A Narrative Inquiry Into Beginning Teachers' Meaning Making of Self as a Teacher and Teaching as a Career

Fang Li

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Abstract

The first year of teaching is known to be a critical period during which beginning teachers build meanings of teaching and themselves as teachers. The first year of teaching is also known to be challenging for many beginning teachers. Therefore, this phase of a teacher's career has been the focus of much research, particularly in relation to induction and mentoring as strategies to facilitate learning and retain beginning teachers. However, less attention has been given to exploring how beginning teachers make meaning of their lived experiences as a teacher. Hence, the purpose of this study is to investigate how first-year teachers make meaning of teaching and themselves as teachers.

This longitudinal study used a qualitative, narrative inquiry approach to examine the influences on beginning teachers' meaning making of teaching and themselves as teachers. Of particular interest was the process of meaning construction and reconstruction that participants experienced over time. The five participants were all first-year teachers in urban Auckland schools, New Zealand. Data were primarily collected through semistructured individual interviews conducted five times; once at the end of participants' initial teacher education (ITE) programme, and four times over their first year of teaching. Interview data were supplemented with field notes and information collected through social media. The data were analysed thematically and presented in two ways: stories that illustrated individual participant's lived experience and a cross-case analysis of the five participants' data.

The findings showed that the five participants had idealistic reasons for choosing teaching as a career including wanting to make a positive difference to children's learning and to society. Pragmatic considerations were also evident, particularly for participants teaching was a second career. The study showed that participants' initial simplistic constructions of teaching were reconstructed during their ITE programme. More complex constructions of teaching and being a teacher were developed through extended practicum experiences which exposed participants to the realities of teaching, revealing how they had underestimated what teachers' work really involved. This indicates the importance of ITE and practicum schools ensuring preservice teachers are provided with opportunities and conditions that facilitate the reconstruction of more complex and realistic understandings of teaching and being a teacher. Increasingly complex constructions of teaching and being a teacher occurred over the first year of teaching. School contexts played a critical role in such reconstructions. Schools that took a comprehensive approach to induction and mentoring and fostered a collaborative culture

helped first-year teachers manage challenges and feel as though they were valued and trusted members of their school. First-year teachers in such schools were more likely to have a positive reconstruction of self as a teacher and view teaching as a long-term career. In contrast, participants who experienced less collaborative school cultures and who did not feel trusted or valued tended to develop more negative views of self as teacher. This influenced those participants' career intentions. This highlights the importance of school culture and the provision of conditions that support beginning teachers to meet the challenge related to their first year of teaching and to develop a positive sense of self as teacher.

Recognising that generalisations cannot be made given the small-scale nature of this study, the findings provide insights into what influences beginning teachers' construction and reconstruction of self as a teacher and teaching as a career over time. The study also draws attention to a relationship between positive and negative constructions of teaching and beginning-teacher career intentions. Thus, this longitudinal study adds understanding to existing literature in the area as well as opening up avenues for future research. The findings from this study may also be of interest to teacher educators, school leaders, preservice teachers, beginning teachers, and policymakers.

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Glossary of Terms

Associate Teacher: A practising teacher who has a preservice teacher in his/her class and assists this preservice teacher during the period of practicum.

Beginning Teacher: A novice teacher or a provisionally certificated teacher who graduates from an approved initial teacher education institution and is typically in his/her first 2 years of teaching.

Classroom Release Time: It is implemented to address teacher workload and available to teachers working 0.8 or more on a pro rata basis who are entitled to 10 hours per term away from the classroom.

Decile: Deciles (1–10) are ratings used by the New Zealand Ministry of Education to measure socioeconomic status of a school's student community and decide how much funding will be provided to a school. The lower a school's decile, the more funding it will receive.

Fully Certificated Teacher: A teacher who completes a 2-year induction and mentoring programme provided by their employer and meets the Standards for the Teaching Profession endorsed by his/her professional leader (e.g., a school principal). Teacher registration is approved by the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Induction: A national or regional system and process to support the professional development of beginning teachers and prepare them to be fully certificated.

Induction and Mentoring Programme: A programme of induction and mentoring provided for provisionally certificated teachers to assist them to achieve full registration. A mentor who is fully certificated will provide guidance and support (including constructive feedback) to the provisionally certificated teacher.

Initial Teacher Education (ITE): An education and training programme that prepares preservice teachers to learn to become teachers.

Intermediate School: Schooling for children at Years 7–8 (ages 10–13).

Practicum: Field experience or school placements for preservice teachers in initial teacher education programmes.

Preservice Teacher: Students trained in an initial teacher education programme. Also referred to as student teacher or trainee teacher.

Primary School: In New Zealand, a primary school usually provides education for children at 5–10-year-olds (from Year 1 to Year 6). In some areas, a full primary school provides education for 5–12-year-olds (from Year 1 to Year 8).

Principal: A head teacher of a school appointed by the school's board of trustees who are elected from the community.

Priority Learners: Māori learners, Pasifika learners, learners from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and learners with special education needs.

Provisionally Certificated Teacher: All new and beginning teachers from New Zealand and overseas need to first apply for a provisional practising certificate when they start teaching in New Zealand.

Secondary School: Schooling that takes up to 5 years, from Year 9 to Year 13 (ages 13 to 18), also known as high school or college.

Syndicate: A team formed by teachers who teach certain year levels of students (mainly in primary schools), such as junior syndicate consisting of Year 1 and 2 classes with 5- and 6-year-old children, middle syndicate of Year 3 and 4 with 7- and 8-year-old children, and senior syndicate of Year 5 and 6 with 9- and 10-year-old children.

The Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand: The professional and regulatory body for teachers in both English and Māori medium settings from early childhood education through to primary and secondary schooling in New Zealand.

Chapter 1
Introduction

The beginning of a teacher's career is recognised in the literature as a critical period during which "perceptions of one's self as a teacher and of the profession are formed and continue to shape the subsequent years of teaching" (Kostogriz, 2018, p. 251). Earley and Bubb (2004) maintain the first year of teaching is "arguably the most formative period in a teacher's career … [a] time of greatest receptiveness and willingness to learn and develop" (p. 128). Losano et al. (2018) view the first year of teaching as "a fundamental and rich period" (p. 312) for teachers' professional identity development. Consensus is that the first year of teaching shapes a beginning teacher's subsequent professional development and determines his or her longevity in teaching (Wideen et al., 1998). In other words, the beginning of a teacher's career, especially the first year of teaching, can greatly influence a teacher's sense of self as a teacher and perceptions of, and intentions towards, teaching as a career.

However, the experiences of teachers in their early years are not always positive. Many studies have highlighted the challenges facing beginning teachers. Veenman (1984) reviewed 83 studies on first-year teaching and identified the "reality shock" and "transition shock" for first-year beginning teachers. This included the harsh reality of teaching and school life, and common problems such as managing competing time demands, addressing classroom discipline, and sourcing teaching material. Research in recent years has continued to report challenges facing beginning teachers. These studies cite the overwhelming workloads, stress and burnout, a lack of support from school leaders and colleagues, and isolation in their workplace (e.g., den Brok et al., 2017; Schuck et al., 2018). Thus, the beginning of a teacher's career has been identified as a most difficult phase or a time of survival for some teachers (McCarthy et al., 2019; Quaglia, 1989).

Evidence suggests that challenging beginning teaching experiences can negatively affect teachers' identity development and career intentions. The seminal work of Veenman (1984), mentioned above, indicates that the problems facing beginning teachers could result in doubts about their personal competence as teachers and shake their ideals and aspirations for teaching. Hong et al. (2018), in their longitudinal, qualitative study of six teachers in the US from the last semester of their ITE programme to the middle of their second-year teaching, show that a challenging beginning teaching experience could constrain a teacher's professional identity

development and affect their intentions to stay teaching in a specific school. Other studies have reported negative feelings resulting from challenging beginning teaching experiences such as exhaustion, loneliness, helplessness, disappointment, anger, frustration, and/or a sense of professional failure, which threaten beginning teachers' identity development and career intentions (Buchanan et al., 2013; den Brok et al., 2017; Pillen, Beijaard, & den Brok, 2013).

Both internationally and in New Zealand, there is a trend towards high attrition rates among early-career teachers. For example, in the United States of America, teachers leave teaching at rates between 19% and 30% within the first 5 years (Sutcher et al., 2016); and in the United Kingdom, a recent survey conducted by the National Education Union showed that approximately 18% of teachers were likely to leave within 2 years (Weale, 2019). In New Zealand, according to the Ministry of Education (MoE, 2019), 22% of the domestic- and 41% of the overseas-trained beginning teachers who started teaching in 2014 were not employed in 2018. Such high rates of attrition have led to an increased focus on ways to support and retain teachers from the beginning of their teaching career.

As induction and mentoring are viewed as key strategies to facilitate positive beginning teaching experience and address the attrition challenge, studies have been conducted to investigate schools' practices and/or beginning teachers' experiences of induction and mentoring. For example, in New Zealand, Langdon et al. (2014) conducted a national survey involving 696 school personnel from both primary and secondary schools to examine induction and mentoring practices across the country, and Cameron et al. (2007) interviewed 57 third-year primary and secondary school teachers on their induction experiences. Langdon et al. (2014) found while over 70% of the 64 first- and second-year teachers experienced comprehensive induction and mentoring, approximately 30% did not. Consequently, as Cameron et al. (2007) highlight, "our luckiest teachers worked in schools that supported them personally," whereas the unluckiest teachers "were in schools that lacked commitment to supporting them to thrive and become successful teachers" (p. 33). Concerns related to such variability emphasise the need for longitudinal research to improve the understanding of beginning teachers' experiences and have inspired this study.

The Focus of This Study

A central focus of this study is how beginning teachers construct and reconstruct meaning of themselves as teachers and teaching as a career over time. The focus on meaning and the perception of meaning that involves dynamic constructions and reconstructions are mainly

prompted by the literature on teachers' professional identity development. As Flores and Day (2006) argue, "becoming a teacher involves, in essence, the (trans)formation of the teacher identity" (p. 220). Geijsel and Meijers (2005) perceive identity as "a configuration of meanings," which "will change constantly when new elements are given a place and are related to experiences" (p. 425). Kelchtermans (1993), who argues that "teachers' professional behaviour is largely determined by and has to be understood from their experiences" (p. 443), emphasises that research into teachers' experiences "not so much focuses on the facts, but rather on the meaning" (p. 444) that teachers construe from their experiences. Kelchtermans further highlights that a teacher's "conception about teaching and of him- or herself as a teacher are 'construed' meanings" (p. 444). Drawing on these perspectives, this study investigates how beginning teachers make sense of their experiences and construct and reconstruct meaning of themselves as teachers and teaching as a career over time.

The overarching research question that guided this study was: How do beginning teachers make meaning of teaching and themselves as teachers over time? Associated with the overarching question are the following three subquestions:

(a) What meaning do beginning teachers bring with them to teaching?
(b) How is meaning constructed and reconstructed in beginning teachers' first year of teaching?
(c) How does the construction and reconstruction of meaning influence beginning teachers' career intentions?

This study focuses on the voices of beginning teachers. This focus on beginning teachers' perspectives is in accordance with the growing recognition that beginning teachers are not passive recipients of knowledge and skills but have an active role to play in constructing their understanding, vision, and goal of teaching and themselves as teachers (Beijaard, 2019; Long et al., 2012; Wideen et al., 1998). For instance, Wideen et al. (1998) stress that becoming a teacher is "a deeply personal activity" (p. 161) in which beginning teachers mediate between their personal beliefs and the expectations of ITE programmes, schools, and society. Further, Volkmann and Anderson (1998) point out that teachers are neither "lumps of clay" with identity simply pressed upon them by the context nor "inert material that becomes what it encounters" (p. 293). Losano et al. (2018) also argue that beginning teachers "are not just a product of the social world of the school where they work" (p. 311). Rather, beginning teachers have "an understanding of self" and "a sense of self-actualisation" (Tickle, 1999, p. 129) who use the self in their own development. Long et al. (2012) maintain that "it is vital that beginning

teachers' voices are heard" (p. 22) to support their development. An important purpose of this investigation is to listen to beginning teachers' voices to provide insight into how they construct and reconstruct their meaning of teaching and themselves as teachers over time.

To address the research questions outlined above, this study has utilised a narrative inquiry approach. Narrative inquiry is an effective approach to investigate teachers' lived experiences. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) perceive narrative as "a fundamental structure of human experience" (p. 2). In their view, "people by nature lead storied lives and tell stories of those lives, whereas narrative researchers describe such lives, collect and tell stories of them, and write narratives of experience" (p. 2). Kelchtermans (2009a) highlights teachers "spontaneously tend to use narrative language to represent their sensemaking of job experiences" and views narrative as "a powerful way to unravel and understand the complex processes of sense-making that constitutes teaching" (p. 31). Narrative inquiry, as Connelly and Clandinin (1990) and Kelchtermans (2009a) claim, is a powerful tool to understand how beginning teachers make sense of their lived experiences and construe meaning. Therefore, narrative inquiry has been utilised in this study.

Rationale for This Study

My research interest in this area arose from the special place that teachers have had in my life for over 30 years. In my years as a student, teachers developed a love of learning in me and inspired me to be a teacher like them. When I started teaching, I learnt every day from other teachers who guided and assisted me on my learning-to-teach path. When I became a more experienced teacher and then a school leader after 10 years in education, teachers became an even more important part of my life. Much of my daily work revolved around teachers, such as recruiting teachers and organising and delivering professional development for teachers. My learning and work experience have shown me the fundamental importance of good teachers, especially those who care for students, and those who have a high regard for the work they are doing. I cannot agree more with the statement that good teaching comes from "the identity and integrity of the teacher" (Palmer, 1997, p. 17). It is therefore essential to ask the "who" question—who is the self that teaches?

My experience as a school leader and mentor has shown me that teachers at the beginning of their career are usually passionate about teaching and improving their teaching. As Hargreaves and Fullan (2013) argue, teachers at the beginning of their career are "on average more committed, more dedicated, more enthusiastic than at any other point in their career" (p. 38).

However, the growing emphasis on “the ‘monitoring’ and ‘measuring’ discourse of teacher accountability” (Dargusch & Charteris, 2018, p. 26) has made working conditions less favourable for teachers in general and even worse for beginning teachers (Perryman & Calvert, 2020). My work with many beginning teachers informed me that beginning teaching is a stage when learning can happen, but it is also a time of uncertainty when doubts can arise regarding teaching as a career. It is not unusual to see beginning teachers who gradually lose passion for teaching and even leave or consider leaving teaching within 5 years in the complex and challenging reality of teaching (Perryman & Calvert, 2020). As a school leader and mentor, I am faced with the challenge of how to help beginning teachers, and as Senge (2000) questions, to “keep their dreams whole while cultivating an awareness of the current reality around them” (p. 59). My desire to better support beginning teachers has led me to this study.

The Structure of This Thesis

The thesis presented here consists of seven chapters. This chapter sets the scene by outlining the topic and describing the background, purpose, research questions, and rationale of this research project. It provides a justification for the focus of the study on beginning teachers’ voices and meaning making of teaching and themselves as teachers. Chapter 2 reviews international and New Zealand literature relevant to the study, including the literature on meaning; meaning making; teacher-identity development; influential personal, teacher education, and school factors; and influences on career intentions. Chapter 3 presents the research process and explains how this study was designed and conducted. It describes the research paradigm and approach, participant sampling strategies, data collection and analysis methods and procedures, ethical stances and decisions, and strategies to ensure trustworthiness and credibility in the study.

Chapter 4 presents the lived experience of each participant using rich narratives. The five stories presented illustrate how each beginning teacher made meaning of self as a teacher and teaching as a career over time. Four of the stories narrate participants’ experiences over their first year of teaching. One participant’s story narrates her experiences over 6 months of teaching, up to the point she resigned from her school. Chapter 5 presents a cross-case analysis of the findings. Chapter 6 discusses the research findings in relation to the literature. Finally, Chapter 7 summarises the key findings of the study, identifies implications for policy and practice, discusses limitations, and makes suggestions for further research.

The following chapter reviews international and New Zealand literature relevant to this study.

Chapter 2
Literature Review

Introduction

Beginning teachers' sense of self as a teacher and perceptions of teaching as a career are likely to change and develop as they make the transition from teacher education to teaching. Research supports the stance that the beginning years of teaching are a critical phase when teachers are likely to construe distinctive and strong meanings about teaching and themselves as teachers (Findlay, 2006; Kelchtermans, 1999; Schellings et al., 2021). More specifically, the first year of teaching is a pivotal time when beginning teachers construe meaning in light of personal experiences and beliefs, learning from teacher education, and the requirements and expectations of schools (Strom, 2015; Wideen et al., 1998). Given the pivotal nature of the first year of teaching, this study aims to provide further understanding and insight into how first-year beginning teachers construct and reconstruct meanings of themselves as teachers and teaching as a career. The overarching research question that guided this study was: How do beginning teachers make meaning of teaching and themselves as teachers over time? Associated with the overarching question are the following three subquestions:

(a) What meaning do beginning teachers bring with them to teaching?
(b) How is meaning constructed and reconstructed in beginning teachers' first year of teaching?
(c) How does the construction and reconstruction of meaning influence beginning teachers' career intentions?

