlights the kind of spatial adjustment the self needed to undergo in the process of becoming a teacher.

It is worth noting that Kate is a primary school second career teacher and her reflections are based upon her experiences with children of kindergarten age or thereabouts. Whether this could influence the spatial challenges to a greater or lesser degree is beyond the scope of this research. Kate did however mention how she had later on got used to the noise and space and she *"doesn't even really notice the little peckings in her brain"* any more. Interpreted existentially, her lived body stabilised, binding itself to the world she currently occupies in the new spatial environment of the school.

Beast that needs to be tamed

Participants also constructed meaning in the school space and environment as beginning teachers, not just as second career individuals. While classrooms can be construed as a place where "the people and the activities that occur within it makes it an ecological setting for social interaction" (Henry, Knight, Lingard & Taylor, 1988, p. 41), career change teachers may see it quite differently.

In the school environment and in the classroom, participants found ways of expressing their spatiality and existence as any beginning teacher would.

As a beginning teacher, Amy wanted to connect with the space that is the classroom and looked for ways to create meaningful experiences in her spatial environment. She was challenged by the classroom and its dynamics and had to find ways and means by which to understand and make meaning in this space:

> *"In terms of managing the class, management of adults is very different from the classroom … I had no experience that I could really draw on … I felt I wasn't in control as I should be."*

Her description of the classroom *"as a beast that needs to be tamed"* reflects her feeling that she could make spatial connections with the classroom through control and management. Other beginning teacher literature has also explored the theme of how teachers define *their* space in classrooms. For example, Henry et al. (1988) refer to a teacher as "resembling a circus ringmaster facing the lions" (p. 28). Amy described lived space in terms of "managing" the class, depicting a custodial approach to teaching. The physical setting of the classroom and the general architecture of the school places constraints or opportunities on the power relationships and what teachers can or cannot do in the space that they have.

Over the course of being a teacher, Amy made adjustments to her spatial level that suited her meaningful existence in the classroom:

> *"I feel I understand more how the classroom works and what things you can do to change the dynamic in the classroom … So, taming the beast is a little bit more possible. I have got a whip in my hand now … They are strategies that are effective and … makes me feel more in control."*

Amy and Matthew described their strategies of effective classroom management through classroom seating arrangements. This too has bearing on the meaning they give to space. Matthew pointed to the strategies offered to him by his master teacher who changed the classroom setting frequently to challenge and prepare Matthew for effective classroom management:

> *"My master teacher would change the setting to challenge me. So, it would go from the 'inside-outside to rows, you know, like primary school blocks. He would say, 'your task this week or today is to teach every lesson with kids sitting like that, so they are not all going to be looking at you.'*

Matthew's existence as a teacher thus came from his understanding and learning of the possibilities of spatiality and the spaces students occupied in the classroom.

Jim's response also provided a similar perspective on how he made spatial connections (again, achieved through control) as a beginning teacher:

"If you are going to have a talk with a student, places where you know, it's going to be the right place to have it, positions where you can be in control and assert your authority."

For Jim, his existence as a teacher and how the body determined where his spatial level should be were connected with where he engaged in conversations with students in the school space.

Spatiality summary

In summary, teacher participants' descriptions of what spatiality meant to them varied depending on their prior career and environment and what was important to them in that environment in terms such as freedom, flexibility and personal space. As beginning teachers, participants like Amy and Jim also negotiated their existence in their new spatial environment through management and control.

Through a change in their work environments, participants experienced a shift in their optimal spatial level and found ways to anchor themselves in this new environment. Spatial relation for teacher participants is necessarily linked with lived relation as they learnt to negotiate the changes in their workplace environment and create meaning for themselves in the school space in and through their relations with students. The meaning that teacher participants gave to *their* space impacted on their ways of becoming a teacher and how they

wished to exist in the world they were in. Participants created meaning in and through the space they were in now as teachers. Spatiality and the shifts in space offered them possibilities to understand who they are and where they want to be.

In this final part of the chapter, I take the existential meaning of spatiality to a slightly higher plane to explain participants' process of becoming a teacher. I first provide an ontological interpretation of the concept of dwelling. I extend the theme of spatiality to address the ontological question: 'Who am I becoming?'

Spatiality and dwelling: "I dwell in school"

Space, as a form of dwelling, is being at home with and as ourselves in the world. Spatially, being at home in our environment provides us with a sense of 'homeliness'. It is about belonging and where one wants to be what we are (van Manen, 1990, p. 102). For instance, we may feel that our fundamental sense of being comes into existence through language. In other words, we "dwell" in our language (Dreyfus, 1991, p. 45). It becomes part of us and "pervades our relation to other objects in the world" (p. 45). Heidegger (1978) described *wohnen* or dwelling as when the self is set at peace and is content. It is also related to words that mean 'to grow used to' or feel at home in a place, signifying the way "human beings *are* on the earth" (cited in Krell, 1978, p. 322). As a journey that is undertaken towards personal growth, dwelling signifies our search for becoming who we want to be and the way we want to exist in the world. Dwelling is our way of being-in-the-world. However, as Heidegger eloquently puts it, the *real* dwelling or who we want to become hides behind our everyday habitual experiences rather than "letting it appear" or "bring[ing it] forth" (p. 337). Our everyday mode of existence prevents us from knowing and understanding what dwelling means in our lives. Through thoughtful inward search and taking stock of our lives in an existential manner, we can learn what it is and what we want to become, bringing dwelling closer to our bodily existence.

I believe some participants came closer to undertaking the journey towards their dwelling. In the first part of this chapter, I discussed an existential understanding of participants' intrinsic motivations for becoming teachers. I argued that some teacher participants, like Amy, Tasfia and Matthew, depicted an ontological awareness as they questioned their ways of living and existing in the world at the time of their career change decisions. In the process of thinking about changing careers the participants were led to meaningfully think about their existence, where they want to be and how they saw themselves then and in the future. At the

same time, they were drawn to becoming a teacher because they felt that the journey would lead them to some answers in their inward search.

As human beings, we are always in the process of looking towards and searching for something else, though we may not be sure what we are looking for. While they may not have known what the future might hold, participants like Kate and Sharon described becoming a teacher as a 'coming home' (*"I am a teacher forever now; something I always wanted to do; can't believe I waited so long"*). Deciding to become a teacher made participants think of the school as a place like home, one where they could dwell. They felt they 'belonged' at school and that it was something they had been searching for. "The real dwelling lies in this, that mortals ever search anew for the essence of dwelling, that they must ever learn to dwell" (Heidegger, cited in Krell, 1978, p. 339). Participants' process of searching, turning inward to "take stock" of themselves' (p. 335) brought them closer to their journey towards their dwelling. When they became teachers, it brought to the forefront what they had always searched for and known—they believed school to be their place of dwelling. We saw under the theme of spatiality that participants made adjustments and negotiated their ways of existing in the space called school. Participants adjusted their self to the new space belonging to school and classroom, or in Heidegger's words, 'learnt to dwell' in the location called school. Spatiality is also intertwined with temporality, as we *become* the space we are in over time. School became a meaningful workplace as participants' inward search and desire to become a teacher led them to feel that they "are here where they want to be", closer to their "home"—the school.

Becoming

Unpacking dwelling and space in existential terms allows me to understand the teacher participants' lifeworlds and their ways of existing in school as individuals who develop and grow. Indeed, their ways of becoming a teacher include the learning, growing and negotiation process they went through within the spatial dimensions of school. Events and experiences altered their orientations towards life, changing their perspectives about space. With each new event or experience, the body anchored itself at the new spatial level, with new levels of commitment for self and world. The characteristics of existential spatiality are thus variable, as the self shifted and re-oriented to new surroundings in order to afford itself a stabilised setting (Talero, 2005).

Participants' existential ways of adjusting to their new optimal spatial level in the school is significant in this study because it enriched my understanding to conceptualise how they changed and grew in their new identity as a second career teacher. Faced with having to make a career choice, participants underwent changes in their personal priorities. In these transformations, it was possible to see the basic phenomenon of personal growth in their lives (Talero, 2005, p. 454). In spatiality, I was able to see their becoming.