Approach and Organisation of the Literature Review

The literature reviewed in this chapter is confined to research relevant to the focus of this study from the mid-1970s onwards with Lortie's (1975) seminal study on the socialisation of school teachers. A wide range of library databases that provide both New Zealand and international studies have been accessed using the following search terms: *meaning, meaning making/construction, beginning teacher, first-year teacher, new/novice teacher, preservice teacher, student teacher, become a teacher, preservice/student teacher identity, influence of person/biographical influence, reasons for teaching, prior beliefs, perceptions of teaching, teaching metaphors, visions/images of self as a teacher, influence/effects of ITE/teacher education, first year of teaching, beginning teacher transition/socialisation, beginning teacher development, beginning teacher challenges/tensions, beginning teacher emotion, beginning*

teacher agency, beginning teacher efficacy, beginning teacher self-worth/self-esteem, beginning teacher support, induction and mentoring, school leadership, school culture, beginning/early-career teachers' job satisfaction, and beginning/early-career teachers' career intentions/retention/attrition. Examples of databases and catalogues utilised include the University of Auckland's library catalogue, the National Library catalogue, Education Research Complete, ProQuest, ERIC, Google Scholar, in addition to conference presentations and other readings recommended by my supervisors and colleagues in my area of study. It is worth noting that studies included in this literature review vary in contexts, methodology, and methods. The selection of the studies was based on their relevance to the research questions for this study and their credibility—the credentials of the sources, authors, and publishers.

This chapter consists of eight major sections. The first section reviews the literature on meaning and meaning making, and the second one is on teacher-identity development. The third and fourth sections focus on personal and ITE influences on beginning teachers' meaning making of teaching and themselves as teachers. The fifth section reviews the literature on teaching in the beginning years, and the sixth one reviews school influences on beginning teachers' meaning making of teaching and themselves as teachers. The seventh section is on early-career teacher intentions, and the final one draws on the literature that provides insight into the New Zealand context.

Meaning and Meaning Making

A review of the literature shows that there is no universal definition of meaning. There appear to be three main reasons why it is difficult to find a definition of meaning that everyone agrees upon. Firstly, meaning has been the focus of study for many disciplines, such as discussions about lexical meaning in linguistics (Teubert, 2005), spiritual meaning in religion (Park et al., 2013), and sociocultural meaning in sociology (C. Johnson et al., 1997) and psychology (Brinkmann, 2011). As a result, there is considerable variability in conceptions of meaning across disciplines and contexts. Secondly, meaning is deeply rooted in human beings' subjective interpretations of the world (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003), and thus it varies widely among individuals. Besides, meaning is often an "implicit process or state" (Osgood et al., 1957, p. 1). The "nonphysical" (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002, p. 608) nature of meaning adds to the complexity of providing a universal, generic explanation of the term. It is therefore hard, if not impossible, to capture meaning in a single definition.

In the context of personal meaning in life, Viktor Frankl brought the issue of meaning to the public's attention and started the discussion of human beings' search for meaning in personal existence. In his seminal book *Man's Search for Meaning*, which was first published in German in 1946, Frankl (1992) claims that humans have the will to seek meaning in life, and their search for the meaning of their own existence is the primary motivation or drive in their life. Following on from the pioneering work of Frankl, other scholars have written about and provided insights on personal meaning in life, such as P. T. Wong and Fry's (1998) discussion on the human quest for meaning and Reker and Chamberlain's (2000) exploration of existential meaning. Both P. T. Wong and Fry (1998) and Reker and Chamberlain (2000) emphasise the importance of personal meaning in wellbeing and quality of life. In the last 10 years, Hicks and Routledge (2013), who review classical perspectives on meaning in life, and Batthyány and Russo-Netzer (2014), who provide a broad overview of both contemporary theoretical work and empirical research on meaning in life, have also viewed meaning as being central and crucial to human existence and wellbeing. Notably, these scholars often discuss meaning from the perspective of existential meaning with a primary concern for living meaningful lives. Meaning in this sense is frequently understood as and used interchangeably with "meaningfulness," such as the use of meaning in the statement that "people sometimes complain that their lives lack meaning; they yearn for meaning" (Wolf, 2010, p. 7).

Among the various attempts to define meaning, conceptions of meaning in terms of meaningfulness or living meaningful and worthwhile lives have centred on three key elements. The first is the pursuit of worthwhile life purposes, such as goals, direction, or mission in life (Battista & Almond, 1973; Frankl, 1992; Reker, 2000). The second is coherence, which refers to one's life making sense and being coherent. It concerns the beliefs that motivate one's purpose or goals in life and justify one's existence (Martela & Steger, 2016; Reker & Wong, 2012). The third involves the attainment of purpose or goals and the sense of life's value and worthwhileness, which some scholars refer to as significance (e.g., Heintzelman & King, 2014; Martela & Steger, 2016) and some describe as fulfilment (e.g., Battista & Almond, 1973; Reker, 2000).

In contrast, some researchers have conceptualised meaning from a more general perspective. For instance, Baumeister (1991) perceives meaning as relationships between things and/or people. Some researchers specially differentiate the concepts of meaning and meaningfulness. For example, Pratt and Ashforth (2003) and Rosso et al. (2010) define meaning as what something represents or signifies from having made sense of something, and meaningfulness

as the perceived purpose or significance of something. When meaning is used interchangeably with meaningfulness, the emphasis is often on positive denotations of meaning, but when meaning is understood as having made sense of something, it can be positive, neutral, or negative (Brief & Nord, 1990).

Following the stance of Pratt and Ashforth (2003) and Rosso et al. (2010), the current study conceptualises meaning as what something represents or signifies from having made sense of something, which is different from meaningfulness as the perceived purpose or significance of something. However, it is worth noting that the purpose of distinguishing meaning from meaningfulness is not to build a wall between the two terms. The two terms are not mutually exclusive but synergistic. It is recognised in the literature that how people make sense of, and give meaning to, their life experiences is shaped by, and also shapes, their perceptions of meaningfulness. For example, Pratt and Ashforth (2003) stress that "individuals actively desire and seek meaningfulness in their lives and work" (p. 310), which gives rise to their sense of purpose and significance in life and influences their sense making and meaning construction of experiences. Baumeister (1991) points out that how people fulfil four basic needs for meaning affects their meaningfulness in life. According to Baumeister, these four needs are: (1) a need for purpose (e.g., goals); (2) a need for value and justification (e.g., having reliable criteria to distinguish right and wrong and make moral choices); (3) a need for efficacy (e.g., having autonomy and control over achieving goals and desired outcomes); (4) and a need for self-worth (e.g., positive views and affirmation of the self). The implication for this study is that to understand how beginning teachers make sense of and construct meaning from their lived experiences, it is important to understand their perceptions of meaningfulness, specifically, their perceived purpose and beliefs related to teaching. Thus, in exploring the meaning that the beginning teachers brought with them to teaching, this study examined their reasons for choosing teaching and prior beliefs about teaching. In turn, this study also paid attention to how the meanings that the beginning teachers construed from their experience of teaching over time influenced their sense of meaningfulness in work.

In contrast to the different views on the definition of meaning, there is more consensus about how people make sense of and construct meaning from their life experiences. The literature generally suggests that apart from the influence of individuals' perceptions of meaningfulness (e.g., personal purpose and beliefs) noted above, meaning making is influenced by context and social interactions within the context. The emphasis on the importance of context in comprehending experiences and on social interaction as the foundation of human activity is

influenced by social constructivism, which dates back to the theories of Lev Vygotsky (1978), a precursor of social constructivism. Many scholars have highlighted that meaning is constructed through a person's interplay with their context and interactions with other people. For example, Wenger (1998) notes that people identify and construct meaning as a daily lived experience in communities of practice in which they hold membership. Blumer (1969) states that "meaning ... is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows" (p. 2). Leontiev (2015) views meaning construction as corresponding to objective, subjective, and intersubjective realities, by which he contends that meaning making involves individuals' external world, inner world, and interpersonal relationships with other people. Informed by these perceptions of meaning making, this study examined the influence of schools (e.g., school leadership, school culture, and induction and mentoring) and of other people (e.g., school principals, team leaders, mentor teachers, and colleagues) on beginning teachers' meaning making of teaching and themselves as teachers.

The literature also suggests that meaning making is dynamic. For example, Kelchtermans (2009a) conceptualises meaning making as "an ongoing interactive process of sense-making and (social) construction" (p. 41). Galbin (2014) argues that meaning is "not a property of the objects and events themselves, but a construction … over time" (p. 84). Because meanings are socially constructed through various encounters with others, they are "always fluid and dynamic" (Galbin, 2014, p. 89) involving processes of constructions and reconstructions. Similarly, Weinstein et al. (2012) point out that the meaning-making process involves continual choices and integration of new experiences and perceptions. When internal and external environments change in the flux of life and individuals integrate new perceptions and ways of living, meaning is likely to be reevaluated and reframed (Weinstein et al., 2012). Based on this dynamic conception of meaning making, research questions for this study were framed to explore how beginning teachers construct and reconstruct meaning from experiences over time.

To conclude, this study distinguishes meaning and meaningfulness and conceptualises meaning from a broader perspective as what something represents or signifies from having made sense of something. However, the study recognises that meaning is shaped by, and shapes, a sense of meaningfulness. In other words, the understanding of meaning is inseparable from perceptions of meaningfulness. In addition, this study posits that meaning is constructed through a person's dynamic interplay with their context and interactions with others, and is likely to be reconstructed over time. Notably, discussions about how people make meaning of lived

experiences are intimately linked to identity formation. The next section presents the literature on teacher-identity development that has provided insight for this study.

Meaning Making and Teacher-Identity Development

Meaning making and identity development often go together in literature. For example, Beijaard (1995) defines identity as "who or what someone is, the various meanings someone can attach to oneself or the meanings attributed to oneself by others" (p. 282). Rodgers and Scott (2008), when discussing self and identity, describe self as the storyteller and the meaning maker, and identity as the story being told and the meaning made. Thus, some scholars argue that identity is at the heart of one's meaning making of lived experiences (e.g., Pratt & Ashforth, 2003). In turn, identity provides a framework for individuals to make sense of themselves and their experiences (e.g., Kelchtermans, 1999; Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2013).

Becoming a teacher goes beyond acquiring knowledge and skills; it is also about developing a sense of identity. According to Britzman (2003), becoming a teacher is "a time of formation and transformation, of scrutiny into what one is doing, and who one can become" (p. 8). Scholars have highlighted that developing a strong, positive professional identity is critical to success in the classroom (e.g., Olsen, 2016; Thomas & Beauchamp, 2011) and maintaining commitment and passion for teaching (e.g., Day et al., 2006; Hong et al., 2018). Bullough (1997) stresses that teacher identity, or what beginning teachers believe about teaching and themselves as teachers, is "the basis" (p. 21) for their decision making. Feiman-Nemser (2008) maintains that the identities teachers develop "influence where they put their effort and guide them in carrying out their responsibilities" (p. 701).

A review of the literature suggests three prominent themes regarding teacher-identity development. First, teacher identity is dynamic, involving a continuing process of "interpretation and re-interpretation of experiences" (Beijaard et al., 2004, p. 122) and "construction and reconstruction of meaning" (Rodgers & Scott, 2008, p. 733). Thus, Maclean and White (2007) call attention to the process of identification rather than identity. Second, teacher identity develops in contexts and relationships. For instance, Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) point out that it is within a particular context that teachers learn and adopt professional norms, values, and practices in individual, unique ways. Brown and Heck (2018) highlight that teacher identity is embedded, negotiated, and reconfigured in relationships with others, such as colleagues and students. Third, teacher identity is multifaceted. Day et al. (2007) identify three domains of a teacher's identity: personal (influenced by personal biography), professional

(influenced by policy and social contexts), and situated (influenced by workplace contexts). Mockler (2011) also suggests three dimensions: personal (e.g., gender, race, family context, experience of schooling), professional (e.g., teacher education, school, and system contexts within which a teacher works), and political (e.g., government policy). Teacher-identity development involves interaction and integration of different dimensions of a teacher's experiences, and balancing and mitigating conflicts between various elements of being a teacher (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard et al., 2004; Garner & Kaplan, 2019).

The interaction and integration of different dimensions and elements of being a teacher appear to be even more pronounced and dynamic for beginning teachers. Pillen, den Brok, and Beijaard (2013) point out that beginning teachers' identity development is a process of "integrating one's personal knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, norms, and values on the one hand, and professional demands from teacher education institutes and schools, including broadly accepted values and standards about teaching, on the other" (p. 86). In the interaction of personal beliefs and expectations with the values and demands of teacher education institutes and schools, friction and tensions may arise (Pillen, den Brok, & Beijaard, 2013). Flores and Day (2006) also observe that integrating the various dimensions and elements of being a teacher "entails an interplay between different, and sometimes conflicting, perspectives, beliefs and practices" (p. 219). Thus, Hong et al. (2018) argue that teacher identity in early career is "provisional and likely to be challenged and changed" (p. 250) as beginning teachers negotiate and grapple with various influential factors.

However, not many international and New Zealand studies have investigated how beginning-teacher identity is constructed and reconstructed amidst the interplay of multiple influences. Akkerman and Meijer (2011) point out that there are many unresolved questions concerning teacher-identity development. They write: "It is of interest to understand 'what' is shifting and what determines the direction of shifting … How can we understand the process of construction or reconstruction taking place?" (p. 311). Akkerman and Meijer and other scholars (Garner & Kaplan, 2019; Hong et al., 2017) argue an individual's desire to maintain a coherent teacher identity is at times challenged amidst the interplay of multiple influences. However, in terms of facing different influences and tensions, ways in which beginning teachers are "authoring their own stories" rather than "being authored" (Rodgers & Scott, 2008, p. 733) remain largely unexplored. By using narrative inquiry to explore how beginning teachers construct and reconstruct meaning of teaching and themselves as teachers over time, this study aims to

provide insight into the research gap identified by Akkerman and Meijer (2011) and Rodgers and Scott (2008).

To summarise, the above literature on teacher-identity development provides a rationale for this study. The understanding of teacher-identity development is consistent with the conception of meaning making discussed in the previous section. Both emphasise dynamic constructions and reconstructions and multiple influences in an individual's interplay with their context and interactions with other people. The following section presents the literature on personal influences on beginning teachers' meaning making of teaching and self as a teacher.

Personal Influences on Meaning Making of Teaching and Self as a Teacher

This section reviews the literature concerning beginning teachers' personal influences on their meaning making of teaching and themselves as teachers, specifically, their reasons for choosing teaching and their beliefs about teaching and being a teacher.

Reasons for Choosing Teaching

The literature suggests people enter teaching for different reasons. The multiple reasons for teaching are often grouped into three broad categories: intrinsic, altruistic, and extrinsic reasons. Intrinsic reasons refer to a person's inherent interest or enjoyment of teaching, such as loving children (e.g., Brown et al., 2008; Goldstein & Lake, 2000), enjoying working with children (e.g., Hayes, 2004; Watt et al., 2014), liking a specific subject (e.g., Chong & Low, 2009; Manuel & Hughes, 2006), perceived person–job fit (e.g., Chong & Low, 2009), the quest for personal fulfilment (e.g., Manuel & Hughes, 2006), and fulfilling a dream (e.g., Flores & Niklasson, 2014). Altruistic reasons concern a person's view of teaching as a socially valuable or worthwhile job. Examples of altruistic reasons include a desire to positively impact student learning and development (e.g., Kane & Mallon, 2006; Thomson et al., 2012), to contribute to society (e.g., Jungert et al., 2014; Kane & Mallon, 2006), and to answer a calling (e.g., Chong & Low, 2009). Extrinsic reasons concern external influences, such as employment opportunities and job security (e.g., Lam, 2012), money (e.g., Yüce et al., 2013), flexible working hours and holidays (e.g., Aksu et al., 2010), the ability to balance work and family demands (e.g., Azman, 2013; Watt & Richardson, 2008), job transferability (Chong & Low, 2009), and job mobility (e.g., opportunities to work and travel abroad; Kyriacou et al., 2002). Some studies have explored reasons people choose to teach and identified the influence of other people and of previous teaching-related work experience (e.g., Chang-Kredl & Kingsley, 2014; Schutz et al., 2001).

The literature suggests that reasons to teach may be influenced by gender, age, and choice of teaching as a second career. For instance, Yüce et al. (2013) surveyed 283 Turkish preservice teachers and found that whereas females were highly influenced by intrinsic (e.g., passion for teaching, perceived person–job fit), altruistic (e.g., a desire to work with students, to serve others), and influence-based extrinsic reasons (e.g., family, former teachers), males were strongly influenced by extrinsic reasons like social status, working conditions, money, and holidays. Moran et al. (2001), in their survey of 466 preservice teachers in Northern Ireland, reveal that those younger than 25 years are more intrinsically and altruistically motivated (e.g., loving children, answering a calling), whereas those older than 25 are more extrinsically influenced (e.g., the ease of teacher training and employment opportunities). Research into career changers' reasons to teach suggests that people change to teaching because of dissatisfaction with previous careers and consideration of teaching as being more fulfilling work or an accessible and family-friendly career (e.g., Bauer et al., 2017; Castro & Bauml, 2009; Crow et al., 1990). These studies highlight the importance of taking into consideration individuals' demographic and biographic characteristics to understand their reasons for teaching.