'Becoming' brings together the previous parts of this chapter, rounding out my existential perspective on career change teachers' reasons and motivations and teacher participants' lifeworlds. I have interpreted participants' personal growth and their becoming in terms of what Heidegger refers to as the "formation" (*Bildung*) of being human.

Bildung is essentially the formation of oneself—that which one aspires to become—guided by being-in-the-world (Heidegger, cited in McNeill, 1998). The existential meaning that is derived in my interpretation, starts from when one is 'un-informed' and then moves towards becoming an in-formed self. Formation signifies a life-long goal of one's personal growth or becoming—a characteristic intrinsic to us being a human (Brook, 2009). We are always 'becoming' in the sense of always developing towards possibilities or possible ways to be what we are not yet (Dall-Alba, 2009). I believe participants saw the potentiality of their becoming when they made the choice to become a teacher. They strived towards their formation or their becoming, and in the process gave meaning to their existence.

Participants made the journey towards becoming by attempting to understand the meaning of themselves and their possibilities of ways of existing in the world. The initial transformation in their lives took place before and during the time they reflected on changing careers to become a teacher.

In the first instance, their everyday mode of existence in their prior lives and careers could be interpreted as leading an "inauthentic existence" of "being lost" (Dreyfus, 1991, p. 193). An inauthentic existence signifies not taking responsibility or not owning up to the possibilities that exist for one's self. Each one of us lives our everyday lives in 'average everydayness', where our everyday understanding covers up or conceals the truth about the possibilities of the true nature of our existence (Dreyfus, 1991, p. 35). The same was true with teacher participants in this research.

Participants' *recognition* of possibilities that could exist if they changed careers to become a teacher constituted the next step towards their formation or personal growth. They became aware of how their purpose in life could change should they become a teacher. Participants recognized that choosing to become a teacher is a concern for their own becoming and their orientation to life. They were able to reflect upon and question the meaning and purpose of their lives as they transitioned into teaching. Their quest for something else made them return inward. To quote van Manen, " in transformation … we realize the potential to be heedful, answerable to what the subject lets me know, and to what it lets me know what I ought to do with respect of my realisation of being answerable' (1982, p. 296). Participants mindfully listened to themselves, which in itself constituted the very essence of their transformation. They were able to direct themselves to the path of formation by changing careers to becoming a teacher.

Finally, as a teacher, the journey of transformation had begun as they returned back 'home' to dwell in school. Participants directed themselves towards an authentic existence, in the sense of owning and recognising their personal growth and becoming.

Participants' stages in their becoming resonate with Heidegger's philosophy of being human as outlined in his interpretations of Plato's doctrine of truth (cited in McNeill, 1998). Heidegger identifies four stages: (1) being uninformed and "chained" to the present everydayness; (2) becoming aware of the ground of our existence; (3) moving out, via a confrontation and questioning of the ground; and finally (4) returning back 'home' to ways of becoming human (1998, pp. 167-170).

Participants' journeys towards their formation were lived out in their ways of being a second career teacher. They moved closer to their own becoming through care for their students and by displaying awareness of students' becoming. The structure of care in relations is essentially interpreted as being-in-the-world (Dreyfus, 1991, p. 239). Hence, participants' lived relation through care in school depicted their ways of being-in-the-world. Becoming a teacher allowed participants to "be-there" for their students in the "intellectual, social and material space" (Donnelly, 1999, p. 945) that is the classroom. By orienting themselves towards caring for students and their becoming, participants like Matthew are then able to direct their own possibilities to become the teacher they hope to be and how they wished to exist in the world.

In the process of forming oneself during a pedagogical encounter, Langeveld points out that the educator must not only be aware of who they are but also "become aware of the complex values and forms of knowledge that ultimately reflect, shape, and orient one's life and give meaning to one's own experiences" (cited in van Manen, 1996, p. 43). Participants' existential awareness of what it meant to be a teacher led to an increased understanding and meaning making sense of their own being and becoming. Attending to the call of pedagogy (for his students) allowed Matthew to give meaning to his own experiences to be a better pedagogue in reality and in the lived relation with students. The motivation to make students' lives meaningful thus came naturally to career change teacher participants like Matthew as he made sense of his own meaning-making in the lived relation.

I also believe their pedagogic confidence as classroom teachers brought participants closer to their formation. Phenomenological pedagogy is being tactful in a way that is reflected in thoughtful, mindful, heedful and confident action (van Manen, 1991, p. 127). The pedagogical practice of teachers is also expressed by an "active understanding" of how they find themselves in the classroom with "certain intentions, feelings, passions, inclinations, attitudes, and preoccupations" (van Manen, 1995, p. 15). This understanding cannot be taught as a theoretical abstract. Rather, as van Manen puts it, it is acquired by the teacher through observation and in personal relation (p. 15). The "confidence" that arises *is* the active knowledge itself, "the tact of knowing what to do or not to do, what to say or not to say" (p. 15). Teachers who participated in the research were not only caring but also emerged as confident. They possessed this active understanding due to their prior experiences and their intrinsic motivation for entering the profession.

I believe that bringing out the existential perspective in their reasons has also brought to light participants' tacit knowing of what it means to be a teacher. Van Manen points out that, "pedagogy is not something inside the text, as if words on a page could provide pedagogy to the reader, nor is pedagogy outside the text, as if it were summoned by the text. Pedagogy, like textuality itself, is neither this nor that" (1990, p. 145). As Tasfia aptly pointed out, to be a confident or competent teacher is *"just part of you and nobody can teach you"*. Pedagogy speaks for itself and participants' inherent pedagogic competence and confidence spoke for itself and paved the way in their becoming teachers.

In a non-existential sense, it can be argued that teacher participants' becoming was influenced by their prior life histories, experiences and personal philosophies. Teacher

growth takes place as earlier experiences and the earlier development resulting from those experiences are integrated into the present in the becoming of a teacher. "Life experiences and background are obviously key ingredients of the people that we are, our sense of self. To the degree that we invest our 'self' to our teaching, experience and background therefore shape our practice" (Goodson, 1992, p. 116). Participants brought unique life experiences that helped shaped their becoming.

I would like to conclude this discussion by quoting Amy and Tasfia's descriptions of how they see themselves now after having changed careers. I believe their descriptions shed light on participants' changes to themselves and their ways of becoming, not just in the present moment of being a teacher but in their ways of existing in the world in the future:

> *"I think I have changed since becoming a teacher. I have become more patient with my own children and better able to have a positive and encouraging attitude towards them and I think that is because I have developed those qualities as a teacher." (Amy)*

> *"Yes, it sure has changed me. Made me a better person, much wiser and more patient. it has made me appreciate life [and what we have currently] much more. Made me more considerate towards everyone, the general public, which includes other drivers on the road, shop assistants and even teenagers around school and other places." (Tasfia)*

Finally, the following quotation from Dreyfus summarises the significance of existentially unpacking career change teachers' ways of existing in the world. The quotation from Dewey captures the usefulness of understanding education as a philosophy and vice-versa:

> *"To exist is to take a stand on what is essential about one's being and to be defined by that stand." (Dreyfus, cited in Thomson, 2004, p. 444).*

> *"If we are willing to conceive education as the process of forming fundamental dispositions, intellectual and emotional, toward nature and fellow men, philosophy may even be defined as the general theory of education." (Dewey, 1916, p. 383).*

Quality teacher characteristics in teacher participants

In chapter two of this thesis, I examined the connection between the perceived characteristics of quality teachers and the attributes of second career teachers as evidenced in the literature. This section examines whether such a connection exists in my research with the seven teacher participants.

My primary focus in the literature review chapter was on the personal qualities and attributes of quality teachers as highlighted in reports and policy objectives, with the aim of bringing out the connection between these attributes and career change teachers. I believe that most participants in my research possessed many of the characteristics described in quality teacher studies. I also believe that a phenomenological analysis has brought out the 'person' in each of the teacher participants and has enabled to bring out the connection with more clarity and insight.