The choice to teach may also be influenced by sociocultural contexts. Pop and Turner (2009), who surveyed 67 preservice teachers in the United States and did in-depth interviews with nine of them, suggest that perceptions of advantages and disadvantages of choosing teaching as a career are influenced by the social view of teaching as presented through the media. Azman (2013), who surveyed 425 Malaysian preservice teachers, finds that many participants were drawn to teaching because it is regarded as a respected job, with a reasonable workload, in Malaysia. Azman highlights that cultural beliefs greatly shape participants' positive perception of teaching. The sociocultural influence on perceptions of teaching is also captured by Richardson and Watt (2006), who surveyed 1,653 preservice teachers in Australia and reveal that teaching is generally viewed as high in demands (e.g., high levels of expertise, a high workload, and a heavy emotional demand) and low in returns (e.g., a relatively low social status and low salary). Besides, it is worth noting that many studies indicate stronger altruistic and intrinsic reasons to take up teaching in more affluent countries but more extrinsic reasons in less affluent countries. For instance, Chong and Low (2009), in their survey of 605 Singaporean preservice teachers, find that intrinsic factors (e.g., interest in teaching, job fit, love of a subject) account for 50% of the reasons for entering teaching, while 39% are altruistic. (e.g., fulfilling a mission, working with students). Only 11% of their participants were found to be extrinsically

motivated (e.g., motivated by role models, financial reasons, job transferability). Conversely, Ejieh's (2005) survey of 107 Nigerian preservice teachers and Moses et al.'s (2017) interviews of 40 Tanzanian preservice teachers show the stronger influence of extrinsic factors, such as employment opportunities, job security, long holidays, flexible working hours, and/or the ease of gaining admission into university and the programme. These studies point to the need to take into consideration the sociocultural influence of a research context (Fray & Gore, 2018; Heinz, 2015).

In New Zealand, the studies that have explored reasons for choosing teaching suggest people go into teaching primarily for intrinsic and altruistic reasons. For instance, Kane and Mallon (2006) investigated perceptions of teachers and teachers' work in a study involving nearly 2,000 people, including teachers, preservice teachers, principals/head teachers, board of trustees/management committee members in school sectors and early childhood, and senior secondary students. Their study reveals the primary reasons for choosing teaching are the desire to work with children and positively influence their learning and to contribute to society. Lovett (2007) interviewed 57 third-year teachers and found enjoying working with children and making a difference to their lives were the main reasons for choosing teaching. In addition to intrinsic and altruistic reasons, the literature suggests there are also extrinsic reasons for choosing to teach, including consideration of teaching as a secure job with a reliable income (Kane & Mallon, 2006), dissatisfaction with previous jobs (Lovett, 2007), and having children or other family responsibilities (Hall & Langton, 2006). However, there seems to be a need for longitudinal studies to investigate the influence of different reasons for going teaching on teachers' constructions of teaching and being a teacher. This study aims to address the gap by attending to the meaning that beginning teachers bring with them into teaching with a focus on reasons for teaching and their influence on meaning construction and reconstruction over time.

International studies have investigated how different reasons to teach influence engagement in ITE. For example, Paulick et al.'s (2013) survey of 291 German preservice teachers and Tang et al.'s (2015) survey of 132 Hong Kong preservice teachers suggest a positive correlation between intrinsic-altruistic reasons to teach and professional development and competence in teaching, whereas extrinsic reasons (e.g., job security, compatibility with family demands, the perception of ease of teaching) were found related to avoiding work and effort in professional development (Paulick et al., 2013). In contrast to the ample research at the preservice level, not many international studies have investigated the influence of different reasons for choosing teaching on teachers' experience of teaching. Among the few studies that have examined the

influence of different types of reasons to teach in the early years of teaching, McLean et al. (2019) surveyed 265 participants in the United States at the end of ITE and at the beginning and end of the first year of teaching. Findings indicate that intrinsic reasons (e.g., inherent interest in teaching) were associated with lower burnout, whereas extrinsic reasons (e.g., job benefits) were associated with more burnout. As discussed above, this study aims to add insights into the influence of different reasons for choosing teaching on teachers' construction of teaching and being a teacher.

The studies discussed above have shown that reasons to teach vary across contexts and individuals. As Pop and Turner (2009) observe, the reasoning behind people's decisions to teach is "complex, personal, and situated" (p. 695). Most studies employ quantitative approaches, relying heavily on surveys and questionnaires in which demographic and biographic profiles of participants are largely overlooked (Brookhart & Freeman, 1992; Han & Yin, 2016). While the numerical data indicate trends and patterns, quantitative research methods do not allow a holistic picture of teachers' decisions to teach, such as the complex interactions between various influential factors behind their choice of teaching (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Thus, research is needed that enables an in-depth exploration of reasons to teach to help explain the influence of different reasons for choosing teaching on becoming and being a teacher over time (Watt et al., 2017). This longitudinal study aims to bridge this gap and, through narrative inquiry, provide a comprehensive understanding of reasons for teaching and their influence on beginning teachers' meaning making of teaching and themselves as teachers.

Beliefs About Teaching and Self as a Teacher

The literature suggests that people enter teaching with prior beliefs about teaching and self as a teacher that are primarily influenced by their experiences of school as students. For example, Britzman (1986) noted more than 3 decades ago that preservice teachers brought to teaching more than a desire to teach; they also brought knowledge of school structures and preconceptions of the teacher's work informed by their experiences of school. The years of experience as students observing the work of teachers are described by Lortie (1975) as "the apprenticeship of observation" (p. 61), which facilitates the development of lay theories about teaching and the teacher's work (Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Sugrue, 1997). The powerful influence of schooling experience on prior beliefs about teaching and self as teacher is evident in a number of studies. For example, Furlong's (2013) interviews of 15 Irish preservice teachers on a postgraduate primary programme, Lee and Schallert's (2016) qualitative study of nine

American preservice teachers over three semesters of a primary ITE programme, and Flores' (2001) 2-year mixed-methods study of 14 Portuguese beginning teachers, show that previous positive and/or negative schooling experiences and memories of favourite and less competent teachers influence perceptions of what is good and bad teaching. Britzman (1986) and Flores and Day (2006) view these prior beliefs as being a frame of reference in beginning teachers' making meaning of teaching. Borko and Putnam (1996) and Anspal et al. (2012) think of prior beliefs as being "filters" through which teachers interpret and integrate new information and experiences concerning teaching.

The literature suggests that in addition to schooling experiences, life experiences may also influence conceptions about teaching and self as a teacher. For example, the beginning teacher in the case study by Bullough and Knowles (1991) perceived teaching as nurturing, which was influenced by her experience of being a mother of five children. Similarly, in Powell's (1992) qualitative study of 17 American preservice teachers, who had chosen teaching as their first career, and 25 career changers, some participants' personal constructs of teaching were influenced by their parenting experience. Powell also provided examples where preservice teachers' personal constructs of teaching were influenced by prior work and nonclassroom teaching experience. The above studies highlight the importance of taking into consideration preservice teachers' life experiences to understand their preconceptions about teaching and self as a teacher.

Studies that investigate preservice teachers' beliefs about teaching suggest that they may come to teaching with idealistic views of teaching. For example, Mahlios et al. (2010) report three studies in the United States on how preservice teachers make sense of teaching through metaphors and find the view of teaching as caring and nurturing is prevalent. Mahlios et al. caution that preservice teachers' tendency to view teaching as caring can cause discrepancies between their ideals and the reality of schools, which often emphasises academic achievement. Additionally, Mahlios et al. note that preservice teachers tend to believe that students will be eager to learn in the classroom and their role as teacher will be easy, and these beliefs may cause trouble when they start teaching. Other studies have also identified discrepancies between preservice teachers' personal perceptions and realities of teaching and schools (e.g., Cole & Knowles, 1993; Galman, 2009; Giboney Wall, 2016; Kettle & Sellars, 1996). For instance, Giboney Wall's (2016) mixed-methods study of six American primary preservice teachers finds that at the entry of teacher education, the participants had thought teaching would be straightforward and easily accomplished, teachers' work would be exclusively interacting

with children all day, and teachers would have boundless freedom at work. When they were on practicum, they realised teaching was demanding and time-intensive involving multiple tasks. Some of the participants were frustrated to find many contextual constraints on teachers' work. The findings of the above studies suggest preservice teachers may come to teaching with unrealistic expectations of teaching and not be fully aware of the complexity of teachers' work. As a result, their prior beliefs about teaching are likely to be challenged and reconstructed during teacher education and when they start teaching.

The following section reviews the literature concerning ITE influences on preservice teachers' meaning making of teaching and self as a teacher.

ITE Influences on Meaning Making of Teaching and Self as a Teacher

Due to its role in preparing teachers to enter the profession, ITE has an important role to play in facilitating teachers' meaning making of teaching and themselves as teachers. ITE is a time for teachers "to reflect upon past and current personae and to imagine future possible identities" (Blackley et al., 2018, p. 849). ITE is also a time for teachers to develop and refine their personal beliefs and practices of teaching in relation to the requirements and expectations of specific educational contexts and society and construct "an image of teaching that is both publicly and personally meaningful" (van Huizen et al., 2005, p. 275). Thus, ITE is expected to strongly and positively influence preservice teachers' meaning making of teaching and self as a teacher (Wideen et al., 1998).

However, there are concerns as to whether ITE can strongly influence preservice teachers' beliefs about teaching. Some scholars view ITE as a "secondary influence" (Cole & Knowles, 1993, p. 459), which may be less powerful compared to firmly established prior beliefs (Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Gelfuso, 2018). Studies have highlighted the challenge that ITE programmes face in addressing preservice teachers' prior beliefs. Cole and Knowles's (1993) well-known study analyses preservice teachers' reflective journal accounts from two ITE programmes and provides an example of one participant whose firmly established prior beliefs about the way a classroom should be (e.g., tidy, organised) conflicted with the reality she encountered on practicum. This conflict between her prior belief and the reality she encountered posed an obstacle to her learning, and it took her half of the semester to realise that her prior beliefs were "too uptight, too rigid" (p. 463). Gelfuso (2018) analysed the audio-recorded literacy instruction planning conversations between him (as the instructor of three literacy courses) and 33 American elementary school second-year preservice teachers.

Findings revealed that participants' conservative, traditional beliefs about literacy teaching (e.g., knowledge is transmitted from the teacher to students), shaped by the apprenticeship of observation, were resistant to change. Gelfuso suggests prior beliefs about teaching are resistant to change because the apprenticeship of observation experienced as a school student is of much longer duration than any ITE programme.

To help preservice teachers address potentially problematic prior beliefs and to help preservice teachers integrate personal meanings of teaching with the requirements and expectations of ITE, scholars argue that ITE programmes should not exclusively focus on professional knowledge and the technical and procedural dimensions of teaching (e.g., Pinnegar, 2005; Timoštšuk & Ugaste, 2010). Rather, it is recommended adequate attention be paid to what preservice teachers bring with them into ITE and engage them in reflective practice about their beliefs about teaching. For example, Anspal et al. (2012), in their study of 38 first- to fifth-year Estonian primary preservice teachers, argue that one of the most important tasks of ITE is to support preservice teachers' constructions of themselves as teachers by providing them with opportunities and sufficient reflective tools for reflection. Their findings show that preservice teachers' reflections on their motives for going teaching in the first year of ITE increased their understanding about their goals for teaching and awareness of their somewhat naïve expectations. Second- and third-year reflections on practicum experience and on how the knowledge they had acquired from ITE was transferred into their teaching contributed to preservice teachers' increased confidence and a strengthened sense of self as a teacher. Reflections in the fourth and fifth year led to a more coherent sense of self as a teacher as preservice teachers revisited their motives for teaching and resolved the contradiction between personal ideals and contextual norms and reality. To optimally challenge preservice teachers' beliefs, Anspal et al. highlight the importance of reflections when they have some knowledge and experience of teaching.

Numerous other studies place importance on reflection for teachers. For instance, Shoffner (2011), through interviews with four first-year American beginning teachers and analysis of their reflective journals, found that participants in their first year of teaching experienced major discrepancies between their expectations and the reality of teaching. Shoffner suggests that different forms of reflection (e.g., individual and collaborative reflections, reflective online discussions as well as reflective journals) should be used in ITE to help preservice teachers get prepared for the reality of schools and classrooms. Korthagen (2004) has proposed a six-level Onion Modal for reflection which included external environment and personal behaviour,

competencies, beliefs, identity, and mission. However, Korthagen points out that, despite considerable emphasis on reflection for teachers, “it is not always clear exactly what teachers are supposed to reflect on when wishing to become better teachers. What are important contents of reflection?” (p. 78). Given the multiple definitions and approaches of reflection in the literature, other scholars have questioned the gap between the theory and practice of reflection, and thus its impact on teaching (e.g., Beauchamp, 2015; R. Williams & Grudnoff, 2011).

Teacher inquiry, as a promising practice to develop preservice teachers’ reflective capacity, has attracted much attention in the literature. By engaging preservice teachers in practitioner research or inquiry into teaching and learning and school practices, inquiry-oriented teacher education aims to cultivate an inquiring stance on teaching and lay the foundation for preservice teachers to analyse, develop, and innovate their teaching practice (Toom et al., 2010). For example, Gitlin et al. (1999) used questionnaires and interviews to investigate 17 American preservice teachers in an inquiry-oriented primary teacher education programme and 20 preservice teachers in a secondary inquiry-oriented programme. Gitlin et al. suggest that inquiry-oriented teacher education influences how the preservice teachers approach theory and research and allows an experiential approach to knowledge creation and an insider view. More recently, Sinnema et al. (2017) argue that because teaching is complex and situated, teaching decisions cannot be routinised but need to be attended to in a teacher’s own context. Hence the importance of ITE taking an inquiry approach to teacher learning, which is focused on preservice teachers’ practice. M. S. Miller and Shinas (2019), in their case studies of three American preservice teachers’ inquiries during practicum, provide empirical evidence that the inquiry process enabled the participants to: reflect on their teaching; identify problems of practice; adjust their practice to meet students’ need; and develop a critically reflective, inquiry-based stance on teaching. However, other scholars caution that not all inquiry-learning activities effectively develop critical reflective practice effectively. For instance, Munthe and Rogne (2015), in their survey of all ITE providers in Norway and interviews with 36 teacher educators and 36 preservice teachers, found a lack of inquiry and reflective practice in the participants’ discussions. Arsal (2017) compared 28 Turkish preservice teachers who were exposed to 14-week inquiry-based learning activities with a control group of 28 teachers who were not exposed. The study showed that there were no significant differences between the two groups regarding their reflective thinking dispositions at the end of the inquiry-based learning. Arsal suggests the design and implementation of inquiry-based learning activities are crucial.

The practicum is frequently recognised as being critical to modify preservice teachers' perceptions of teaching by increasing understandings of the reality of schools and teachers' work. For instance, Flores's (2014) analysis of 47 written narratives by preservice teachers from a Portuguese Master's ITE programme reveals that her participants identified the practicum as key to understanding the reality of classrooms and schools, connecting theory with practice, learning how to address student-behaviour issues, and working with experienced teachers. Studies from the last decade have increasingly emphasised the importance of strong university–school partnerships, and integration of practicum periods with coursework, to the implementation of quality practicums and facilitation of preservice teachers' learning. For example, Oerlemans (2017) reports an Australian school–university partnership programme on which preservice teachers spent 1 or 2 days at practicum schools every week while taking courses at university on the other days. These preservice teachers appreciated the immediate opportunities to apply theory to practice, and saw themselves as becoming more confident, capable teachers upon graduation. Also, in Tannehill and MacPhail's (2014) qualitative study of 16 Irish preservice teachers on a 1-year graduate diploma programme, participants identified practicum experience that was interconnected with coursework as being most influential in changing their initially optimistic, almost implausible, beliefs of teaching to more feasible, achievable ones. Tannehill and MacPhail suggest the integration of theory and practice supports preservice teachers "to make the link between analysis of their own developing beliefs and how these impact practice" (p. 159).

Studies also stress the influence of teacher educators, associate teachers, peers, and other teachers from practicum schools on preservice teachers' meaning making of teaching and themselves as teachers. Rots et al. (2012), based on their case studies of 12 Belgian preservice teachers, suggest that social recognition (e.g., positive feedback and affirmation) by teacher educators and associate teachers greatly influences preservice teachers' confidence and efficacy. Conversely, a lack of social recognition can threaten their self-efficacy and self-worth. Notably, the literature frequently reports tensions resulting from conflicting ideas of teaching between preservice teachers and associate teachers. The American preservice teacher in the case study of Smagorinsky et al. (2004), and the Dutch preservice teachers interviewed by Pillen, Beijaard and den Brok (2013), identified their associate teachers as being very directive, not allowing any space or autonomy to teach in ways that were different from their own, which led to preservice teachers' negative emotions and delayed learning. However, some studies suggest that differences with associate teachers may also promote learning and development

(Friesen & Besley, 2013). For this to happen, associate teachers need to give preservice teachers autonomy to examine their prior beliefs and try out teaching strategies, and to support them with constructive feedback (Hollingsworth, 1989). Other studies (e.g., K. Smith & Lev-Ari, 2005; Tannehill & MacPhail, 2014) emphasise the importance of support from peer preservice teachers and other teachers from practicum schools in addition to teacher educators and associate teachers. These studies suggest preservice teachers value opportunities to collaborate, reflect, and discuss with various people in the profession about learning to teach and being a teacher. Thus, Le Cornu and Ewing (2008) recommend the formation of professional learning communities to enable preservice teachers to learn and thrive in the profession by engaging in a range of professional conversations and learning relationships.

Teacher education has a key role to play in preparing preservice teachers for teaching. This includes helping them integrate their personal meaning of teaching with the requirements and expectations of the programme and schools. However, it has been argued that ITE cannot fully reflect the complexity and reality of teaching (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Thus, as Feiman-Nemser (2001) argues, it is important that ITE is viewed as the start rather than the end point of a teacher's professional learning and development. As Flores (2001) says, professional learning is "a continuing process" (p. 147) that goes on throughout a teacher's career. The next two sections review the literature related to beginning teaching and school influences on beginning teachers' meaning making of teaching and self as teacher.