What a teacher brings to school and students remains a crucial factor in discussions surrounding quality teaching and its links to student achievement and learning. The literature review chapter noted that reports on quality teachers emphasise the attributes and characteristics deemed necessary for quality teachers. Such attributes are generally defined by personal qualities of an affective nature such as experience, passion, creativity, flexibility and context awareness. The challenge for teachers, according to Robinson, is to facilitate creative development in students through different styles of teaching, yet, to teach in ways that "reflect their intimate connections in the world beyond education" (2001, p. 201) using both the rational and the natural. Real creative power then comes through feelings *and* reason.

Jim entered the teaching profession not just with a passion for science—his first degree—but also with a passion to share his knowledge of science with his students. He used this passion to infuse interest and enthusiasm in the classroom, taking delight in the achievements of his student. Similar passion existed for Amy and Tasfia who, as mathematics teachers, described sharing that passion and work experiences with their students. Imparting knowledge and inspiring a love of learning of the subject was made possible for these participants because of their ability to connect their previous work with the subject matter content in the classroom. They brought real life experiences to their students.

Matthew was clearly able to demonstrate the skills of being creative and flexible as a mature age teacher. He also showed care and sensitivity to the needs of his students conveying his care and understanding to them. His personal beliefs about the capabilities and strengths of career change teachers also demonstrated the significance he gave to these attributes. Both he and Tasfia showed awareness of students' contexts and circumstances, adapting their pedagogical style to suit diverse needs. Their intrinsic reasons for being in the school could also be interpreted as giving them sufficient incentives to practise innovation in their classrooms.

A phenomenological and pedagogic analysis of teacher participants also brought out the affective nature of each participant. Qualities such as pedagogic thoughtfulness and tact, care, sensitivity, genuineness and awareness of students' becoming brought out participants' inner passion and drive. Participants like Matthew who expressed a holistic approach, providing character education for his students, also resonated with the characteristics of quality teachers discussed in literature. Robinson reminds us that caring and sensitivity to oneself and to others are vital elements "in the development of the personal qualities that are now urgently needed in business, in the community and in personal life" (2001, p. 165). Matthew looks at engaging his students whether *"from a social point of view, relationship point of view or what kind of pedagogy can we think to engage them"* with a view to developing the whole individual. He sees this as an essential process of good teaching.

I believe my research adds significant value to the discussion on the connection between teacher quality and career change teachers. In the final chapter I suggest how we can build on these results.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have examined the lifeworlds of seven second career beginning teachers. By adopting a hermeneutic phenomenological approach, I described, interpreted and developed an existential understanding of participants' lived school experiences. In this way I uncovered the meaning of being a second career teacher for each of the participants.

In this final chapter, I first provide a brief thesis summary. I then re-visit the research questions and the purpose of the study to reflect on the extent to which I have achieved what I set out to do. This is followed by a discussion of the significance of the research. The next section discusses the implications of the research for schools and policy makers, including the potential that the research offers with respect to quality teachers. I then present recommendations for future research on career change teachers drawn from this study. My thesis's concluding remarks remind readers of the significance of career change teachers as indicated through the research study.

Thesis summary

I began this dissertation by introducing the aim of this research study to understand the lifeworlds of second career beginning teachers. I discussed the way in which my experience of changing careers and my personal philosophy led to this study. I put forward arguments for learning about career change teachers in the context of the teaching profession and suggested the ways in which this research could contribute towards a better understanding of this group of early career teachers.

In chapter two, the literature review chapter, I critically examined existing research studies on career change teachers while putting forward the value of my research as a study that examines the perspectives and experiences of practising classroom teachers. Through a critical examination of current studies, I was able to show how my research could provide rich insights into career change teachers' philosophies and practices in schools, usefully

supplementing the limited research on career change teachers' school experiences. I also highlighted the different qualitative approaches used in studies of career change teachers and thus brought out the significance of an existential and phenomenological approach to understanding teachers' lived school experiences.

In chapter three I discussed my research methodology. I argued for the use of hermeneutic phenomenology to interpretively understand teachers' lived experience and the meanings of those experiences. I justified my choice of this methodology in light of its alignment with my personal philosophy and research aim and the possibilities it offered to observe and build on teachers' reasons and motivations from an existential perspective. I explained how I have interpreted and applied the methodology in this study, particularly to understand teachers in a phenomenological and pedagogical sense.

In chapter four, I outlined the design and analysis necessary in a phenomenological study. For example, I explained the steps involved in the phenomenological analysis of the data gathered from participants, including interpretive and thematic analysis. I showed that a phenomenological orientation during the analytic process guided me towards uncovering the existential meaning in teachers' stories by way of lived relation and lived space.

Chapter five analysed the research findings using an interpretive inquiry approach. Following the reflective analytic process discussed in the previous chapter, I identified nine thematic aspects from the participants' stories. These thematic aspects paved the way for the existential understanding of participants' lifeworlds discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter six represents the culmination of the research with a discussion of the pedagogic and phenomenological sense of being a second career teacher. I argued for an existential perspective, drawing on evidence in my teacher participants' accounts of their intrinsic motivations and on results from published studies. I then articulated the phenomenological and pedagogic meaning of being a second career teacher through the existential themes of lived relation and lived space. I articulated teacher participants' lifeworlds using Heidegger's philosophy of the ways of 'becoming'. I suggested that the thesis allowed us to understand career change teachers' lifeworlds including their career choice from an existential perspective.

Re-visiting research questions and purpose of the study

My study has sought to provide a rich and meaningful understanding of a group of second career beginning teachers in their first few years as teachers. When I first embarked on this research journey about second career beginning teachers, I was drawn by two immediate goals. First, I wanted to find out more on this group of new teachers about whom little research existed. Second, I wanted to bring out the significance of the teachers' experiences by listening to their voices. At a more philosophical level I also wanted to uncover what it is like for them to be second career beginning teachers. Hence my choice of a phenomenological study as I sought to understand the lifeworlds of each of the seven second career teacher participants and explored what it is like for each of them to be a second career teacher. A phenomenological approach taught me not to expect nor look for straightforward solutions. The 'messiness' that is part of a phenomenological route offered answers along the way in my search to understand what is it like to be a second career teacher.

My research questions reflected phenomenological methodology as applied to uncovering teachers' experiences. The research questions were:

- What is the nature and essence of the experiences of a group of second career beginning teachers in schools?
- What kinds of influences do second career beginning teachers' past experiences have on their current role as teachers?

In my study, I was able to existentially uncover and understand the meaning of being a second career teacher through an understanding of participants' lifeworlds. The existential themes of lived space and lived relation opened a pathway to participants' lifeworlds. Through the existential theme of lived space, I was able to see how teacher participants adapted themselves in the new space and environment called school even as they negotiated differences due to shifts in the spatial level between their past and present lives. Their intrinsic motivations and their turning inwards in the search for their existence in the world led them to feel 'at home' and they learnt 'to dwell' in the space called school. It is through finding their existence (who they are) in the school space that they become teachers. Kate described her coming home at various points in her interview:

"I always kind of thought that I would become a teacher; I am a teacher forever now, I can't believe I have waited for so long, that's a shame to me that I could have been doing

this for longer; I think I would really like to do it forever; I am happy that I [made the change], I am happy every day."

I was able to see how participants like Kate created meaning for themselves as they came home to dwell in the school space. The theme of lived space was one means through which I was able to uncover the nature and essence of teacher participants' lived experiences.

Similarly, the existential theme of lived relation allowed me to see the meaning of being a second career teacher. I was able to see how participants' relationships with students were central to their meaning-making process. I highlighted the inward thinking processes that lay behind participants' intrinsic motivations during the time they were deciding to change careers. Later, when they became teachers, I brought out the significance of the relations through their pedagogic awareness of what it is to be a teacher.