Teaching in the Beginning Years

Many studies highlight the complex and demanding nature of teaching. For example, Le Maistre and Paré (2010) and Perryman and Calvert (2020) observe that today's teachers are faced with high social expectations and accountability pressures, substantive changes in curriculum and pedagogy, increasing student diversity, more workload and administrative work, yet declining social recognition. Many other scholars also stress the complex, diverse, and high-pressure nature of teaching by describing it as uncertain (Kane & Francis, 2013), changing (Abbott et al., 2019), problematic (Loughran, 2016), multifaceted and multilayered (Cole & Knowles, 1993), or time-intensive (Giboney Wall, 2016).

Despite the complexities and demands of teaching, from the day beginning teachers enter the classroom they are expected to fulfil similar roles and responsibilities to their experienced counterparts. Beginning teachers undertake the same classroom work as experienced teachers, such as lesson planning, grading, assessment, and report writing (Richardson et al., 2013;

Shoffner, 2011). Beginning teachers often have the same class size as experienced teachers and need to resolve problems instantaneously and constantly within and beyond the classroom (Le Maistre & Paré, 2010). Some beginning teachers are even assigned more challenging classes, more extracurricular duties, or a heavier workload (Gaikhorst et al., 2014; Howe, 2006; McCormack & Thomas, 2003). In comparing beginning teachers with novice practitioners in physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and social workers in Canada, Le Maistre and Paré (2010) comment that "no other profession [like teaching] takes newly certified graduates, [and] places them in the same situation as seasoned veterans" (p. 560). However, beginning teachers may not be fully prepared for the immediate reality of assuming full responsibility, as they are still developing themselves as teachers and coming to terms with familiarity of school conditions and policies, the curriculum, and establishment of their own classroom environment and relationship with students (Kane & Francis, 2013). Thus, the reality of teaching can be more challenging for beginning teachers.

Further, the many challenges experienced by beginning teachers as they transition from teacher education to school are identified in studies. These challenges have been referred to as reality shock (Veenman, 1984), culture shock (Huberman, 1993), or tensions and dilemmas (Pillen, Beijaard, & den Brok, 2013). Identified also is the heavy workload beginning teachers experience (Burgess et al., 2018; A. Williams, 2003), classroom management and student discipline and diversity (Fontaine et al., 2012; Gaikhorst et al., 2014), isolation and poor support (Kane & Francis, 2013), lack of resources (e.g., access to curricular materials, textbooks, technology, and printing services; Flores, 2001), lack of time for teaching planning and ongoing professional development (Ergünay & Adigüzel, 2019), and handling parents (Marable & Raimondi, 2007). Also, tensions may arise from conflicts between individual and school values (e.g., individuals' beliefs and practices of teaching may conflict with the prevailing professional culture of the school; Gray, 2019; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002; Pillen, Beijaard, & den Brok, 2013), the preservice experience and the first year of teaching (e.g., different expectations and teaching practice of ITE and their school; Pillen, Beijaard, & den Brok, 2013; Wideen et al., 1998), and a lack of professional autonomy that stems from accountability and surveillance (Blömeke et al., 2015; Blömeke & Klein, 2013; Dymoke & Harrison, 2006).

The literature suggests some beginning teachers manage to address the challenges of their early year and some do not. For instance, Hong et al. (2018) report a longitudinal qualitative study of six American participants from the preservice stage to their second year of teaching and

categorise participants' responses to challenges as "coping" and "managing." Coping refers to participants who did not resolve the challenges and were trying to endure the intensity and complexity of demands. Managing refers to participants who made use of school support (e.g., support from school leaders and colleagues) and personal resources (e.g., individual motivational and emotional strength) and resolved challenges. Many scholars argue that the challenges and tensions are not always negative but can be seen as opportunities for professional development (e.g., Cook, 2009; Galman, 2009; Hong et al., 2018; Pillen, Beijaard, & Brok, 2013). Cook (2009), for example, argues that beginning teachers, by making meaning of the challenges and tensions, can develop new understandings of teaching and self as teacher. However, Cook also points out that it can be challenging for most beginning teachers to cope with tensions in the first year, due to a lack of time, resources, strategies, or motivation.

Studies that have investigated how teachers make sense of and cope with challenges and tensions identify agency as having an important role to play in making meaning of teaching and self as teacher. While there are many definitions of agency, teachers' professional agency often refers to the capacity to make choices (e.g., to set goals and direct actions towards those goals) related to their work (e.g., Beauchamp & Thomas, 2011; Ruan & Zheng, 2019; Ruohotie-Lyhty & Moate, 2016). The literature suggests both personal and contextual factors influence agency. Sydnor (2017) contends that teachers with clear visions for teaching are more likely to exercise agency when confronted with challenges. Other scholars highlight that agency is also shaped by school contextual and relational factors (Huber & Yeom, 2017; Ruan & Zheng, 2019; Ruohotie-Lyhty & Moate, 2016). An encouraging school context, such as supportive colleagues and leaders, is likely to increase agency (Hong et al., 2017) and positively influence beginning teachers' abilities and approaches to issues at work (Shoffner, 2011), whereas a lack of supportive school leadership and colleagues is likely to constrain agency and autonomy and negatively influence a teacher's sense of self as a professional (Pearson & Moomaw, 2005). Thus, Huber and Yeom (2017) argue that "teachers' agency is learned, developed, and continuously constructed and reconstructed" (p. 311) in relation to other members of the school. The present study, by exploring how beginning teachers make meaning of teaching and themselves over time, aims to provide insight and understanding into what promotes or hinders their agency.

Intense emotions are likely to arise when addressing challenges and tensions. For instance, demanding and unsupportive working conditions can lead to feelings of stress, exhaustion, frustration, and disappointment (Flores, 2001). Incongruity between individuals and their

schools in terms of beliefs and practices of teaching can cause insecurity, confusion, uncertainty, self-doubt, and powerlessness (McCormack et al., 2006). There are also emotion-laden interactions and relationships with students, parents, mentor teachers, and colleagues (Richardson et al., 2013; Shoffner, 2011), such as student misbehaviour which is often seen to interfere with teaching and negatively influence teacher emotions (Weiss, 1999), or loneliness from isolation and lack of support (Marable & Raimondi, 2007). Thus, emotion is recognised as interconnected with identity (Hong et al., 2018), and the process of moving from preservice to teaching may be "deeply emotionally threatening to a teacher's identity" (Hodgen & Askew, 2007, p. 474). Scholars stress the importance of providing emotional support to beginning teachers, such as that offered by school principals and mentor teachers, to positively influence beginning teachers' meaning making of themselves as teachers, and their job satisfaction and commitment (Sargent, 2003; Wynn et al., 2007). The influence of school principals and mentor teachers and other school contextual factors is reviewed in the next section.

School Influences on Meaning Making of Teaching and Self as Teacher

The literature stresses the importance of school influences on beginning teachers' meaning making of teaching and themselves as teachers. Three frequently identified key influences are school leadership, induction and mentoring, and school culture. This section reviews these school influences on beginning teachers' meaning making of teaching and themselves as teachers.

Leadership

School leadership is vital in supporting beginning teachers' transition into teaching. There is evidence that school leadership influences implementation and quality of induction and mentoring (Killeavy, 2006), work demands and resources to meet those demands (Brock & Grady, 1998; Schuck et al., 2018), and recognition and evaluation of beginning teachers' work (Brock & Grady, 1998; Kelchtermans, 2019). School leadership can also influence beginning teachers through professional communities and school-culture building (Kardos et al., 2001; Milton et al., 2020) and trust and connectedness between teachers (Blömeke & Klein, 2013; Thomas et al., 2019). Weiss' (1999) large-scale survey of 5,088 teachers in the United States identifies school leadership as one of the most influential variables on first-year beginning teachers, influencing their "feeling that it is worthwhile to exert their best effort, commitment to career path, and intentions to stay in teaching" (p. 865). Weiss suggests that school leadership could enhance beginning teachers' confidence and commitment by clarifying expectations, providing guidance and resources, engaging them in participating in decision making within

their schools and experiencing autonomy and discretion, and fairly evaluating and acknowledging their work.

However, studies show that not all school leaders can positively influence beginning teachers. Du Plessis and Sunde (2017) conducted a qualitative study with school leaders from two public schools in South Africa, four schools in Australia (two public schools and two independent schools) and nine public secondary schools in Norway. Du Plessis and Sunde's findings reveal school leaders might have negative beliefs and attitudes towards beginning teachers, such as considering beginning teachers to be a burden and the provision of professional development opportunities for beginning teachers to be too costly. School leaders might not have time to communicate with beginning teachers or organise support and mentoring programmes. Beginning teachers in such schools were found to feel abandoned, in a "sink-or-swim" situation (Lortie, 1966). Du Plessis and Sunde (2017) suggest that school leaders need to effectively engage in support for beginning teachers to retain them in teaching. Flores (2001) and Flores and Day (2006), in a study of 14 Portuguese beginning teachers in their first 2 years of teaching, also find that the participants see their school leadership as being passive and not engaging them in professional development or school improvement processes. Such school leadership is found to have influenced an unsupportive school atmosphere, ineffective relationships between staff, and lack of resources and collaboration. Flores and Day call for a supportive and informative leadership at school and team levels to positively influence beginning teachers' learning and development.

Induction and Mentoring

Induction is generally seen as a key contextual factor in supporting beginning teachers' transition from ITE to teaching. T. Smith and Ingersoll (2004) view induction as a bridge between ITE and full-time teaching, while Wang et al. (2008) consider induction part of a continuum from ITE through the beginning years of teaching. The assumption behind induction is that teaching is so complex and demanding that it is impossible to give teachers all the training at the preservice level, no matter how good an ITE programme is (Blömeke et al., 2015; Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Thus, teachers must continue to develop on the job (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). It is expected that induction can provide the foundation for beginning teachers' ongoing development (Kane & Francis, 2013), allowing them to learn the local context, students, and curriculum; tackle challenges of beginning teaching (e.g., building a learning environment in classroom settings, providing responsive instructional programmes); and develop positive professional identities (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). It is generally agreed in the literature that

induction and mentoring are crucial for beginning teachers' subsequent development and performance (e.g., improved instructional practices and improved student achievement) and career intentions (e.g., greater commitment and retention in the teaching profession; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

However, there are variations between induction programmes in terms of purpose, structure, length, and intensity. Some induction programmes have a narrow vision of support with an emphasis on providing practical information (e.g., school policies and procedures) or addressing beginning teachers' immediate problems rather than enhancing their vision of good teaching and development as teacher (Kane & Francis, 2013). Some induction programmes may last only a short time and consist of orientation meetings while others are highly structured and multifaceted programmes that include comprehensive and intensive induction activities (T. Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Thus, not all beginning teachers enjoy the support of well-delivered or long-lasting induction, and there are beginning teachers who have no exposure to induction at all (Gaikhorst et al., 2014; McCormack & Thomas, 2003). Thus, the need for structured, comprehensive, and intensive induction practices is highlighted in the literature (Howe, 2006; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; H. K. Wong, 2004).

Mentoring and the role of mentor teachers are frequently identified as critical in supporting beginning teachers. Beginning teachers in many studies highlight that they value most the opportunities of interacting with and being guided by an experienced colleague (Gaikhorst et al., 2014; Howe, 2006; Marable & Raimondi, 2007; Spooner-Lane, 2017). A number of positive effects from mentoring and mentor teachers in supporting beginning teachers have been reported in the literature. These include supporting beginning teachers' socialisation into school contexts and culture and teaching to school curriculum standards (Kane & Francis, 2013); reflecting on teaching practice and learning the wisdom and knowledge of experienced peers (Gaikhorst et al., 2014; McCormack & Thomas, 2003); raising student achievement (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Spooner-Lane, 2017); providing emotional support and countering negative emotions like anxiety, frustration and stress (McCormack & Thomas, 2003); and building confidence and a sense of professional identity and belonging (Kane & Francis, 2013). In other words, when carefully implemented, induction and mentoring can increase beginning teachers' effectiveness, wellbeing, and commitment (Harrison, 2019; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Spooner-Lane, 2017). Nevertheless, research into the effectiveness of induction and mentoring programmes has been criticised for its focus on "what works, but not why or why not" (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011, p. 227) and the limited evidence of the direct impact of induction

and mentoring on the development of beginning teachers' beliefs and teaching practice (Wang et al., 2008). While this study does not examine the influence of induction and mentoring on student achievement, it is interested in how induction and mentoring in a school context influences beginning teachers' meaning making of teaching and themselves as teachers.

Many studies have identified characteristics of effective induction and mentoring practices. This comprehensive list of characteristics includes: clearly defined goals (Barrera et al., 2010); trusting and collaborative relationships and regular, intensive interactions (Gaikhorst et al., 2014; Harrison, 2019; Spooner-Lane, 2017); attention to beginning-teacher beliefs and needs (Gaikhorst et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2008); an appropriate degree of autonomy granted to beginning teachers (Feiman-Nemser, 2001); the match between beginning teachers and mentors according to the grade level or subject they teach (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004); and/or the match between their personality and philosophy of teaching (Irinaga-Bistolas et al., 2007). In addition, many scholars point to the importance of providing sufficient time for both beginning teachers and mentors (e.g., time released from some classroom duties) to conduct class observations and engage in feedback and reflection (Barrera et al., 2010; Gaikhorst et al., 2014; Howe, 2006). Also, mentors should be provided with proper, structured training. Selection of mentors tends to depend on teaching experiences and seniority, but, as Wang (2001) points out, being an effective teacher does not necessarily make someone an effective mentor. Training is key to ensure that mentors understand the purpose, duties, and responsibilities of their role, and acquire interpersonal and intrapersonal skills and effective mentoring strategies to fulfil their role (Barrera et al., 2010; Certo, 2005; Gaikhorst et al., 2014). The provision of a mentor will not guarantee bringing learning to beginning teachers (Howe, 2006; Wang et al., 2008).

Despite the comprehensive list related to effective mentoring, mentoring practice does not always follow these recommendations in supporting beginning-teacher development. For instance, Wynn et al.'s (2007) survey with 217 first- and second-year teachers in the United States shows that, given the time constraints, beginning teachers did not often observe their mentors teaching and their mentors did not often observe their classes. Fifty-five percent of the participants did not observe their mentor at all, and 67% did not have a common planning period with their mentor. Apart from time, there may also be a lack of clearly defined mentoring responsibilities and expectations (McCormack & Thomas, 2003) and training for mentors (Hobson et al., 2009). As a result, some mentors may focus on providing emotional support only (Grudnoff, 2012; Hobson et al., 2009). Or, as Wang (2001) observes, a mentor may only

work as a local guide that helps beginning teachers socialise into the local context and culture of teaching rather than supporting beginning teachers to develop their teaching practice. Besides, the literature suggests collaborative mentor–mentee relationships and co-reflection may be limited. Rather, the mentor–mentee relationships are often perceived as expert–apprentice (Hobson et al., 2009) and often one-way exchanges with knowledge passing from the mentor to the mentee (Howe, 2006). Also, some scholars point out when mentoring emphasises assessment, beginning teachers may find it difficult to trust their mentors (Killeavy, 2006), and mentors may do harm to beginning teachers by making them feel judged (Hobson & Malderez, 2013). Thus, mentoring, in practice, has varied effects and may not always support beginning teachers.

As mentoring is conducted within a school context, the literature suggests its effectiveness is also affected by school culture. It appears that when a school culture is collegial and values teachers' professional development, mentoring is usually effective in supporting beginning teachers (Harrison, 2019; Hobson et al., 2009). When beginning teachers are solely supported by their mentor but not by other colleagues, they are likely to change schools even if their relationship with their mentor is positive (A. Williams et al., 2001). The following section will review literature concerning the influence of school culture.

School Culture

School culture is another key contextual influence on the process of becoming and being a teacher. School culture has been defined as "the distinctive blend of norms, values, and accepted modes of professional practice, both formal and informal, that prevails among colleagues" (Bryk & Driscoll, 1988, p. 253). It pervades almost every aspect of school life: "the way people act; how they dress; what they talk about or avoid talking about; whether they seek out colleagues for help or don't; and how teachers feel about their work and their students" (Deal & Peterson, 1999, p. 3). That is, school culture serves as "a source of meaning and significance" (Sergiovanni, 1987, p. 59) for anyone who works at school.

The literature suggests that school culture significantly influences beginning teachers' meaning making of teaching and themselves as teachers. Schempp et al. (1999) point out that beginning teachers learn the codes of school culture, and it is within this culture they make sense of the meaning and purpose of school daily activities and practices, locate themselves, and establish their professional identities. Many studies provide empirical evidence that beginning teachers' meaning making of teaching and themselves as teachers is influenced by school culture (e.g.,

Gaikhorst et al., 2014; Gratch, 2001; Kardos et al., 2001). The different socialisation experiences of three American beginning teachers in Gratch's (2001) research provide examples: Dana, who worked in an isolated school culture with little guidance or support, lost sight of her initial goals for teaching; Alice, in a culture of balkanisation (consisting of separate and even competing groups like Balkan states), was preoccupied with challenging authority rather focusing on her teaching practice and student learning; in contrast, Carol, in a supportive school culture, was encouraged to critically reflect on herself as a teacher and meet student needs despite accountability pressures faced by her and the other teachers. It therefore appears that beginning teachers' meaning making of teaching and themselves as teachers is significantly influenced by the school culture they are inducted into, and a supportive culture is important for beginning teachers. By the end of their first year, Dana decided to leave teaching and Alice considered leaving teaching, while Carol became more confident in teaching. It seems school culture plays a critical role in validating beginning teachers' choice of teaching as a career and influencing their subsequent professional development.