For example, I described how Matthew displayed qualities of thoughtful pedagogy, like care and concern for his students as well as being mindful of the students' becoming in the future. I also described Kate's process of becoming a teacher in her questioning and experiencing wonder in the classroom. I suggested that participants' maturity and wisdom gave them the pedagogic awareness to look beyond the school and prepare students for the future in more ways than just teaching the content. I was able to detect in participants a holistic approach to students and to their teaching and learning practices. 'Holistic' here refers to being aware of the wholeness of the student. I provided instances of this, such as Matthew referring to student character building; Tasfia referring to developing student skills and mechanisms to cope with adult life and to teaching students about respect; and Kate and Sharon referring to keeping perspective while recognising the individuality of each student. I brought out the phenomenological perspective by stating that the process of becoming teachers existed in and through their relations with students. Lived relation, in turn, helped the participants to understand themselves and how they wished to be after having changed careers. For example, we heard Kate indicating her mature disposition to life, Tasfia giving it her 'best shot' as a teacher, and Amy being more satisfied within her own skin now.

Furthermore, I brought out the (existential) journey that participants undertook in the process of becoming teachers. Teacher participants' ways of dwelling and becoming who they are, constituted an ontological understanding of the nature and essence of being a second career teacher.

My second research question aimed to unpack teachers' prior lives and experiences in the context of their new career as a teacher. The phenomenological journey enabled me to uncover the significance of participants' past experiences and the manner in which those experiences had shaped their present becoming. I was able to demonstrate how teachers constructed meaningful influences from their past lives, including from the time when they were deciding to change careers. The intrinsic motivations of participants like Amy and Matthew led them to consider teaching as a second career. I brought an existential perspective to understanding participants' intrinsic motivations as they questioned their existence and ways of living in the world. For Kate and Sharon experiences from their past also had an element of 'calling to the teaching profession'. Participants' stories showed that their past experiences, however different those were, shaped the teachers they wished to become in classrooms.

To summarise, I have been able to achieve the aims I set out in my research questions. I believe my research provides a meaningful and informative philosophical lens on teachers' thinking. The study is in line with emerging trends of a "philosophical renaissance" (with epistemological underpinnings) in educational research and in the study of teaching in general (Chambliss et al., 2012, p. 1). Through a phenomenological and pedagogic perspective I have been able to uncover the lifeworlds of teacher participants and to make sense of the journey the participants undertook as they changed careers. The philosophical approach of phenomenology also helped me understand the intrinsic motivations that drew some mature age individuals into teaching.

Acknowledging the limitations of the study

Understanding the lived experiences of second career teachers from a hermeneutic phenomenological point of view offers one dimension on this field. As we saw in chapter three, hermeneutic phenomenology presents its own challenges with no two studies the same. Career change individuals' lifeworlds after they became teachers can be examined from other perspectives, not just through an existential approach using lived relation and lived space. When I first started this research, I was driven by the lack of studies on career change teachers in schools. I was also motivated to adopt a philosophical approach given my interests and the rich and meaningful insights the approach offered. What was important to me as a researcher was to explore what it was like to become a teacher as a mature age adult who had worked elsewhere. The question held significance for me for its philosophical and

practical perspectives and because of my own experience. I was attempting to understand how teacher participants, in their world of schools and classrooms, made meaning for themselves after having changed careers. The process of unpacking this question through the themes of lived relation and lived space made both practical and philosophical sense because of what had occurred in participants' lives as a result of changing their careers. Their workplace environment (space) and the people they worked with (relations) had changed. Existentially understanding their everyday experiences as a teacher through lived relation and lived space enabled me to uncover what it was like for them now as human beings.

Moreover, unpacking and describing teachers' stories can be done in various ways in a qualitative study. The themes that I describe in chapter five are by no means the only themes that can be identified. However, listening to and engaging with the teachers' stories as told to me led me to identify those particular themes. Moreover, the methodology I applied played a crucial role in that I cultivated a phenomenological attitude throughout my research journey.

A further limitation of this work is that data collection is confined to one in-depth interview with each of the participants and a second email interview with four of the seven participants. My analysis and interpretations is limited to these interviews where participants have provided a snapshot of their lives and school experiences. Participants' reports about their experiences and the meaning they attach to their experiences may not hold true for themselves at all times. Self-reports in the form of interviews are however both vital and appropriate sources of data when one seeks an in-depth insight to understanding participants' perspectives on their experiences. Furthermore, my interpretations are based solely on participants' self-descriptions, about for instance, their use of prior career and life experiences in their teaching and pedagogical practices. Hence, in my research design, I am unable to confirm or refute participants' claims about how and to what extent they use their prior skills and experiences in classrooms.

An additional limitation could also arise from the fact that participants teach in schools located in certain suburbs in the state of New South Wales. While this was determined by the responses received, it is quite likely that the findings, particularly teacher experiences, would vary depending on the type and location of schools the teachers are situated in. Moreover, while six of the participants were secondary school teachers, one was a primary school teacher. This would also influence the type of responses such as participants' views on students and the challenges they faced as a beginning teacher.

The aim of an existential human science study is never to generalise or to make large claims about second career teachers' lived school experiences. The study acknowledges the unique nature and characteristic of each teacher participant and what this particular group of career change teachers brought at the time they were interviewed within the parameters of the study. The focus has always been to capture the essence of the phenomenon of teachers' lived experience.

Research significance

My research study has focused on understanding, describing and interpreting the lived school experiences of a group of second career beginning teachers. Few career change studies have researched the lived school experiences of second career teachers with the purpose of understanding the process of meaning-making as they change professions to become a teacher. I identify three main contributions of the study.

First, the main contribution of this research is that every attempt has been made to highlight the voices of career change teachers. Learning and understanding more about the meaning of teachers' school experiences reveals the human-ness in teaching. Hearing practising teachers' actual experiences opens up space for discussion and improvement in schools and classrooms and is also relevant for anyone interested in teachers and their everyday lives.

Second, apart from researching career change individuals who are practising classroom teachers, the study has also made a significant contribution to understanding teachers from a human side. A philosophical and existential approach has contributed to understanding teacher participants' holistic ways of thinking about students and their development. Participants have made possible the examination of pedagogy in thoughtful and caring terms. By bringing out some participants' modes of self-questioning as they explore their intrinsic and altruistic motivations, the study has opened up new ways of thinking about teacher identity. Changing careers to become a teacher is not just a process one goes through at a particular stage. It is a process that also opens one up to asking deep questions about oneself, one's values and beliefs such that one attains new knowledge about oneself. Participants learnt more about themselves and their ways of existing in the world through their career change decisions and through becoming teachers. The study has thus made a meaningful contribution to understanding participants not just as teachers but also as human beings.

Third, the study of career change teacher participants in the study have brought out the deeper purpose of education—to help young people become successful people, eager to learn and grow in the real world of work and relationships. The participants have reminded us of the deeper learning of human values and skills that are necessary for students as they develop into adults and make their ways into the 21st century and beyond. As mature age individuals with work and life experiences, career change teachers have the potential to prepare students to be future leaders, helping them acquire relevant workplace and life skills that career changers have experienced. Participants demonstrated they have the potential to make their prior life and work experiences relevant to students when they step into the wider world. Participants showed they have the potential to instil a sense of wonder and questioning in their students, drawing on the understanding of the meaning and purpose of education that their career change journey led them to explore. Career change teachers' perspectives on learning and life should be taken seriously.

Implications for schools

My research has shown that there is a clear need for school administrators and management to familiarise themselves with the career change teachers who come into their schools, particularly the need to understand teachers' intrinsic reasons for changing careers, teachers' backgrounds including their life and other experiences and to understand teachers' strengths, weaknesses, needs and wants. Only by educating themselves about career change teachers can schools acknowledge and recognise what these teachers have to offer the profession and their students.

Understanding second career teachers' intrinsic motivations

The study has brought out the significance of valuing career change individuals, paying particular attention to their intrinsic reasons for choosing teaching as a profession. School management needs to be attentive to the multifaceted and complex motivations that bring mature age individuals into teaching. Career change teachers show high commitment to the path they have chosen, having made a conscious decision to be an educator. Schools and school management should make themselves aware of the intrinsic motivations that have contributed to career change teachers' decision making. By examining teachers' intrinsic motivations from an existential perspective, this research has revealed career change teachers as 'persons' who have reflected deeply and thoughtfully about their career and life decision.

By being aware of their reasons to enter teaching, schools will be more able to benefit from the potential contribution that career change teachers have to offer as classroom teachers.

It is also worth noting here that teaching raises challenges for many countries around the world. As Watt and Richardson note, the situation is not made easier by the "changes in political ideology or shifts in political opinion" (2008, p. 408). There is also a shift in the notion of a single lifelong career. Teaching, like any other career, is no longer considered a job for life. In today's employment environment, individuals have multiple career choices. When combined with facing the challenges of location, family and lifestyle, it is not surprising that even those who commit themselves to teaching evaluate the 'worthiness' of their chosen path at every step of the way, re-visiting the question "is it worth it?" (Hammerness, 2006). Most teacher participants in my research were not sure of their long-term plans, nor did they speak categorically of committing themselves to being a teacher for the rest of their lives. At the same time, the literature tells us that most career changers enter the teaching profession for altruistic and intrinsic reasons, drawn by a sense of deep commitment and purpose. They join the profession not so much for extrinsic rewards such as salary and status but more to fulfil their altruistic and intrinsic desires. Their aspirational desires lead them to actively seek to advance the teaching profession. Career change individuals' intrinsic reasons should not just be understood *and* welcomed but should serve as a constant positive reminder for employers who seek to retain these teachers and consider new ways of supporting them. Making the teaching profession attractive and worthwhile for career changers—most of whom have made a conscious career choice and who show deep commitment—will go some way towards their long term retention.

Being informed about career change teachers

The study has also shown the importance of management being familiar with this group of teachers, including being aware of teachers' backgrounds and prior experiences. Awareness of teachers' backgrounds allows schools to tap into and capitalise on the individual strengths and attributes that each of these teachers bring to the profession. Career change teachers have rich and different life trajectories with diverse and versatile occupational backgrounds and previous career experiences. The skills and experiences that they take into school can only enhance the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of schooling

The type of career role teachers have had in their prior profession (s) determines the strengths and the skills that they bring to teaching. For instance, career change teachers may

possess a range of people and communication skills as a result of having worked in other environments. Sharon, a teacher participant in this study, described people skills gained while previously employed as a flight attendant and working with young people. Both Tasfia and Jim spoke about using their previous expertise in technology to teach other teachers during their practicum. Career change teachers may also be flexible and creative willing to take on extra roles and responsibilities when they join the school, as noted by Matthew in the study. Schools should familiarize themselves with the personal attributes and individual skills and expertise that some career change teachers bring to teaching. Teachers' prior professional expertise should be valued and positively and productively applied in the school environment. Their contributions to school and students should be recognised and taken seriously by educational authorities, who need to move beyond the assumption that a person coming into a career in teaching will stay in teaching, building a traditional lifetime career. It is possible for career change teachers to move careers again, having made the change once before. Schools and principals need to ensure second career teachers become an invaluable asset by taking steps to integrate them successfully into school culture, without drawing blanket assumptions on their loyalty to the profession.

Knowing about the nature and characteristics of career change teachers in their school can result in management giving recognition where it is deserved. Jim, a science teacher, experienced challenges as a career change entrant due to a lack of understanding by senior management in his school. He felt he was not being recognised for what he brought to teaching. He talked of the difficult relations he had with senior management. In research conducted on second career student teachers and their ways of learning as adult learners, Haggard et al. (2006) point out that adult learners learn best when they receive recognition and accommodation for their wide-ranging experiences, knowledge and skills. Although the need for recognition is not something unique to career change teachers, with research showing many teachers feeling that they are not being recognized (OECD, 2009), the issue is significant because of the potential experiences, capabilities and attributes of career change teachers, such as those possessed by the research participants. Career change teachers are by no means beginners. Jim's views are not isolated and are indicative of older teachers who come into the profession with expertise, and who want to be valued and respected for their experience.

An understanding of career change teachers and their background also enables schools to recognise the needs and wants of this group of teachers. Career change teachers have entered teaching with a strong sense of mission and purpose as evidenced in my research and in the literature. They look for opportunities to fulfil their personal ambitions and aspirations and to identify ways to move up the career ladder. Among my research participants both Jim and Sharon seized the leadership opportunities that were presented to them in their schools. Similarly, Matthew enjoyed the challenge of managing difficult students, taking it upon himself to teach them life and character-building skills. The keys to enhancing any teachers' capacities in the classroom are to provide opportunities for their development as professionals and to introduce variety and challenges appropriate to their needs. Career change teachers would also benefit from a degree of professional autonomy as recognition of their prior career and life experiences.

Most teacher participants in my research also displayed the need for personal growth and learning through further education. Lifelong learning is now considered essential across all occupations to build employability, and schools should value and encourage teachers' thirst for learning and knowledge. Assisting career change teachers to pursue their personal goals and aspirations can benefit the entire school community. The more we understand career changers' motivations as well as their aspirations and beliefs, the more likely we will be to see the significance of recruiting *and* retaining these engaged and committed teachers.

Furthermore, the existential approach in this research has also helped reveal career change teachers as people who care. Participants' descriptions of their experiences reflect a holistic approach to student learning and development. For example, Matthew's emphasis on care and concern led to him being holistically engaged in the development of his students. Management may wish to note the possibility of such a holistic approach among career change teachers employed in their schools. While I am cautious in putting forward this implication given the obvious limitations of the research and the interpretive nature of its methodology, the point made here is that management might consider looking at career change teachers in their schools through a slightly different lens than first career teachers.

Preparing teachers for what is to come: managing expectations and providing support

This study makes clear that second career beginning teachers, like other beginning teachers, are confronted with a different world when they enter the school and classroom. Teacher

participants in my research were practising teachers, for most of whom school culture and the school environment were very different from their prior working environments. They talked at length about the differences and the adjustments they have had to make since becoming teachers, such as working with students instead of adults. Previous second career studies have reported on second career teachers who had worked in industry or business experiencing "culture shock" and disbelief (Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003, p. 108) at inflexible and archaic school processes. Career changers may also come to teaching profession expecting to make a difference quickly and they may then become frustrated by the reality of the slow and arduous processes in schools and school culture. There could also be a certain degree of unexpected shock when faced with student issues such as discipline, dealings with parents (described by Amy) and school and staff management issues (mentioned by Jim). While some career changers may be prepared for certain issues, most may not realise what to expect when they first join a school. Teacher participants such as Amy acknowledged that it may not be fully possible to understand the realities of being a teacher until one is actually immersed in it.

However, what may help is for career change teachers to be educated about what is likely to happen, such as how to deal with students who can be temperamental or unmotivated or how to deal with parents who can be the difficult. Schools should consider ways of differentiating and tailoring induction that meets the strengths and support of second career teachers. Warning and preparation for what is to come can help not only restore faith in the system but also remind career change teachers of their reasons for joining the profession. Being aware of the realities of being a teacher and thus being mentally prepared would also lessen the frustration and shock. Teachers may then be less likely to consider leaving the profession. Schools should also consider giving career change teachers some time to adjust to the school environment and school culture. As my findings show, career change teachers can be surprised and overwhelmed at first. Schools and staff can take steps to smooth teachers' transition into the workplace. I acknowledge that some of these initiatives support the preparation of both first and second career entrants to teaching. However, some onus lies with school management to reduce the realities of a teaching career, particularly to those who have thought through and gone to great lengths to change careers to teaching. Career change teachers themselves need to be aware of their orientations and ability in order to respond appropriately to obstacles and frustrations they may confront and to develop strategies for career resilience.

Career change teachers require support that is suited to their prior backgrounds and experiences as beginning teachers when they commence teaching. It is imperative for schools and management to remind themselves that career change teachers are still *beginning* teachers. This may sometimes be forgotten by school staff and colleagues who assume career change teachers have years of teaching experience because of their mature age, as described by Kate and Amy. Recognition of prior experiences may also be closely linked to teachers' concerns, as described by Jim in my research. When principals and staff understand the skills and strengths of each career change teacher employed, they are also able to see how these skills and strengths may be played out in the instructional approaches used by the teachers in their classrooms and assess what type of support is required. The support structure would thus be based on teachers' varied and diverse personal and professional characteristics.