The literature emphasises the importance of integrated professional culture to beginning teachers' positive meaning making of teaching and themselves as teachers. Kardos et al.' (2001) qualitative study of 50 early-career teachers in the United States, identifies three forms of professional culture that influence beginning teachers. The first is a veteran-oriented culture where the norms and modes of professional practice are largely determined by and oriented towards experienced teachers. In this culture, beginning-teacher development needs are most likely to be ignored. The second is a novice-oriented culture dominated by new teachers, in which, because there are few experienced peers, beginning teachers lack professional guidance. The third is an integrated culture where teachers of all experience levels are encouraged to work collegially and collaboratively. Kardos et al. (2001) argue that neither the veteran-oriented nor the novice-oriented culture provide beginning teachers with appropriate support and guidance to develop professionally. The integrated professional cultures, on the other hand, enable beginning teachers to access sustained support and professional development through frequent exchanges with colleagues of different teaching experiences. Gaikhorst et al.'s (2014) qualitative study of 11 principals and eight beginning teachers from 11 Dutch urban primary schools also finds an integrated professional culture promotes active interaction and collaboration between beginning teachers and experienced teachers, and beginning teachers find it easier to approach their colleagues. Other scholars suggest teachers can serve as resources for each another (e.g., Husu & Tirri, 2007; Moolenaar et al., 2012), and relationships

and networks with colleagues allow access to valuable resources and opportunities for informal learning (Kyndt et al., 2016).

Previous research has revealed ways in which beginning teachers may interact with their colleagues and identified benefits for beginning teachers from these interactions. The literature suggests that beginning teachers are most likely to approach colleagues who are easily accessible, such as those who teach similar grades or areas (A. Williams et al., 2001) or whose classroom is nearby (Thomas et al., 2019); and interact with colleagues through meetings, structured networking time, and time to visit other classrooms (Marable & Raimondi, 2007), team-teaching and informal conversations (A. Williams et al., 2001), and reflective discussions (Husu & Tirri, 2007). It has been shown that support from colleagues helps enhance beginning teachers' teaching practice (Killeavy, 2006; A. Williams, 2003), overcome challenges and increase problem-solving competencies (Killeavy, 2006; Thomas et al., 2019), counteract isolation (S. M. Johnson, 2012; A. Williams, 2003), influence happiness and resilience (Nias et al., 1989), increase job satisfaction (Thomas et al., 2019), enhance beginning teachers' positive self-esteem (Gold, 1996), and encourage initiatives and contributions to school (A. Williams, 2003).

There are some pitfalls concerning collegial support. An often-identified problem is lack of time for teachers to connect with each other (Killeavy, 2006; Thomas et al., 2019). Small schools and staffing shortages may also limit beginning teachers' opportunities to interact with colleagues (A. Williams et al., 2001). Hargreaves (1994) distinguishes between collaborative cultures (spontaneous, teacher-generated collaboration) and contrived collegiality (required and regulated by administrators and prone to resulting in distrust between teachers and between teachers and administrators). To facilitate spontaneous, teacher-generated collaboration, teachers need some degree of flexibility and autonomy to make decisions and take actions (Datnow, 2011). However, Datnow (2011) also points outs that informal collegial support cannot replace formal, structured collaborative activities through induction and mentoring programmes. If beginning teachers are not provided with induction and mentoring programmes, they may just adopt the practices of their team rather than enhance their professional learning and develop their practice.

Early-Career Teacher Intentions

The literature on teachers' career intentions reveals many school factors that facilitate or impede beginning teachers' satisfaction with teaching as a career. Many of these influential

factors have been mentioned in the previous sections, such as school leadership that allows or hinders agency and autonomy at work (Weiss, 1999), collaborative or isolating school culture (Thomas et al., 2019), having or lacking comprehensive induction and mentoring support (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011), (un)manageable workload (Veenman, 1984), (in)sufficient teaching resources (Marable & Raimondi, 2007), and student behaviour and discipline (du Plessis & Sunde, 2017; Nichols et al., 2017). There are also other influential factors, such as pay and status (S. M. Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Kelly & Northrup, 2015). Influential personal factors are also identified by some studies, such as personal situations (e.g., family moves, pregnancy, and health problems) and motivations for teaching (e.g., Burke et al., 2013; Tricarico et al., 2015).

As a result of the different facilitating or impeding influences, especially the influence of school contextual factors, beginning teachers may stay teaching, change schools, or leave the profession, such as the participants in S. M. Johnson and Birkeland's (2003) 3-year research in the United States. Among the 50 early-career teachers, there were 11 "leavers" who departed teaching because of the heavy workload and lack of support, 11 "movers" who changed schools as a result of dissatisfaction with school leadership and collegial support, and 28 "stayers" who remained in the same school and were satisfied with their workplace conditions and experiences of working as a teacher.

However, over the last 10 years or so, there has been increasing recognition that research should perceive teachers' career intentions as an identity-making process and outcome, rather than simply identifying various individual and contextual factors and treating these factors separately. For instance, Clandinin et al. (2015) maintain that early-career teacher retention and attrition is "an identity making process that involves a complex negotiation between individual and contextual factors" (p. 1). To understand beginning teachers' career intentions, it is essential to understand their lived experiences, which Clandinin et al. describe metaphorically as "put[ting] a finger on the pulse of their [beginning teachers'] lives in order to gain a sense of the experiences they were undergoing and the identities they were continuing to compose as they began teaching" (p. 12). Rinke (2008) also highlights the important of synthesis of individual and contextual influences. Rinke (2008) points out that to understand retention or attrition decisions, research should not be conducted at a single point in time or after the retention or attrition decision has already been made. Instead, Rinke argues that more attention should be given to understanding the process by which the retention or attrition decisions are made. The emphasis on understanding teachers' career-intention decisions as an identity-

making process, and on the synthesis of individual and contextual influences, inspired this longitudinal study on how beginning teachers make meaning of teaching as a career.

Beginning teachers' sense of self-efficacy and self-worth is often found to be closely related to their career intention for teaching. For instance, McCormack et al. (2006) studied 16 Australian beginning teachers and find that a low sense of self-efficacy and self-worth, resulting from a lack of feedback and recognition from colleagues and students, led to some participants questioning their effectiveness as a teacher, and their position in their school, and leaving teaching by the end of their first year. Wilson and Deaney (2010) provide a case study of a first-year beginning teacher who left teaching because of a low sense of self-efficacy because she did not see herself as competent in the classroom. The current study, with its focus on how beginning teachers make meaning of self as a teacher, is interested in investigating how a sense of self-efficacy and self-worth influence beginning teachers' career intentions.

The New Zealand Context

New Zealand provides the context for this study. This section reviews policy and practice related to education in New Zealand. Also, reviewed is literature on ITE, beginning teaching, and induction and mentoring in New Zealand. Special attention has been paid to the primary school sector given all the participants of this study are primary school beginning teachers.

Policy and Practice

New Zealand education aims to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population comprising different ethnic groups, religious beliefs, income levels and abilities (MoE, 2021). Teaching and learning in New Zealand is underpinned by a student-centred philosophy, which aims to support all New Zealander learners to succeed in their lives and careers. However, the increasingly diverse population in New Zealand, particularly in the Auckland region where this study is set, poses challenges for teachers who need to have the attitudes and strategies to work effectively in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms (Ell, 2011). According to the OECD's (2019) Teaching and Learning International Survey, 28% New Zealand teachers (compared to the OECD average of 17%) worked in schools where at least 10% children had a migrant background, and 17% teachers worked in classes where at least 10% students had special education needs. Given the demands to teach in ways that can support equitable learning outcomes for increasingly diverse student populations and needs, making the transition from ITE to schools is even more challenging for beginning teachers (Grudnoff et al., 2016).

The MoE, the Education Review Office (ERO), and the Teaching Council play particularly important roles in overseeing and promoting teaching and learning. The MoE is the main government body with oversight of the New Zealand education system. ERO, an external evaluation agency of the MoE, evaluates and reports on teaching and learning and on the care of students in schools. The Teaching Council is the professional body for teachers. It registers and certifies teachers, sets and maintains professional standards for teacher practice and behaviour, and makes sure preservice teachers and beginning teachers get appropriate training that promotes continuous learning for teachers.

Newly graduated preservice teachers from approved ITE programmes can apply to the Teaching Council for registration and a provisional practising certificate. They must make a declaration that they are committed to the values and expectations set out in the Code of Professional Responsibility and the Standards for the teaching profession (Teaching Council, n.d.-a). The Code emphasises teachers' commitment to the teaching profession, learners, family, and society. The six Standards for the teaching profession are: (1) teaching (e.g., understanding student learning styles and using a range of teaching strategies to enable students to achieve); (2) design for learning (e.g., based on curriculum and pedagogical knowledge, assessment information, and each student's interests, needs, strengths, identities, and cultures); (3) learning-focused culture (e.g., respect, inclusion, empathy, collaboration and safety); (4) professional relationships (e.g., with family and the wider community and between teachers such as the communication and collaboration between the experienced and the novice); (5) professional learning (e.g., committed to learning and using an inquiry, collaborative approach); (6) and Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership (e.g., practices that pay respect to the indigenous people of New Zealand) (Teaching Council, n.d.-b). The Code sets out the high standards for ethical behaviour that are expected of every teacher; the Standards describe the expectations of effective teaching practice. Together they set out what it is, and what it means, to be a teacher in Aotearoa New Zealand. Teachers are required to show they meet the Code of Professional Responsibility and the Standards. They are expected to provide caring and creative learning environments and high-quality teaching to all children. Moreover, they must engage in positive and collaborative relationships with children, their families, colleagues and the wider community (Teaching Council, n.d.-b). Practising certificates are required to be renewed every 3 years, and teachers are required to demonstrate and declare their commitment to the values and expectations in the Code and the Standards (Teaching Council, n.d.-d). For full registration,

a beginning teacher is required to meet the Code of Professional Responsibility and the Standards typically after 2 years of practice.

Initial Teacher Education

ITE programmes are approved and monitored by the Teaching Council. The Teaching Council requires content to be informed by recent sound research and to promote teaching as inquiry. It also requires programme design and delivery to be based on authentic partnerships between ITE providers and partner schools to support the integration of theory and practice. The aim of the Teaching Council's (n.d.-c) requirements is to support graduates to develop theory, practice, and reflective abilities, and enable them to uphold the values underpinned the Code and meet the Standards for the teaching profession.

There are 16 ITE providers for primary teaching in New Zealand (TeachNZ, 2021). Most offer 3-year undergraduate bachelor's degrees (e.g., Bachelor of Education, Bachelor of Teaching, or Bachelor of Teaching and Learning), or 1-year qualifications in Graduate Diploma of/in Teaching or Postgraduate Diploma of Teaching for people who already have a degree in other subject(s). From 2014 to mid-2020, the MoE competitively funded master's-level ITE programmes with the aim of lifting the quality of graduating teachers' practice, especially their readiness to support what the MoE termed as "priority learners," that is Māori and Pasifika learners, those from low-socioeconomic backgrounds, and students with special education needs (MoE, 2013). An evaluation of the new master's programmes by Jenkins (2018) comments positively on the deep partnerships between providers and partner schools, the integration of teaching as inquiry, and extended practicums.

A number of New Zealand studies have investigated how ITE programmes have prepared and supported preservice teachers for teaching. There is evidence of positive influences of ITE programmes on preservice teachers' understanding and practice of teaching, and preparedness for teaching. For instance, Grudnoff et al. (2016) investigates preservice teachers' perceptions of how their ITE programme prepared them for teaching, especially in schools in low-socioeconomic communities. Document analysis of assignments and data from the exit survey showed that participants from the 1-year primary master's ITE programme thought their programme had provided them with knowledge and skill related to equity and inquiry that enabled them to support priority learners' learning. The participants valued their intentional placements in practicum schools in low-socioeconomic communities for preparing them to work in such contexts. In Carss's (2019) case study of nine first-year beginning teachers who

graduated from a 3-year Bachelor of Teaching (Primary) programme, most participants felt prepared and were confident to begin teaching upon graduation. They identified their programme provided them with the theoretical foundation (e.g., knowledge of how students learn, content and pedagogical knowledge) and teaching strategies (e.g., instructional approaches, understanding and using running records in lesson planning), which informed their teaching practice. They also attributed their preparedness to being able to practise teaching on three practicums with the support of associate teachers who modelled how to use different, appropriate resources in teaching.

On the other hand, there is evidence of variability of preparation. For instance, the ERO's (2017) large-scale mixed-methods investigation of newly graduated teachers' preparedness and confidence to teach in early learning services and schools finds not all participants felt prepared or confident to teach. Identified areas of weakness included planning lessons responsive to the diverse needs of students, managing classroom and students' behaviour, and writing reports. The newly graduated teachers who felt less prepared or confident to teach pointed particularly to insufficient integration of theory with practice. In contrast, the newly graduated teachers who felt confident and prepared to teach attributed this to their ITE programmes providing opportunities to integrate theory and practice.

To address the varied preparation for preservice teachers and support better integration of theory and practice, the literature has increasingly recognised the importance of university–school partnerships. For example, Whatman and MacDonald (2017) reviewed international and New Zealand literature on high-quality practica and field experiences. Based on their review of 50 refereed journal articles, 13 research reports, 12 government reviews and discussion documents of ITE, and nine books or theses, Whatman and MacDonald argue for the need to integrate every aspect of an ITE programme through strong university–school partnerships to avoid theory and practice being enacted separately in the different contexts. Some studies have provided examples of strong university–school partnership arrangements to support preservice teacher learning and practice. For example, Cooper and Grudnoff (2017), in their case studies of ITE programmes at the University of Waikato and University of Auckland, show how the universities and schools worked together to design and implement ITE programmes to support preservice teachers' learning. Cooper and Grudnoff's case studies identify a number of differences from traditional practicums, such as lecturers from universities and teachers from practicum schools, along with school principals, working together to design a practicum to better integrate theory and practice. Sewell et al. (2018) also provide a case study of university–

school partnerships involving participants in three primary/intermediate schools and one university. They identify seven strategies to facilitate school–university partnerships, including being willing to share power and expertise, promoting dialogue, making shared values visible, and building relational trust.

Moreover, the literature highlights the importance of clearly defining roles and responsibilities and developing shared understandings of the practicum. For instance, Trevethan (2017) investigates 11 New Zealand primary school teachers' views about the purpose of the practicum and the associate teachers' role and compares them with the intention of an ITE programme, showing they were not congruent. Trevethan (2017) thus notes it is crucial for universities and schools to have shared understandings of the purpose of practicum and the role of associate teachers, otherwise, preservice teachers may have to negotiate conflicting expectations from the university and the practicum classroom. In addition, the importance of providing professional development for practicum partners is also highlighted. For example, Cooper and Grudnoff (2017) point out that outstanding classroom teachers do not necessarily make skilled associate teachers, and university staff may have had little experience in working alongside teachers in classroom contexts. Hence, both teachers and university staff would benefit from professional learning to develop shared understandings of partners' roles and responsibilities and to strengthen mentoring skills necessary to enhance the learning of preservice teachers.

Further, some studies emphasise a whole-school approach to support the learning of preservice teachers. For instance, Grudnoff et al. (2017) in their qualitative study of 72 participants (including principals, associate teachers, lecturers, and preservice teachers) from one university and four primary schools on university–school practicum relationships, stress the importance of making the whole school the practicum site, rather than an individual classroom, to strengthen opportunities to link theory and practice in order to enhance preservice teacher learning. Likewise, Bernay et al. (2020) and Whatman and MacDonald (2017) maintain that it is important for the whole school to take responsibility for the practicum rather than an associate teacher in one classroom. It is argued that making the whole school a site of learning/practice provides collaborative and flexible learning opportunities and spaces for preservice teachers to learn and work with the experienced ones, which helps them grow into more effective beginning teachers (Whyte, 2017).

While the literature has recommended ways to improve ITE and the preparation of teachers, it also suggests learning to teach does not stop at graduation from ITE. The notion that some things need to be learned "on the job" (ERO, 2017; Lang, 2001) indicates the need for ongoing professional learning for beginning teachers through induction and mentoring to ensure "a scaffolded transition" (Ward et al., 2013, p. 68). The following section reviews the New Zealand literature on beginning teaching, with a focus on beginning-teacher induction and mentoring.

Beginning Teaching

The literature suggests that the first year of teaching can be very challenging for beginning teachers. For instance, in Lang's (2001) qualitative study, all but one of the seven first-year teachers reported the first half of their first year as being a period of survival with long hours of work and high stress. Similarly, the beginning teachers in Grudnoff's (2007) qualitative study also identified the start of the first year of teaching as being tough and stressful, and that they were shocked at the demands of the job (e.g., the amount of paperwork and administration work). It is interesting that the participants of both Lang (2001) and Grudnoff's (2007) studies became more relaxed, comfortable, and confident as teachers in their second 6 months of teaching. Cameron (2009) also reports that beginning teachers found the first year of teaching challenging with many experiencing reality shock because they had to undertake almost the same responsibilities as their more experienced colleagues. Whether they had become more confident as teachers over time appeared to rely on how well they were supported in their schools. Trevethan (2018), who reports on three primary school teachers' positive first-year teaching experiences, emphasises school support in enabling beginning teachers to handle the demands and stress of teaching.