Training and development is also likely to be more successful when it capitalises on teachers' qualities and attributes (Mayer, 2003). Career change teachers should be given the same opportunity as other beginning teachers, such as access to mentors and to attend professional development and training workshops. In this context, it could be worthwhile for schools to be aware of the kind of professional support second career teachers may require, taking into account their age and experience. It is important that principals are attentive to the differences in age and work experience of career change teachers in order that individualized induction and mentoring programs are incorporated into schools. As Kate points out, principals should take note of the fact that "*you start working in a school as a second career teacher ....and been only teaching for two months*". Findings from my research showed some participants preferred specific professional development and conference forums for second career teachers rather than "*being lumped*" (in Jim's words) with other younger beginning teachers where they may not fit. Career changers' retention and growth in the teaching profession would in part be determined by the support received from their principal and staff. It would also be determined by the administration's recognition of each career change teacher's individuality, instead of treating them as one large monolithic group of teachers.

We also saw from the literature the challenges some career change teachers may face with the transferability of their knowledge and experiences to school. It would be wrong to assume that they do not require further training and help to gain an in-depth knowledge of the subject matter, despite the wealth of knowledge that they bring from their work experience. For instance, second career science and engineering professionals who join the teaching

profession need a good pedagogical foundation with access to resources and tools, in addition to recognising their content expertise and particular strengths that they bring to the profession (Grier & Johnston, 2009). Whilst this issue did not come up with teacher participants in my research, schools and management should keep this in mind in the context of offering opportunities to strengthen and develop teachers' existing skills, experience and knowledge.

An informative and proactive approach by the school executive towards second career entrants will ensure that both teachers and school benefit. As Jim notes, " *I really hope we [school and second career teachers like him] can come together with a strategy that will really get people into teaching, the right people and retain them … we [second career teachers] have got a lot to offer and I think it is something that should be encouraged".*

Implications for policymakers

Given that there are now an increasing number of career change entrants to the profession, policy makers also need to make themselves aware of this group of teachers, understanding both their motivations for change and their skills and experiences. Close attention must be paid by policy makers to career change teachers' expertise, experience and expectations with respect to their recruitment, selection and training. Having some prior knowledge could enable policy makers to respond effectively to the needs of career change teachers and, more importantly, to think innovatively about steps to attract and increase long term retention rates of these teachers. For instance, there is some research to show that older age entrants are more likely to remain committed to teaching when they are employed in challenging schools (Donaldson, 2012). Policy makers could look into this further and perhaps focus on steps to increase recruitment of career change teachers into such schools, leading to a win–win situation.

Research also confirms that although career changers' reasons and motivations are less likely to do with salary and social status, teachers' pay conditions continue to be an issue for second career teachers, particularly when some of them have left well-paid careers to join teaching (Johnson, Berg & Donaldson, 2005). Financial incentives matter in the long term and the teaching profession could potentially lose career change teachers over salary issues. Concern about low pay continued to be on the minds of most of the teacher participants in my research study. Career change teachers are also aware of the status of the teaching profession in society having come from other professions. Amy is sceptical of how teachers are valued and respected and is keen for *"teachers … education and learning to be valued and*

respected more". Whilst issues regarding pay and teacher status are not unique to career change teachers, policy makers and stakeholders should take note of these concerns and suggestions in the overall context of attracting and retaining career change teachers, with a view to lifting the status of the teaching profession.

Perhaps a cohesive and collaborative approach between the different stakeholders could be considered, involving higher education institutions, educators, employers, schools and school management and policy makers. Such collaboration could work to make career change teachers' school experiences and their long-term retention a success. A collaborative approach could have these goals:

1. To increase awareness and education about these individuals.
2. To frame policies suited to this different cohort of teacher entrants.
3. To help identify ways in which career change teachers' skills, experiences and knowledge can be recognised and hence capitalised on.
4. To find innovative ways to integrate career change teachers successfully in the school environment.

Recommendations for future research

This research has opened the door to understanding a unique group of teachers who came into the teaching profession as mature age individuals with life and other experiences. The present study was limited to a rich analysis of the experiences and perspectives of seven career change teachers who were also beginning teachers. Through the stories of the seven career change teachers, the study has pointed to the value of and need for further research on career change teachers. Published studies show that the numbers of mature age individuals entering the teaching profession is on an upward trend. Given the dearth of research on career change practising teachers, an in-depth qualitative examination has provided a necessary first step in building a broader and larger understanding of this group of teachers. The field is thus likely to benefit from further research involving a large scale investigation into career change teachers.

From a beginning teacher perspective, research on the challenges faced by second career beginning teachers and the personalised support that may be needed is worth pursuing. This study has demonstrated that while some of the challenges such as classroom management are the same as for other beginning teachers, career change teachers' requirements in the early

years of teaching can be quite different. Being able to identify those specific needs is essential to addressing challenges and providing appropriate support. Examining the rates of attrition in the early years and the reasons associated for career changers considering leaving the profession is another potentially significant area of research. It could also help identify the differences and similarities between this group and first career beginning teachers.

The field would also benefit from a larger qualitative study to understand the early school experiences of second career teachers. While the majority of the research on career change teachers focuses on mature age students with implications for teacher education, very few studies have concentrated on practising classroom teachers. Qualitative studies that combine teacher interviews with classroom observations and focus group would provide rich data on second career teachers' school experiences.

Future studies could also include both qualitative and quantitative research into the teaching patterns of career change teachers in the classroom and levels of student engagement based upon those patterns. It could explore, for example, to what extent career change teachers bring real world examples into their content teaching and to what extent their prior career and life experience influences their pedagogy and teaching practices. Measuring the performance of students who are taught solely by career change teachers against students taught by first career teachers could yield interesting information that is valuable to both policy makers and practitioners, given the rise in career change teacher numbers.

A longitudinal survey tracking career change teachers over the first five to ten years of their school teaching experiences would also be beneficial. For instance, as mentioned above, participants in my research and in previous studies were keen to share their prior work and life experiences in the classroom. Studies that follow either the same career change teachers or those who have been teaching for more than five years could shed light on their current classroom teaching practices, teachers' ways of thinking, as well as ways to increase retention rates of these teachers. Such research would also reveal career change teachers' patterns of mobility and attrition and whether career changers view teaching as a short or long-term commitment. Most teacher participants in my research did not have a view about their long-term plans about being a teacher and were keeping an open mind about their futures. Sharon viewed the teaching journey in terms of "*the next step, the next block"*, while Jim was keen to "*cultivate options"*

The seven participants in my research were chosen from urban schools in different geographical areas within the state of New South Wales in Australia. Studies of the profiles of and differences between career change teachers who teach in regional and urban schools in parts of NSW—including retention rates—would yield rich results. With one exception, the teacher participants in my study were secondary school teachers. This matched published findings that note career change teachers are more likely to go into secondary teaching because of their subject area knowledge and expertise. Further research could include providing a comparison of profiles of second career teachers teaching in primary and secondary schools to determine differences (if any) in teaching practices and in retention rates.

I have previously discussed the possible link between career change teachers and the characteristics of quality teachers. The existence of such a link was confirmed in my study. By putting forward the possibility of such a connection, I hope to open up discussion for further research on the subject, which could provide a better insight into both quality teachers and second career teachers. I believe that a phenomenological understanding of participants' intrinsic motivations to become a teacher and the passion they demonstrated for teaching provides an argument for further research to explore the connection between career change teachers and quality teaching. Teacher participants such as Amy found ways to adapt their previous work experience to suit student current and future needs and learning. Matthew discussed and practised his views on what second career teachers brought to the profession such as creativity and flexibility, being inspired by his intrinsic and altruistic decision. Questions such as what defines a good teacher were raised by Amy in the course of her interview and sheds light on career change teachers' thinking about quality teaching.

While it may be hard to measure quality teaching in terms of outcomes, when looked at from the perspective of the teacher and his/her role, I believe that both schools and policy makers can benefit from learning about career change teachers' nature and characteristics, which can in turn provide unique insights into quality teaching. The research acknowledges that teaching is a complex process that needs to be looked at from multiple perspectives. Examining career change teachers' practices in the classroom could also help shed light on the link between this group of teachers and quality teaching characteristics.