A key school support is induction and mentoring. Relevant literature is reviewed below.

Induction and Mentoring. According to the Teaching Council's (n.d.-e) *Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring and Mentor Teachers*, induction is the broad term for all support and guidance (including mentoring) given to beginning teachers, which is required to involve comprehensive elements and sources (e.g., mentoring, observing colleagues teaching, external networks, and professional development opportunities) over a sustained period of at least 2 years. Mentoring, as a core component of induction, is required to move beyond quick-fix support but to be educative, in which mentor teachers take on an educational role. They guide, support, give feedback to, and work collaboratively with mentees to co-construct knowledge-

of-practice and develop a vision of good teaching (Langdon & Ward, 2014; Whatman, 2016). The purpose of induction and mentoring is to enable beginning teachers to develop and practise the attributes, attitudes, and skills they need to facilitate the learning of diverse students, meet the standards for full teacher registration, lay a strong foundation of self-reflection and ongoing professional learning, and enjoy teaching and stay in the profession (Teaching Council, n.d.-e).

Beginning teachers employed in a teaching position with at least 0.5 full-time teacher equivalent (FTTE) role are provided with an induction and mentoring programme by their employer and with an in-school mentor teacher (in the primary sector) who holds a full practising certificate. The MoE (n.d.-a) specifies that a school employing a beginning teacher is eligible for an additional staffing entitlement of 0.2 equivalent of an FTTE for the first year of employment as a permanent teacher. This additional entitlement is often used to reduce the staffing load of a beginning teacher, so they have time for induction and mentoring. At primary schools, a full-time beginning teacher (1.0 FTTE) gets 0.2 FTTE time allowance in their first year of teaching, and part-time beginning teachers (0.5 to 0.9 FTTE) get 0.1 FTTE time allowance. Schools are not eligible for any staffing allowance for beginning teachers who are part-time with less than 0.5 FTTE, but they get 0.1 FTTE staffing allowance for a full-time beginning teacher in the second year of teaching. There is also an allowance for mentor teachers. A mentor teacher will receive a $4,000 allowance to mentor a beginning teacher with at least 0.8 FTTE, or a $1,000 allowance to mentor a beginning teacher with at least 0.5 FTTE but less than 0.8 FTTE (MoE, n.d.-b).

As one of the first countries in the world to provide nationally mandated and funded induction and mentoring support, New Zealand has enjoyed an international reputation for a system-wide commitment to support beginning teachers. For example, more than 15 years ago, Wong et al. (2005) commented that “in New Zealand, there is a universal commitment to support beginning teachers,” and “we were struck by the variety of the sources of support in New Zealand and by how the schools make use of a range of induction activities” (p. 381). Studies have confirmed the strong commitment most New Zealand schools make to support beginning teachers. For instance, in Whatman’s (2016) large-scale surveys of 1,196 provisionally certificated teachers from primary and secondary schools and state-funded kindergartens, 87% participants reported access to an induction and mentoring programme over their first 2 years. The survey results of 696 participants by Langdon et al. (2019) show that the perceptions of the school leaders, teachers, mentor teachers and beginning teachers on the quality of schools’ comprehensive

induction and mentoring programmes were relatively high, scoring 88.97, 73.94, 80.12, and 80.37 out of 100 respectively.

However, the literature reveals variability in beginning teachers' experience of induction and mentoring. For instance, Cameron et al. (2007) interviewed a cohort of third-year teachers about their induction experiences and found that their experiences ranged from systematic and supportive induction, to minimal or unsupportive induction, and to guidance in an ad hoc way. Grudnoff (2012) investigated 12 first-year primary teachers and found their induction experiences were "diverse and variable" (p. 471) caused by varied school approaches to beginning teacher induction and different mentor behaviours. Some participants had more opportunities to interact and collaborate with their mentor teachers and received more constructive feedback than others. Some found their schools took a collegial approach to induction involving all teachers in professional development and they could learn from and with more experienced colleagues. But this did not happen to all participants. Also, Whatman's (2016) case studies of induction and mentoring in 10 early childhood education settings, and five primary and six secondary schools suggest that some beginning teachers were exposed to educative mentoring where they were encouraged to critically think about their choice of teaching approaches, while others were not. These studies suggest not all schools make good use of the policy and funding to provide beginning teachers with well-structured induction and mentoring programmes. Rather, the provisions of induction and mentoring programmes and beginning teachers' induction experiences are critically influenced by school contexts. How school induction and mentoring practice influences beginning teachers' meaning making of teaching and themselves as teachers is a focus of this study.

Research suggests school leadership plays a key role in influencing induction and mentoring practice. For instance, Langdon et al.'s (2012) analysis of sound induction and mentoring identifies 12 principles. Central to these principles are school leadership and culture. Effective school leadership is viewed as foundational to induction and mentoring along with a school culture that fosters collaborative learning communities. Many scholars highlight the importance of leadership commitment to beginning teachers' induction experience (Cameron et al., 2007; Langdon et al., 2019). Such commitment involves engaging the whole school in induction and mentoring, providing a time allowance, selecting appropriate mentor teachers and, importantly, resourcing these mentor teachers to ensure they have opportunities to participate in professional learning (e.g., Buchanan, 2019; Langdon, 2017; Langdon & Ward, 2014; Trevethan, 2018).

To conclude, this section has reviewed literature related to educational policy and practice in New Zealand with a particular focus on the literature on ITE, beginning teaching, and induction and mentoring. The literature suggests increased student diversity is likely to influence teachers' work and pose challenges to beginning teachers. The literature shows that while there is evidence confirming ITE programmes' preparation of preservice teachers for teaching, there is variability among ITE programmes and graduates. While there is much evidence of comprehensive induction and mentoring support for beginning teachers, variability is also found in induction and mentoring practice. Concerns related to such variability highlight the need for longitudinal research to gain greater understanding of beginning teachers' experiences. The need for further understanding of beginning-teacher experiences and how such experiences influence how they give meaning to teaching and self as a teacher have inspired this study. The following chapter presents the methodology and methods used in this investigation.

Chapter 3
The Research Process

Introduction

This chapter outlines the research process employed in this study. The overarching research question that guides this study is: How do beginning teachers make meaning of teaching and themselves as teachers over time? The overarching research question has led to the following subquestions:

(a) What meaning do beginning teachers bring with them to teaching?
(b) How is meaning constructed and reconstructed in beginning teachers' first year of teaching?
(c) How does the construction and reconstruction of meaning influence beginning teachers' career intentions?

In addressing these research questions, this study aims to provide greater insight into, and understanding of, how beginning teachers make meaning of self as a teacher and teaching as a career. Research methodology is crucial to achieve research objectives. Researchers need to apply methodology and methods appropriate to the research questions (Kothari, 2004). The use of appropriate methodology and methods is essential for a study to be of good quality and value (Silverman & Marvasti, 2008). Further, appropriate approaches allow researchers to see the problem being researched in new ways and contribute to policy and practice (Wideen et al., 1998). This chapter describes and justifies the choice of an interpretative and qualitative approach and the use of narrative inquiry. The sampling strategy is explained along with the methods and procedures for data collection and analysis. Ethical considerations underpinning the study and the trustworthiness of the study are also discussed.

An Interpretative Paradigm

The choice of a research paradigm critically influences the overall research and the methods used to answer the research questions. According to Lincoln et al. (2011), a research paradigm provides the philosophical and methodological guidelines for research development and conduct. Three core questions define a research paradigm (Guba, 1990, p. 18):

> Ontological: What is the nature of the "knowable"? Or, what is the nature of "reality"?
>
> Epistemological: What is the nature of the relationship between the knower (the inquirer) and the known (or knowable)?
>
> Methodological: How should the inquirer go about finding out knowledge?

Different answers to the above questions lead to two distinct research paradigms: positivism and interpretivism. According to the positivist position, there is a common, shared social reality, which is objective and external to individuals with universal laws governing social phenomena that need to be studied by objective methods (Aliyu et al., 2014; Neuman, 2003). The positivist approach generally assumes that the principles and methods of natural science research can be directly applied to social science to uncover knowledge of human activities (Cohen et al., 2000). Research based on this premise usually starts with a hypothesis, utilises a quantitative approach, and pursues scientific explanations supported by empirical evidence from measurement and/or observation that is replicable by other researchers (Aliyu et al., 2014; Neuman, 2003). Researchers using this paradigm are interested in generalisability of findings and consider themselves strictly objective and detached from the research process (Cohen et al., 2000).

In contrast, the interpretivist position emphasises human interpretation and construction of social reality. Researchers taking this stance view social reality as multiple, relative, and context specific (Lincoln et al., 2011). For instance, Crotty (1998) maintains, "all knowledge and therefore meaningful reality [are] constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context" (p. 42). Research based on interpretivism does not test hypotheses but generates questions for investigation (Krefting, 1991). This type of research is more concerned with obtaining deep insider knowledge of a phenomenon in its natural setting, and less with generalisations of findings, although there may be consideration given to transferability of findings to settings beyond the immediate research environment (Cohen et al., 2000). Researchers employ a qualitative approach, gather and present data in the form of descriptive words more than numbers, and inductively develop a theory (Cohen et al., 2000). Researchers using an interpretative paradigm acknowledge that they are not value-free and employ strategies to minimise the influence of their personal experiences and beliefs on the research process and its outcome (Creswell, 2013; Lichtman, 2013).

The purpose of this study was to investigate how beginning teachers make meaning of themselves as teachers and teaching as a career over time. The emphasis was on beginning teachers' insider perspectives and multiple, relative, and context specific interpretations and constructions of their experiences. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), a constructivist approach views reality as socially constructed. Social constructivism states people construct meaning when they interact with their surroundings and other people (Vygotsky, 1978). As people continually interact with their context, they are likely to reconstruct meaning of the

social world (Galbin, 2014; Weinstein et al., 2012). This is different from the positivist view of a single reality independent of social members' subjective consciousness and interpretive constructions. Thus, an interpretative paradigm is appropriate for this study.

A Qualitative Methodology

This study utilised a qualitative methodology. Merriam (2009) points out that the focus of qualitative research is on "how people interpret their experiences" (p. 5). Braun and Clarke (2013) note that qualitative research is about exploring "meaning and the ways people make meaning" (p. 35). Researchers using a qualitative methodology value multiple social realities and subjective meanings that people develop out of their experiences (Creswell, 2013). Also, qualitative research is mainly naturalistic and investigates people, objects, phenomena, and events in their natural settings (Punch & Oancea, 2014). These methodologies emphasise the "context-bound" nature of lived experiences and can capture the richness of experiences through "nuances and diversity within accounts" and "patterns across accounts" (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 23). Hence, a qualitative methodology, which can provide a rich and deep understanding of everyday life and the complex social settings in which people live their lives (Yin, 2015), was employed in this study.

A Narrative Inquiry Approach

This study employed a narrative inquiry approach. As a way of knowing, narrative inquiry recognises lived experience as a significant source of knowledge and values the stories that people live, tell, relive, and retell, and more importantly, the meaning conveyed by the stories (Clandinin, 2013). Connelly and Clandinin (1990), two significant scholars in the field of narrative inquiry, argue that the study of stories and narratives is the study of how people experience the world. They state that "humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives" and teachers, like other humans, "are storytellers and characters in their own and other's stories" (p. 2). Connelly and Clandinin (1994) further elaborate that people make and remake meaning of lived experiences through story. Other scholars stress that through stories or narration, people manifest not only their interpretations and evaluations of lived experiences but also their construction of identity. For instance, Hinchman and Hinchman (1997) argue that the stories people tell about themselves reveal who they are and how they have become who they are. Mockler (2011) further maintains that "the process of 'storying' and 'restorying' has the effect of both claiming and producing professional identity" (p. 519). Thus, narrative inquiry provides a useful way to study how people make sense of lived experiences, (re)construct meaning, and develop identity. Given the aim of this study is to

explore how beginning teachers (re)construct meaning of themselves as teachers out of their lived experiences, narrative inquiry is appropriate for this study.

The last 3 decades have seen a growing interest in investigating teachers' lived experiences and professional identity development through their narratives and career stories. For instance, Kelchtermans (2009b), who has conducted extensive research into teachers' work lives through their narratives, recognises narrative inquiry as "allow[ing] for the non-technical dimensions of teaching and being a teacher to be conceptualised, talked about, shared and critically challenged" (p. 270). Hong et al. (2018), who researched a group of teachers from their preservice year to their first 2 years of teaching in the United States, claim that narrative inquiry can best capture how teachers manage the interactions between personal and contextual factors, attribute meaning to their lived experiences, and construct their professional identities. Other scholars like Craig (1999) and Olson (1995) maintain that by encouraging teachers to tell stories about their work lives, narrative inquiry provides a way to value and nurture teachers' insider knowledge, an alternative to the dominant outsider knowledge generated by positivism. By focusing on beginning teachers as the storyteller, this narrative inquiry aims to "shed light on the identities of individuals and how they see themselves" (Creswell, 2013, p. 71), acquire insider knowledge, and generate insights into how to better support beginning teachers in becoming and being teachers.

The literature indicates that narrative inquiry allows consideration of context in investigating how people make meaning of their lived experiences. Ruohotie-Lyhty (2013) highlights that the stories constructed by individuals are not free from contexts but embedded in a dynamic process of social interaction within and across contexts. Polkinghorne (1995) notes that a story is characterised by a plot which not only consists of events and activities but also provides the context for understanding the meaning of the story. Elbaz (1991) also points out that the concept of story keeps the teller in focus, and meanwhile, maintains an audience and context. Mattingly (1998) suggests that stories in narrative inquiry "not merely describe what someone does in the world but what the world does to that someone" and "allow us to infer something about what it feels like to be in that story world" (p. 8). That is, storytelling involves telling the story context and the influence of the context, making it possible for the audience to interpret the meaning of the story in relation to the story background. Therefore, it has been argued that narrative inquiry is first and foremost a way of investigating lived experience in relation to social settings (Chase, 2011; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006) and understanding the complexity and multiplicity of social worlds (Squire et al., 2014). As meaning in this study is viewed as

being constructed in context, narrative inquiry provides a useful way to study contextual influences.

In addition to context, narrative inquiry allows consideration of time. Clandinin and Huber (2005) describe that as new experiences constantly come along, stories to live by are in flux. Interpretation and integration of new experiences are often realised by looking back to past events and forward to future ones (Clandinin et al., 2007; Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2013). Given that narrative inquiry allows consideration of context and time in exploring people's lived experiences, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) have highlighted the capacity of narrative inquiry to represent lived experience and events in three dimensions. The three dimensions are: place (i.e., the situations where lived experiences and narrative inquiry take place), sociality (i.e., the interplay between personal and social factors), and temporality (i.e., connections between past, present, and future experiences). Thus, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) claim that narrative inquiry provides a way to look inward, outward, backward, and forward at lived experience, by which they mean that narrative inquiry allows a dynamic exploration of personal and social dimensions of lived experience within and across contexts and time. As meaning making is seen as an ongoing, interactive process in this study, the use of narrative inquiry is appropriate; it allows the study to explore the iterative unfolding of the lived reality of each participant (e.g., looking backward and forward in time) and the dynamic interplay between personal and contextual influences (e.g., moving inward and outward between the personal and the social).

Sampling

Given the emphasis on in-depth exploration of complex human phenomena rather than generalisability, qualitative research uses nonprobability samples, also known as purposive samples (Ritchie et al., 2014). Nonprobability samples or purposive samples are selected purposefully based on research questions and the phenomenon being studied (Punch & Oancea, 2014). Unlike probability sampling strategy (also known as random sampling) which features scale and coverage and is statistically representative, nonprobability/purposive samples are relatively small in size (Ritchie et al., 2014). As the aim of this study is to increase understanding of how beginning teachers (re)construct meaning of self as a teacher and teaching as a career through narrative inquiry, nonprobability/purposive samples were used. Also used was convenience sampling, which is explained in the following section.

Selection of Site

Due to the availability of participants who were graduating from their ITE programme in the middle of the year, convenience sampling (also known as accidental or opportunity sampling)—selection based on easy access—was employed (Creswell, 2013). Convenience sampling is criticised for being likely to result in bias and poor-quality data (Robson, 1993), but as Morrow (2005) points out, no research can be completely objective or free from bias. Ethical approaches and procedures, applied to reduce the risk of bias, will be discussed in a later section.

This study invited the participation of graduating preservice teachers from the Master of Teaching—MTchg (Primary) programme at the University of Auckland in New Zealand in May 2017 (2 months before their graduation in July 2017). The MTchg (Primary) programme was a new 1-year primary teacher education programme designed to raise student achievement, particularly that of priority learners (see Appendix 6). To increase teacher expertise in addressing education outcome inequalities and attending to the needs of priority learners, the MTchg was framed by six facets of practice for equity, such as *connecting to students' lives and experiences* and *recognising and challenging classroom, school and societal practices that reproduce inequity* (see Grudnoff et al., 2016 for more detail). The MTchg also placed an emphasis on school–university partnerships. The preservice teachers worked in a high-socioeconomic-status school 2 days a week in the first 6 months of the programme, including 3 weeks of full-time practicum in the same school. They then worked in a low-socioeconomic-status school 2 days a week in the final 6 months of the programme and undertook 9 weeks of full-time practicum in the same school.

Selection of Participants

The purposeful criteria used in the selection of participants from the MTchg (Primary) programme was that they had been appointed to a primary school in the Auckland region to start teaching in July 2017. The process undertaken to recruit participants is outlined in the section on ethical considerations. Five graduates of the programme, four females and one male, volunteered for participation in this study. Two of the five participants were in their early 20s, and had enrolled in the programme immediately after completing their undergraduate studies and so were first-career teachers. Three participants were approximately 30 years of age and had previously worked in business before entering the MTchg, so were second-career teachers. Four of the five participants were European New Zealanders, and one was an Iranian New Zealander. Four of the five participants grew up in New Zealand, and one immigrated to New

Zealand from Ireland at the age of 15. Three participants started teaching in low-socioeconomic-status schools (Decile 3 or 4), and two in medium-to-high-socioeconomic-status schools (Decile 7).

The five participants used pseudonyms: Zoe, Stella, John, Sophie, and Annie. In terms of employment contracts, Zoe and Stella were permanent, full-time. John and Sophie were fixed-term, full-time in the first 6 months of teaching. Sophie resigned after 6 months of teaching, while John became permanent from his second 6 months of teaching. Annie was relieving in the first 6 months and then became permanent, full-time. Stella, Annie, and Sophie were in junior syndicates, teaching 5- to 6-year-olds. Zoe and John were in senior syndicates, teaching 9- to 11-year-olds. Table 1 provides the five participants' demographic details and information about their school decile, student age group, and employment type.

Table 1

The Five Participants' Demographic Details and Information About Their School Decile, Student Age Group, and Employment Type

Name	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	First- or second-career teachers	School decile	Student age group	Employment type
Zoe	F	22	Iranian New Zealander	First	3	9 to 11 years	permanent, full-time
Stella	F	22	European New Zealander	First	3	5 to 6 years	permanent, full-time
John	M	30	European New Zealander	Second	7	9 to 11 years	first 6 months: fixed-term, full-time second 6 months: permanent, full-time
Annie	F	29	European New Zealander	Second	4	5 to 6 years	first 6 months: relief teaching second 6 months: permanent, full-time
Sophie	F	30	European New Zealander	Second	7	5 to 6 years	first 6 months: fixed-term, full-time resigned after 6 months

Ethical Considerations

This section addresses the ethical considerations for this study. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) contend that ethical considerations need to be a priority over the entire duration of the research

data gathering and writing process. Josselson (2007) maintains that all researchers need to pay attention to ethical issues and comply with the basic ethical principles of obtaining voluntary, informed consent from research participants, protecting privacy and confidentiality, and avoiding deception and potential harm. For this study, ethics approval was obtained from the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 31st of March 2017 (Reference Number 018792). Below are the main ethical principles that have guided the research process.

Voluntary Informed Consent

All the participants were provided with information about the study and gave written consent for participation in the research. After obtaining ethics approval from the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, I introduced my research project verbally to the preservice teachers of the MTchg (Primary) programme at the University of Auckland in May 2017 during a class break. I explained to them the purpose of the study, data-collection methods, time commitments, and potential risks and benefits of participation. The potential benefits of participation were related to opportunities for them to reflect on their experiences of becoming and being teachers and for insights gained from their experiences to inform policy and practice on how to better support future beginning teachers. The main possible risks were related to confidentiality and accuracy of data. Strategies to avoid these risks were explained (see later paragraphs for details). An expression of interest form was distributed to the preservice teachers, and they were told that participation in the study was voluntary, and they were free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. Those who wished to participate returned the forms with their names, emails, and phone numbers, whereas those who did not wish to participate returned blank forms. I collected the forms myself, carrying a box and going to each desk, and the preservice teachers, regardless of wanting to participate or not, folded their own forms and dropped them into the box from a hole on the top. Eight preservice teachers expressed interest in participation.

On the day after the collection of the expression of interest forms, I emailed the invitation to participate in research (Appendix 1), participant information sheet (Appendix 2), and consent form (Appendix 3) to the eight preservice teachers who expressed interest in participating in the study and who had provided their contact details. The three documents contained information on myself as the researcher, the purpose and research questions of the study, data-collection methods and procedures, participation criteria, the duration and intensity of participation, data storage and usage, and ethical approaches. In addition, contact information

was provided for myself, my two supervisors, the head of school of Learning, Development and Professional Practice at the Faculty of Education and Social Work, and the chair of the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee. Five of the eight preservice teachers replied to my email and confirmed their interest in participating. Of the other three preservice teachers who had originally showed interest by filling out the expression of interest form, two of them decided not to participate in the study out of concerns about time commitments, and one did not respond to my email messages.

I then made an interview time via email with the five preservice teachers who confirmed their interest in participating. In the first individual interview, 15 minutes were set aside to explain the participant information sheet and the consent form. Participants were given opportunities to ask questions about the research and their participation before they signed the consent form. The participants were reminded that participation was voluntary, and that they were free to discontinue at any point in the research process and could withdraw any data up to 2 weeks after the data were collected. No interview was conducted before written consent was obtained. After the participants signed the consent form, they provided me with information on their age, educational background, the school where they were going to work, and the employment type for their first teaching position, and then we began our first individual interview.

It has been pointed out that it is impossible for researchers to foresee all future situations at the beginning of their research projects. For example, Weatherall et al. (2002) state that informed consent is "always inevitably a shorthand promise for an abridged information package," and that "it is never possible, theoretically and practically, to give participants full information about a research project" (pp. 534–535). Braun and Clarke (2013) write that because of the "quite open-ended and iterative" nature of qualitative research, "we often don't know in advance exactly how we're going to analyse our data, or the sorts of claims we will make about them. Consent can only be granted to our broad interests/approach" (p. 64). So, Cohen and Manion (1994) suggest that there is only reasonably informed consent. However, over the conduct of this study, I did not notice any issues that were not covered by the consent form, nor did participants bring up any concerns.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Protecting privacy and maintaining confidentiality were important ethical considerations. Robinson (1991) recognises the protections for privacy and confidentiality as a "cornerstone" of social research (p. 279). Punch and Oancea (2014) also hold that privacy and confidentiality

are key ethical issues, because the information that participants reveal is likely to be “of a personal and sensitive nature” (p. 67). To maintain privacy and confidentiality, identifying information in this study, like the real names of participants and their schools, was not used in any report of the research findings. Pseudonyms were used in all instances. I used social media to communicate with the participants individually by texts between the interviews during the longitudinal data-collection process. To protect privacy and confidentiality, I used individual Facebook Messenger (i.e., a messaging app developed by Facebook) accounts to reduce the chance that the participants might recognise each other’s participation in this study. To protect the security of data and meet the requirement of the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, signed consent forms were stored separately from other paper data (e.g., interview transcripts, field notes, and artefacts), and all documents were kept in locked drawers in my home. All electronic data were securely stored on a password-protected University of Auckland computer and my own computer. As the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee requires, all data will be kept for a period of 6 years, after which time any data will be securely destroyed.

Despite all care taken to protect privacy and confidentiality, it is hard to guarantee complete confidentiality or anonymity in social research. It is possible that participants’ identities and experiences are identified by those who know them well (Neuman, 2003). Giordano et al. (2007) point out that not all participants want confidentiality or to be anonymous, and there is “the possibility that certain participants might not desire such ‘protection’” (p. 264). While pseudonyms are used in this study, some participants said they did not mind letting others know of their participation in the research. I admit that I had no control over what participants might reveal to their family, friends, or colleagues.

Avoiding Deception and Harm

The measures taken above to obtain voluntary informed consent and protect privacy and confidentiality were related to addressing the key ethical principle of avoidance of any deception or harm to participants. Other actions were taken to minimise the risk of causing harm. For instance, I let participants decide the time and location for each interview. During interviews, they were assured that they could request the recording to be stopped at any time without having to give a reason. In my interactions with the participants, I kept reminding myself to be nonjudgemental and not to ask leading questions. Within 2 weeks of interviews, all audio transcripts were sent to the participants for them to check for accuracy.

Furthermore, the literature suggests that misrepresentation and misinterpretation of participants' narratives can pose harm to participants. Smythe and Murray (2000) point out that narrative meaning is multiple, because narratives can be represented in more than one way and be interpreted from multiple perspectives. Josselson (2007) cautions that because aspects of a person described in the final report are selective and contingent, a participant may find a written story based on his/her experience is related to, but not identical to, his or her narration. It is possible that while some participants feel empowered or enlightened to read the final research report, others may feel offended, misunderstood, or that the account is not fully true about them (Josselson, 2007). For this reason, researchers may face the ethical dilemma of having a participant who may not like or agree with what has been said about him or her.

To avoid feelings of being offended or misunderstood, participants were informed before the first interviews that the themes chosen or conclusions made in the final cross-data analysis were based on the findings of the whole group rather than on individual interviews. Further, following the advice of Chase (1996), to claim authority over data interpretation as the researcher, I made efforts to secure my understandings of the narratives as close as possible to those of the participants. For example, I emailed the final stories of their experiences to the participants for them to confirm or challenge the accuracy, to which the participants replied with positive feedback and affirmation. For example, one participant said, "I've read through the summary, and it sounds very accurate and [is] like my story. Thank you for capturing it so well." Also, my reflexivity as the researcher (discussed in the following section), along with the guidance of my supervisors, helped mitigate the possibility of misinterpretation and misrepresentation of participants' narratives that might pose harm to participants.

Reflexivity as the Researcher

A researcher's decisions and actions inevitably influence the meaning and context of the experience under study (Horsburgh, 2003). It has been argued that researchers, influenced by possible personal bias, "can be the greatest threat to trustworthiness in qualitative research" (Poggenpoel & Myburgh, 2003, p. 420). Thus, reflexivity as researchers is highlighted in the literature. According to Lincoln et al. (2018), "reflexivity is the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher" (p. 143). In the observation of Dowling (2008), reflexivity involves a researcher's "engagement of continuous examination" (p. 747) of their influence on a research project. Fine (1992) highlights the importance of "positioning researchers as self-conscious, critical, and participatory analysts, engaged with but still distinct from our informants" (p. 220). In the field of narrative inquiry, Josselson (2007) notes that "the inherent

ethics of narrative research lies in the resolute honesty of the researcher's reflexivity" (p. 551). Clandinin (2013) also highlights the reflexivity, attentiveness, and sensitivity of narrative inquirers, especially to the unfolding of their interactions and relationships with participants. Keeping in mind the importance of reflexivity as the researcher, I examined my thoughts, which might bias the collection and analysis of data, through reflection and field notes in the inquiry and writing process and through regular and frequent discussion with my supervisors.

Reflecting upon my interactions with the five participants, I feel fortunate to have them in this study. When I first introduced my PhD project to all the preservice teachers of the MTchg (Primary) programme in their class, I did not talk about any economic rewards for participants' time commitments. So, the five participants did not expect that there would be a financial return for their time at the beginning. They volunteered their participation through genuine interest in the research topic—this was something we had in common when we started our journey together as complete strangers. Despite the challenges of time, workload, and energy drain over their first years of teaching, all participants showed their commitment to the research throughout the year. They usually arranged time in advance for each interview and promptly responded to my emails and messages. Due to differences in personality, three participants were more talkative than the other two. However, all participants were generally open to the research questions and shared with me both high and low moments of becoming and being a teacher. Considering that I am a nonnative English speaker and a researcher who grew up out of New Zealand, the participants were patient in the way that they explained some idiomatic terms or New Zealand's education jargon without my asking them to do so.

For my part, I kept reminding myself of the point made by Josselson (2007) that a participant's openness and self-disclosure are influenced by the trust and rapport that a researcher is able to build with them. Mauther and Doucet (2003) also emphasise the importance of "situating ourselves [researchers] socially and emotionally in relation to respondents" (p. 419). Braun and Clarke (2013) caution that "it can be more difficult to establish rapport and feel comfortable having an in-depth and possibly intimate social encounter with someone you don't know. Building rapport and putting the participant at ease are a priority" (p. 88). The suggestions of these scholars made me more conscious of my presence, engagement, interpersonal communication, and interview skills as a researcher and of how I could both help and hinder the context and meaning of the experience under study. Given that my previous experience in teaching was outside New Zealand, I positioned myself as an outsider who was seeking insider knowledge. This positioning helped me be open, nonjudgemental, and attentive in my

interaction with the participants. My attentive, listening attitude and my friendly personality helped me build good relationships with the participants. Also, my over 10 years of work experience prior to my PhD study informed me of some basic principles that all successful communications and relationships follow, such as respect, honesty, and appreciation. I used these basic communication and relationship-building principles to guide my contact and presence with the participants. In this way, my influence as a researcher was used productively (Xerri, 2018).

Further, I kept in mind the recommendation from Smythe and Murray (2000) that "it is important to treat participants not just as data sources but as human beings with their own distinctive individuality and autonomy" (p. 317). The authors advise that this is especially important in narrative inquiry because narrative data require participants to make a personal investment. Following the advice of Smythe and Murray, I respected participants' individuality and autonomy by asking questions based on each participant's previous interview(s) and our communications via social media between interviews. So, while an interview question guide was used, the questions to each participant were slightly different in terms of the order and wording of interview questions. Also, I allowed sufficient time for participants to think, reflect, respond, and ask questions, and as mentioned earlier, sought their feedback on the accuracy of data. My experience of the research deeply responded to the statement made by Xerri (2018) that "knowledge construction was a product of the transactions between the participants, the evidence, the context, and myself" (p. 38).

As a novice researcher and someone who grew up out of New Zealand and spoke a different mother tongue, I acknowledge that I experienced dilemmas, struggles, uncertainties, and self-doubts in the conduct of the research and in writing the thesis. For example, every time I was preparing the question guide for interviews, I struggled with what questions to ask in 1 hour as well as how questions should be asked so as to elicit narratives but not lead the answers. Also, when a participant was talking about a difficult situation or showing emotional vulnerability, I hesitated about how to ask questions to dig deeper without causing harm to the participant's feelings. During the hard times and dilemmas of ethical decision making, it was the consideration of the possible impact of my work on the participants who trusted me as a researcher that persistently motivated me and reminded me which direction to take. At no time over the conduct of this study was pressure placed on the participants to provide information, and close attention was paid to their body language and emotions to ensure that they were comfortable with telling their lived experiences during the interviews.

Over the time of the research, I was developing and growing as a beginning researcher while the five participants were developing and growing as beginning teachers. I was very grateful for the trust that the participants gave me and my project, which boosted my confidence in conducting research, especially a longitudinal one using a foreign language in a country quite different from my motherland. By the end of the research, the participants thanked me for being involved in the project, and three of them said that their participation had facilitated their reflection on their work lives as beginning teachers. I was delighted to hear such feedback from the participants because it meant the research brought a win-win result for us both.

Last but not least, it was also the constant support of my supervisors that guided me through the doctoral study process. My supervisors were always ready to help me when I got confused or needed support. They guided me from the initial thinking of ethical issues, to the application of ethics approval, and to the implementation of ethical decisions throughout the inquiry and writing process. Their supervision facilitated peer evaluation throughout the study and reinforced the bias management and ethical integrity of this research.

Data Collection

Data were primarily collected through semistructured individual interviews. The interview is one of the most frequently used qualitative data-collection tools to understand people's conceptions and constructions of reality (Punch, 2009). There are different types of interviews: structured, semistructured, and unstructured. While a structured interview has a rigorous set of questions which does not allow for diversion, a semistructured interview is open, allowing new ideas to be brought up during the interview as a result of what the interviewee says. As Punch and Oancea (2014) explain, semistructured interviews possess "in-built flexibility to adapt to particular respondents and situations" (p. 184). That is, semistructured interviews allow interviewers to probe and ask unplanned questions while guided by a set of preplanned questions and prompts. Thus, a semistructured interview is a method of research used most often in the social sciences. I chose to use semistructured interviews because I could pose open-ended questions and enable discussion with participants. An interview question guide (Appendix 4) with a series of open-ended questions was prepared for each interview.

Process for Data Collection

The semistructured individual interviews were conducted at five time points from June 2017 to June 2018 (see Table 2). The first interview was conducted in June 2017 before the participants' graduation from their ITE programme, and the following interviews were done

quarterly at the end of each term over their first year of teaching. Each interview took a maximum of 60 minutes and was audio-recorded.

Table 2

Interview Schedule

First interview	June 2017: the end of the MTchg (Primary) programme
Second interview	September 2017: the end of the first term of teaching
Third interview	December 2017: the end of the second term of teaching
Fourth interview	April 2018: the end of the third term of teaching
Fifth interview	June 2018: the end of the fourth term of teaching

To answer the first research question "What meaning do beginning teachers bring with them to teaching?", the first set of semistructured individual interviews asked questions concerning personal and ITE influences on beginning teachers' meaning making of teaching and themselves as teachers. The appropriateness of questions for the first interview was assessed through a pilot study with two PhD students who were teachers before their PhD studies. Piloting the interview guide is important for examining the wording, tone, degree of difficulty, and sequence of interview questions (Braun & Clarke, 2013). By piloting the interview question guide, I found that I had included many questions that required philosophical or conceptual answers. After the pilot interviews, I reframed some of the questions to enable them to elicit narratives about experiences. For instance, a more philosophical question like "in your opinion, what makes good teaching?" was changed to the ones related to experience: "What was your experience of school like?" and "could you tell me about the teachers you had in your school days?" In addition, by piloting the interview question guide, I realised that a degree of flexibility needed to be exercised in terms of the wording and sequence of interview questions, based on the responses of participants, to make the question flow and the shift in question topic more natural (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Much effort was invested in making participants feel comfortable to share their stories during the interviews. For example, to put participants at ease, I went to the locations where they felt comfortable to conduct the interviews. We normally met after school in their classrooms, a reserved meeting room at a library of the University of Auckland or of a neighbourhood, or at their home once we had built trust. I prepared water and some refreshments for participants in advance and started interviews with "preinterview chit chat" (Braun & Clarke, 2013) to make both of us comfortable and set the scene for a natural flow of the interview. I turned on the

recording equipment when participants were happy to begin. When a question evoked their recall of very negative experiences or feelings at their work, I asked them whether they were okay to continue or talk more. Riessman (2008) maintains that "the interviewer's emotional attentiveness and engagement and the degree of reciprocity in the conversation" (p. 24) are more important than the wording of questions. Given my genuine interest in this research and in the participants' lived experiences as first-year teachers, I found myself attentive and engaged during the interviews without effort. This enabled me to exercise flexibility in using the interview question guide (e.g., what question to ask next or dig deeper, how to ask it) and ask unplanned questions according to the responses of participants. However, I acknowledge that as a novice researcher and a nonnative English speaker, I started out my first one or two interviews with each participant by following the interview question guide quite rigidly, whereas with the growth of my interview experience and my relationship with each participant, I got more relaxed and the interviews became more fluid.