For instance, further research to gather career change teachers' views on quality teaching could add rich insights into what we already know as well as add to the multiple perspectives

in research on quality teaching. If quality teaching is indeed to be measured in student outcomes, career change teachers' effectiveness in terms of student achievement is another area of further research that is worth investigating. Investing in effective teachers is the most successful "method of improving student learning and creating top performing education systems" (Jensen, 2010, p. 10). Teachers in my research show a commitment to and passion for making a difference in students' lives. Being able to understand their contribution to student learning in qualitative and quantitative terms may be a useful exercise in the broader picture of the relationship between teacher quality and effectiveness and student outcomes. It may also lead to increasing the number of quality teacher applicants coming from another profession.

Concluding remarks

> *"To make the best of ourselves and of each other, we urgently need to embrace a richer conception of human capacity. It's about how we can all engage more fully in the present and how we can prepare in the fully possible way for a completely unknowable future." (Robinson, 2009, pxii)*

The face of the teaching workforce is undergoing significant changes as an increasing number of career change workers opt in to become teachers. Teacher professionalism and teacher expectations are also being constantly re-defined in the face of societal changes. While public policy can help shape the conditions for effective teaching and learning, differences among teachers underlie the need for paying individualised attention to our teachers (OECD, 2009).

More than ten years ago, in 2003, The Teacher Quality and Educational Leadership Taskforce reported to the Australian Government's Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) on the changing nature of the teacher workforce in Australia.

The taskforce identified a "new generation" of teachers with particular reference to career change teachers and their increasing presence in the profession (Mayer, 2003, p. 15). The purpose was to highlight issues of teacher recruitment and retention that require further investigation. For instance, the report critiqued the effectiveness of current teacher preparation models in the light of the "growing differential backgrounds and prior experiences of prospective teachers" (p. 19). The report argued for the teaching profession—

including teacher preparation and ongoing professional development—to be positioned within the context of this new generation of teachers, in particular career change teachers:

> *"Much of what we currently do … treats the teaching workforce as a 'bulk' profession … as if they were a homogeneous group. We could question whether the practices established … are sufficiently attractive to the new generation of teachers … perhaps teaching and teacher education does not meet the career and life expectations of these new generations of teachers." (p. 18).* Fundamentally, the taskforce argued that we examine and understand this new generation of teachers and *"what does it mean (for them) to be a teaching professional." (pp. 27–28)*

More than ten years on, more than a third of today's teachers have worked in another career before becoming teachers (Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2014). The profile of the teacher workforce has substantially altered. Career change teachers are here to stay and their presence can no longer be ignored and it is important that we learn much more about this large cohort of teachers.

My research serves to partly answer what MCEETYA's report called for: a deeper analysis of career change individuals' motivations in terms of what it means for them to be a teacher. At the same time, my thesis recognises the uniqueness of each teacher participant. The research has brought out the rich characteristics of each teacher participant as well as the collective meaning of a group of career change teachers. The study shows that career change teachers value their career (change) choice and are committed to their decision to become a teacher. The study identifies the significant ways in which the teacher participants perceived their role in the classroom and were able to see the contributions they could make in the lives of their students. This in-depth examination of one group of teachers enables relevant stakeholders to tap into the potential contributions and value that career change teachers bring and will continue to bring to the profession. ■

Appendix A

Information letter to academics about the research

I am a PhD student at the University of Technology Sydney. My research is about understanding the experience of second career teachers in schools. I intend to focus on the description and interpretation of this experience from the perspective of second career teachers in their first three years of teaching in schools. My thesis will seek to enable the voices of second career teachers to be heard and acknowledged. Further to this, I hope my study will contribute to the knowledge base in the field of teacher recruitment and retention and teacher education programs.

I am seeking to interview participants 25+ years who have been teaching full-time for three years or under (either primary or secondary) and who have had one or more prior career before joining the teaching profession. Prior careers can be from any field other than teaching. These interviews can be held at a location that is determined by participants.

I do not intend to interview overseas trained teachers classified as second career teachers as part of my study.

I anticipate publishing the research findings in the form of a PhD thesis with completion date approximately mid-2014.

Signed,

Meera Varadharajan
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences,
University of Technology, Sydney
Kuring-gai Campus,
PO Box 222, Lindfield 2070

Meera.Varadharajan@student.uts.edu.au

Appendix B

Formal invitational letter to participants

Understanding the Lived Experience of Second Career Teachers in Schools

(UTS HREC REF NO. 2009-367A)

WHO IS DOING THE RESEARCH?

My name is Meera Varadharajan and I am a doctoral student at UTS: Education. My supervisor is Assoc. Prof. Sandy Schuck and my co-supervisor is Dr Helen Russell.

WHAT IS THIS RESEARCH ABOUT?

This research is about understanding experiences of second career teachers in schools. I intend to focus on the description and interpretation of this experience from the perspective of second career teachers in their first three to four years of teaching in schools. My thesis will seek to enable the voices of second career teachers to be heard and acknowledged.

I am seeking to interview teachers who have been teaching full-time for three to four years or less and who have had one or more prior career(s) before joining the teaching profession. Prior careers (with at least five years or more experience in paid employment) can be from any field other than teaching. These interviews can be held at a location that is determined by participants

IF I SAY YES, WHAT WILL IT INVOLVE?

I will ask you to participate in two audio-taped interview sessions of a maximum of one hour each. The interview will be confidential and conducted in person. The research findings gathered will be published in the form of a PhD thesis and conference and journal papers. Data published will not identify you in any way; instead, pseudonyms will be used.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS?

There are very few if any risks because the research has been carefully designed. I will conduct the interviews with utmost sensitivity and will end the interview if you indicate that you would like to stop.

WHY HAVE I BEEN ASKED?

You are able to give me the information I need to find out about because you are a beginning teacher who has entered the profession after one or more other prior career (s).

DO I HAVE TO SAY YES?

You don't have to say yes. However, if you would like to participate, please contact me on my email at Meera.Varadharajan@student.uts.edu.au

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I SAY NO?

Nothing. I will thank you for your time so far and won't contact you about this research again.

IF I SAY YES, CAN I CHANGE MY MIND LATER?

You are free to withdraw from the research project at any time you wish, without consequences, and without giving a reason. I will thank you for your time so far and won't contact you about this research again.

WHAT IF I HAVE CONCERNS OR A COMPLAINT?

If you have concerns about the research that you think I or my supervisor can help you with, please feel free to contact either me on my above email or my supervisors at Sandy.Schuck@uts.edu.au; 9514 5218 or Helen.Russell@uts.edu.au; 9514 5473.

If you would like to talk to someone who is not connected with the research, you may contact the Research Ethics Officer on 02 9514 9615, and quote this number (UTS HREC REF NO. 2009-367A).

Appendix C

Participant consent form

I _____ agree to participate in the research project *Understanding the Lived Experiences of Second Career Beginning Teachers (*UTS Ethics approval reference no. 2009-367A) being conducted by Meera Varadharajan, email: Meera.Varadharajan@student.uts.edu.au of the University of Technology, Sydney for her degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD).

I understand that the purpose of this study is to understand the nature of experiences of second career beginning teachers in schools.

I understand that my participation in this research will involve participation in two audio-taped interviews of not more than one hour each with the researcher. I will be able to determine the location of the interview.

I am aware that I can contact Meera Varadharajan or her supervisor(s)

Assoc. Prof. Sandy Schuck (Sandy.Schuck@uts.edu.au; 9514 5218) or Dr Helen Russell (Helen.Russell@uts.edu.au; 9514 5473) if I have any concerns about the research. I also understand that I am free to withdraw my participation from this research project at any time I wish, without consequences, and without giving a reason.

I agree that all my questions in relation to this research project have been answered fully and clearly by Meera Varadharajan.

The research findings gathered will be published in the form of a PhD thesis and conference and journal papers. Data published will not identify me in any way; instead, pseudonyms will be used.

_____ ____/____/____

Signature (participant)

_____ ____/____/____

Signature (researcher or delegate)

NOTE:

This study has been approved by the University of Technology, Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any aspect of your participation in this research which you cannot resolve with the researcher, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Officer (ph: 02 9514 9615, Research.Ethics@uts.edu.au) and quote the UTS HREC reference number. Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated fully and you will be informed of the outcome.

Appendix D

Sample of questions sent to participants

- What kind of work did you do and what was it like?
- What kind of experience did you have with teachers and teaching (in school, work, teacher education course)
- How are you finding life in the classroom with the students?
- What challenges and opportunities do you see for yourself as a teacher?
- What kind of relationship do you have with other colleagues in school?
- How would you describe yourself?
- How do you want to develop as a teacher?

Appendix E

Interview questions

Introductory question

- Please tell me about your decision to participate in the research study

Questions relating to previous work experience and process of change to become a second career beginning teacher

- Could you provide a summary of your work experience before you became a teacher?
- How did you view your previous work experience? Can you depict a picture?
- Why did you decide to change career and become a teacher?
- How and when did you know you wanted to change career and become a teacher?
- Was there any aspect of the previous job that acted as a catalyst for change?
- In what way did your prior career influence your decision to become a teacher?
- Could you describe for me any particular incident that stands out in your mind that illustrates the above two points-?
- How did this make you feel? What happened then?
- What are your prior experiences associated with teachers and teaching? How did they influence you in your decision to become a teacher?
- Are there any other prior experiences that are relevant to your decision to change career?
- What did you tell others when you made the change to become a teacher?

Questions relating to starting as a second career beginning teacher

- What does the concept of a second career beginning teacher mean to you?
- How do you view the experience of being a second career beginning teacher? Can you depict a picture?
- Changing careers in any profession bring opportunities and challenges. What *opportunities* did you envisage for yourself when you entered the teaching? Can you

provide an illustration or an example of your feelings? What *challenges* did you envisage? Example/illustration

- How do you feel *now* about the change you made to become a teacher?
- Would you mind sharing this experience? Can you perhaps depict a picture?
- Can you describe to me any aspects of experience that had *continuity* from your prior professional life to your current teaching profession?
- Similarly, can you describe any aspects of experience that underwent *change* as you changed profession? (aspects of experiences can relate to such things as skills, knowledge, beliefs, behaviour, competencies, identity, mission and work environment)
- Do you reflect on your previous experience now working as a second career beginning teacher? In what way?
- Do you think these reflections play a part in your role as a second career beginning teacher? (for example, do you see any connections between careers?)
- How do you want to develop as a teacher?

Questions of being a second career beginning teacher in school

- Would you mind sharing your experiences as a beginning teacher? Can you perhaps describe a typical day at school?
- Can you go back the first few days when you started teaching and tell me what it was like then?
- What makes a good day for you? Was there a time when you felt really good in the class with the students; got a real buzz?? What was it LIKE for you?
- What makes a bad day/not so good day? Can you describe a bad day you had recently. What was it LIKE for you?
- Would you mind describing how you see yourself at school? As a mature age teacher or as a beginning teacher or perhaps a combination of both?
- Do you think this will change in the future?
- How do you view the school as a workplace?

Questions relating to experiences with other colleagues in school

- How do *you* think that your colleagues think of you?
- What is it like for you to talk to other teachers? Can you recall a situation?

- Do you think age has been a factor in the way you converse or interact with other teachers? In other words, do you think the type of conversations have been influenced because of your age, your maturity and experience?
- Does the conversation vary depending on the type of teachers you interact with?
- How do these conversations make you feel?
- Do you think other all the teachers you converse with are aware that you are a second career beginning teacher in the school?
- Do you think it is important for them to know this? And if they knew, do you think the conversations would be different?
- Tell me about a time recently when you felt happy after talking to a colleague?
- Did this person know you are a second career beginning teacher? If so, in your view, what role did this play in the way you felt about the conversation
- What would you like to see happening?

Questions relating to experiences with students in school

- How are you finding life in the classroom?
- How would you describe your relationship with students?
- How do you perceive your students? *Who* are your students?
- Tell me about your experiences with students. Have you faced a challenging situation? What was the reason and what did you do? How did it make you feel?
- How do you teach your students? Do you reflect on your prior career while teaching?
- Tell me about a time when you felt happy being with students
- What would you like to see happening?
- How have you gained your personal perspectives and thoughts about schools and classrooms?

Questions on teacher education experiences

- What have your experiences been with respect to university education?
- Do you think that coming from a previous career may have had any impact on the way you feel about theory vs practice gap and its integration in schools? In what way?
- Is there anything else I should have asked you about and didn't?
- Would you like to ask me anything?

Appendix F

Follow-up questions to participants

1. Your thoughts on how things have been for you since we last met?
2. Your perspectives on what it is like now to be a second career teacher?
3. Has becoming a teacher changed you as a person? How and in what way? Do you think the change has occurred because of being a second career teacher?
4. Can you explain what role others (for example, staff and school management) have played or not played in any change?
5. Your current thinking on your future (as a teacher)?
6. On a more general note, I also feel that second career teachers' lives and experiences are deeply shaped and influenced by their past lives and experiences. Just wanted to get your thoughts and if you feel they reflect your views.

Appendix G

Ethics approval

15 December 2009

Associate Professor Sandra Schuck
Education Group
KG02.02.94
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, SYDNEY

Dear Sandra,

UTS HREC 2009-367 – SCHUCK, Associate Professor Sandra, RUSSELL, Dr Helen (for VARADHARAJAN, Ms Meera, PhD student) – "Understanding the lived experience of second career beginning teachers in schools"

At its meeting held on Tuesday 8 December 2009, the UTS Human Research Ethics Committee reviewed your application and I am pleased to inform you that ethics clearance is now granted.

Your clearance number is UTS HREC REF NO. 2009-367A

Please note that the ethical conduct of research is an on-going process. The *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans* requires us to obtain a report about the progress of the research, and in particular about any changes to the research which may have ethical implications. This report form must be completed at least annually, and at the end of the project (if it takes more than a year). The Ethics Secretariat will contact you when it is time to complete your first report.

I also refer you to the AVCC guidelines relating to the storage of data, which require that data be kept for a minimum of 5 years after publication of research. However, in NSW, longer retention requirements are required for research on human subjects with potential long-term effects, research with long-term environmental effects, or research considered of national or international significance, importance, or controversy. If the data from this

research project falls into one of these categories, contact University Records for advice on long-term retention.

If you have any queries about your ethics clearance, or require any amendments to your research in the future, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Secretariat at the Research and Innovation Office, on 02 9514 9772.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Jane Stein-Parbury

Chairperson

UTS Human Research Ethics Committee

Appendix H

Publications and presentations

Varadharajan, M. (2009). Understanding the lived experience of second career beginning teachers in schools. Paper presented at the NSW Institute of Educational Research Forum, University of Technology Sydney

Varadharajan, M. (2010). Research on second career beginning teachers. Poster presented at the 'Annual Poster Presentation Lecture Evening' (APPLE) by Teachers' Guild of NSW, Sydney

Varadharajan, M. (2010). Understanding second career teachers school experiences. Poster presented at the Annual Postgraduate Research Students Conference, University of Technology Sydney

Varadharajan, M. (2011). Exploring the experiences of second career teachers. Seminar presented at the Second Career Teachers' Breakfast and Seminar, Teachers' Guild of NSW, Sydney

Varadharajan, M. (2011). Second career teachers school experiences: some findings from research. Paper presented at the Annual Postgraduate Research Students Conference, University of Technology Sydney

Varadharajan, M. (2011). Understanding the lived school experience of second career beginning teachers. Seminar presented as part of seminar series in Faculty of Arts of Social Sciences, University of Technology Sydney

Varadharajan, M. (2011). Understanding the lived experience of second career beginning teachers. Paper presented at First Annual Higher Degree Research Student Conference, University of New South Wales, Sydney

Varadharajan, M. (2011-2012). *Understanding the experiences of second career beginning teachers*. Proceedings: The Teachers' Guild of New South Wales 2011-2012, pp47-51. A bi-annual publication by The Teachers' Guild of New South Wales

Research Award Recipient—Selected as the 2010 Guild Research Award Prize winner by the Teachers' Guild of NSW at their Annual Poster Presentation Lecture Evening (APPLE) for research work on second career teachers

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