As mentioned earlier, all transcripts of the audio-recorded interviews were sent to the participants for them to check for accuracy within 2 weeks of the interviews. Participants then had 2 weeks to change, add or delete their responses. Three of the participants made changes in terms of wording and tracked their changes in Microsoft Word, but there were no substantial comments or changes made. Because of concerns about not being able to understand some participants' accents, I originally planned to hire a transcriber to help transcribe the interview audios. But because all the five beginning teachers spoke English with little or not much of an accent, I could understand them and so transcribed all the interview recordings myself, with my supervisors helping me with words and sentences that were not clearly articulated or difficult for me to comprehend. Listening to the recordings of each interview repeatedly in the process of transcription enabled me to better understand the participants' perspectives, note their emotions, and reflect on my presence and interaction with each participant in the interviews. As Oliver et al. (2005) observe, transcribing the interview data myself provided "a valuable exercise in honouring both the research process and participant's voice" (p. 1287).

Some scholars have argued that all narratives are fundamentally co-constructed by participants and researchers. Riessman (2008), for example, notes that narrative inquirers play a significant role in co-constructing the narrative data by interviewing, questioning, transcribing, and displaying text in certain ways. My position as a narrative inquirer and transcriber allowed me to experience first-hand this co-constructing process and see the importance of the researcher–

participant relationship and member checks by the participants to ensure the richness and authenticity of data.

Other Sources of Data

Field notes were made after interviews. In field notes, I recorded the time and location of interviews, observed behaviours and emotions of participants, the interactions between participants and myself, my initial impressions, feelings, and hunches about the interviews, along with observations of participants in their classrooms on my visits to their schools to interview them. To give a specific example of observation, I noticed some participants appeared to be more relaxed in their classroom in their second 6 months of teaching, which suggested to me a development in the participants' self-confidence in themselves as teachers. Also, as I was waiting for the beginning teachers to finish the last class of the day before conducting the interviews, my observation of their school environment, the extracurricular activities going on the playground, and the parents waiting outside the classroom to pick up their children enriched my understanding of the participants' descriptions of their schools (e.g., the school overall atmosphere, the community a school was located in, the composition of students' cultural backgrounds). As this study was a longitudinal one, the use of field notes as supporting data sources provided rich contexts and important information (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018) for me to understand and analyse the interview data over time.

Considering that the face-to-face semistructured individual interviews were conducted once every 3 months, I included the use of social media in my design of the research. The purpose was to connect with individual participants through social media on a regular basis of 5–10 minutes every 2 weeks to facilitate flexible and timely communication of any key information related to the research over the 3-month interview gaps. As social media—internet-based social networking technologies—become indispensable for daily lives, they are increasingly used by scholars and researchers in their professional activities (Gruzd et al., 2012). A main advantage of social media is establishing connections and facilitating prompt communication (Gruzd et al., 2012). Participants were given the option to choose their favourite social media platform for this study, and all of them chose Facebook Messenger. In the first 3 months of teaching, some participants did share with me some critical events at their work on the day those events occurred, such as the unexpected resignation of a school principal or friction with their team leader. When receiving such information from participants via social media, I replied by asking how the events affected them and their feelings in those moments. In this way, the use of social

media enabled real-time communication of the participants' thoughts and emotions and minimised the distortion of memory (Kern et al., 2016).

However, as Gruzd et al. (2012) warns, the possible burden of time is a big obstacle in using social media for research. After the first 3 months of teaching, the participants generally replied to my messages on Messenger saying that they were very busy. Given the beginning teachers' busy work schedule, most of the participants were not active on social media. Two of the participants asked me to contact them via email to get prompt replies, that is, they changed their communication platform to a more personally convenient one. The participants responded to all my greetings via Messenger or email (e.g., "Half the term has passed. How is everything?") and told me briefly about their recent situation (e.g., "Things have been up and down again this term. Up with the success of classroom programmes that I've trialled, and down with the increase in school responsibility as mentioned before"). However, because they were very busy at work, from the second term of teaching, participants did not report information to me via social media unless I contacted them. Therefore, the use of social media to collect real-time data did not go as well as I had expected when designing the research. While their responses confirmed the beginning teachers' busyness, the data collected through social media was limited. However, the information conveyed via social media influenced individual interviews because I followed up the social media information the next time I interviewed the participant. For example, when one participant reported the unexpected resignation of his/her school principal in the third week of his/her first term of teaching via social media, the influence of this event on him/her as a beginning teacher was followed up in the interview conducted at the end of that term. The data collected via social media (i.e., Messenger and emails) in each term were compared and analysed simultaneously with the interview data collected in the same term.

The participants were encouraged to bring artefacts to each of the interviews, such as pictures, drawings, writings, or other objects. The rationale for artefacts was that frank and spontaneous discussion does not always happen or happen naturally. As Fielding and Thomas (2008) point out, participants may not be good at putting feelings into words or may only give logical explanations and/or hold back evaluative or emotional responses, behave overpolitely, give answers that interviewers want to hear, or avoid telling stories that conflict with their preferred self-image. It is argued that artefacts are likely to evoke memories, overcome shyness and anxiety, spark connections, and provoke more stories to get a truer insight (Kim, 2016). In this study, as the consent form stated, participants were encouraged but not required to bring

artefacts to the interviews. Some participants brought artefacts to the first set of interviews such as their writings explaining their philosophy and/or metaphor of teaching or the letter of intent they had written for the application to the MTchg (Primary) programme; some participants brought artefacts to the later sets of interviews, such as their beginning teacher portfolio, lesson plans, appraisal feedback from their mentor teacher, their class artwork, and pictures at work. The artefacts indeed facilitated the flow of interviews, enriched the quality of the interviews and my understanding of their narratives, and allowed me to question further. As the information provided through the artefacts was picked up in the individual interviews and analysed in the transcripts of interviews, the artefacts were not analysed separately as data sources. The participants decided freely whether they would like me to keep the artefacts after the interviews, with some participants allowing me to keep the artefacts. Keeping the artefacts allowed me to refresh my memory during the data analysis process. Appendix 5 (Examples of Artefacts from Participants) provides some examples.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research is not a linear process. Bryman and Burgess (1994) note that data analysis in qualitative research is continuous and intertwines with other activities, like data gathering, of the research process. Other scholars also emphasise that there is not always linear progression from data collection to analysis or a clean separation between data collection and analysis, but the two are often entangled (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Wiseman, 1974). Wiseman (1974) observes that the "constant interplay of data gathering and analysis is at the heart of qualitative research" (p. 317). Braun and Clarke (2013) also suggest that analysis can begin when data collection starts and is ongoing. In this view, qualitative data analysis does not have to wait till the completion of data collection. Data analysis for this study began after the first set of interviews were completed, and the findings of earlier interviews influenced and informed the questions for later interviews. Thus, the data analysis of this study, like the observation of Bryman and Burgess (1994), was "simultaneous and continuous" (p. 217) with the data-collection process.

As the focus of qualitative research is on how people construct their experiences, the purpose of qualitative data analysis is to identify the meaning that people attribute to their experience (Merriam, 2009). That is, qualitative data analysis is a meaning-making process with the aim to develop an explanation and theory of the experience or phenomenon under study (Flick, 2013). In the field of narrative inquiry, scholars have highlighted the importance of meaning making for narrative analysis. For example, Riessman (2008) notes that "a narrative is not

simply a factual report of events" (p. 187); rather, it is the personal meaning that people ascribe to their experiences and realities through their narratives that a narrative inquiry seeks to understand. Likewise, Polkinghorne (2007) points out that "storied evidence is gathered not to determine if events actually happened but about the meaning experienced by people" (p. 479). Kim (2016) argues that narrative analysis is a "meaning-finding act" (p. 190) that "help[s] the reader understand why and how things happened in the ways they did, and why and how our participants acted in the way they did" (p. 197). The purpose of data analysis of this study was to understand what meaning beginning teachers ascribed to their experiences. Special attention was paid to what influenced how beginning teachers made meaning of teaching and themselves as teachers and how this meaning making influenced their career intentions.

Among the different approaches to qualitative data analysis, the analysis process generally involves the analysis of content, the analysis of structure, or both. The content analysis focuses on what participants report about their experiences, and the analysis of structure is on how the experiences are reported (Flick, 2013). In terms of narrative analysis, the focus of different approaches to explore data is also either on the what (e.g., what is said) and/or the how (e.g., how things are said) of storytelling (Gubrium & Holstein, 1998). To address the research questions of this study, the data analysis in this study has focused on the content or the what and the meaning conveyed through the what. However, Riessman (2008) cautions that when spoken language is transcribed into written texts, the transcription is likely to be partial and incomplete, and without the sound of spoken language, it will be hard for readers to imagine how people really talk. For example, when one participant made the following statement that "It is a very full life. The little ones are just exhausting. I am exhausted," the participant said it cheerfully and laughed in a jolly tone. The positive emotion indicated that the participant remained passionate about her work as a teacher despite being exhausted; but without the clarification of how things were said, a reader may only see the exhaustion of the participant. Thus, to correctly understand the meaning of the narratives and achieve a balance between the explicit account and the underlying content (Miles et al., 2014), special attention was paid to participants' emotions and notes were taken during the transcription process, marking important changes in voice and tone (e.g., emphasis) or nonverbal utterances (e.g., laughter).

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis involves analysing data by identifying and interpreting patterns of meaning, or, in other words, themes across a data set (Clarke & Braun, 2017; Miles & Huberman, 1994). In the observation of van Manen (1990), themes are "like knots in the webs of our experiences,

around which certain lived experiences are spun" (p. 90). That is, "a theme provides a way of linking diverse experiences or ideas together, and of juxtaposing and interrelating different examples and features of data" (Gibson & Brown, 2011, p. 129). Thus, it has been argued that a prominent advantage of thematic analysis is flexibility and that it can be utilised to analyse almost any form of data (e.g., interviews, stories) and data sets of any size (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

It is worth noting that although I was aware of the availability of data analysis software for qualitative research and attended courses to master some of the tools (e.g., NVivo), I chose to code and analyse the data myself from the first set of interviews, using Microsoft Word and Excel. I did not choose to use qualitative data analysis software, partly because I had a small number of participants which made it possible for me to analyse and code the data myself. More importantly, as Bryman and Burgess (1994) advise, the use of data analysis software cannot substitute for the insight and intuition of the researcher, such as "the imagination that is a necessary ingredient of analysis" (p. 221). Additionally, Gibson and Brown (2011) caution that themes can be decontextualised categories of complex social life. While cutting and pasting the texts by using software can save time, a researcher may face the risk of having decontextualised themes without spending sufficient time understanding the contextually relevant experiences the themes refer to. I believed that coding and analysing the data myself would minimise the risk of "losing sight of the contextual nature of the transplanted chunks" (Bryman & Burgess, 1994, p. 219) and enable me to better understand the experience under study and develop explanations and theory.

Data Analysis Process

As shown in the Findings chapters, two processes of data analysis were undertaken, and both involved thematic analysis. Chapter 4 presents the narrative cameos, and Chapter 5 reports a cross-case analysis of the data. Thematic analysis essentially is about analysing data by examining commonalities, differences, and relationships within data (Gibson & Brown, 2011). Specifically, thematic analysis involves coding, categorising codes, and examining the relationships between different code categories. Code refers to a word or short phrase used to present the essence of a set of data meaningful to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2013). A code contains one idea, and several ideas form a theme. Codes can be derived from the examination of the data (data-derived or empirical codes) or informed by conceptual frameworks (research-derived or a priori codes; Braun & Clarke, 2013; Gibson & Brown, 2011). For this study, prior to the data analysis, I had expected to identify some codes, broad

code categories, and themes informed by the literature review, such as personal influences, ITE influences, and school influences. Within the scope of personal influences, I had expected to identify the influence of previous life experiences, such as previous school and work experiences. According to the literature review, I had also expected to identify relationships between some codes or code categories, such as the influence of previous school experience on beginning teachers' construction of themselves as teacher.

However, when undertaking the data analysis, the initial codes were empirically generated using open coding to mitigate against missing important data or the distortion of the data. The open coding process starts with familiarisation with the data, which requires repeatedly listening to the interview recordings, reading and rereading the transcripts, and studying field notes (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). Ritchie and Spencer (1994) advise that by immersing oneself in the data, a researcher will be "not only gaining an overview of the richness, depth, and diversity of the data, but also beginning the process of abstraction and conceptualisation" (p. 179). In this study, the primary sources of data were the transcriptions of the 24 individual, taped interviews, which were supplemented with field notes and social media. Immersing myself in the data, repeatedly listening to the interview recordings, and reading the transcripts and other data allowed me to identify the key aspects of long narratives, notice key issues, discover recurring ideas, and develop hunches about ways to code and sort the data.

I used Microsoft Word's comment function to assign initial codes to the data of each participant. The names of initial codes were derived from terms identified in the literature, wording that participants used in the interviews, or my own creation according to the meaning and idea indicated by the texts. While open coding was applied to the total data set of 24 individual interviews, the codes generated from the data of earlier interviews were applied to the data collected in later interviews if there were recurring ideas and themes. The use of open coding enabled me to not only confirm some codes that I had expected in light of the literature review but also identify codes and themes that have not received much attention in the literature, such as the influence of previous work related to teaching on beginning teachers' positive construction of themselves as teacher. As Terry et al. (2017) argue, open coding provided a way to ensure that the codes were open and inclusive. Table 3 provides an example of a narrative extract from an individual interview and the coding.

Table 3

An Example of a Narrative Extract and its Coding

Narrative Extract	Coding
Researcher: What led you into teaching? Participant: Way, way back when I was a child, I was fascinated with school.	Previous school experience: Influence of primary school
I'd come home from school and play school with my two little sisters. I'd do weekend school with them and create worksheets that I'd make them do. I had an early fascination with that.	An early interest in teaching
When I was 18 and had just finished high school, I applied for a Bachelor of Teaching.	Always wanted to teach
I was invited for an interview, but I decided that I was too young for it. I wanted a bit more life experience.	Reason for not undertaking an undergraduate ITE programme previously
So I guess I kind of <u>always</u> [here, underlining indicates emphasis] liked the idea of teaching. I knew that someday I would be a teacher.	Always wanted to teach
But then I took a course at the end of my undergraduate studies in my last semester, which was a mentoring course. That was based at a school in South Auckland. It was working with a Year 8 student, just one on one. I taught academics as well as other things like social skills.	Previous work related to teaching: Mentoring
It was such an incredible experience. Seeing the impact you could have by doing something like that was what drove me to realise that I needed to do this now. I didn't want to wait. I really want to do this.	To positively influence children's learning

The initial analysis and tentative codes were refined later with the progression of data collection. Some initial names of codes derived from the literature were revised to fit the purpose of this study later when I collected more data and had a better understanding of the overall data set. For instance, the code "the influence of other people" (e.g., the influence of family, friends, and former teachers) was initially referred to as "social influences" as termed by some researchers in their studies (e.g., Richardson & Watt, 2006). However, the influence of family, friends, and former teachers was considered within the scope of personal influences

(distinguished from ITE influences and school influences) on beginning teachers' meaning making of teaching and themselves as teachers in this study. The meaning of the code social influences was confusing, so it was replaced by "the influence of other people," which was more straightforward and clearer. Another example was that "reasons for teaching" replaced "motivation to teach," because the word "motivation" is often used within the psychological domain. When the data collection ended and the entire data set was ready, all the codes and code categories were revisited and checked to ensure they meaningfully and usefully covered all data.

I used Microsoft Excel to summarise codes for each participant interview data and compare the codes across participants (see Table 4 for an example of a comparison across participants). In the process of summarising and comparing, initial themes were constructed by identifying the similarities, differences, and relationships between codes. For example, in Table 4, a comparison of participants' reasons for going teaching revealed similarities, differences, and key themes on initial meaning construction of teaching. A most noticeable theme and similarity was that the participants had entered teaching with idealistic reasons, although the extent varied among participants.

Table 4

An Example of Comparison of Codes and Themes Between Participants

Initial meaning construction	Reasons for going teaching	Influences	Stella	Zoe	Annie	Sophie	John
idealistic views of being a teacher	to positively influence children's learning and development	personal ideals	✓	✓			✓
	to help unprivileged children	personal ideals	✓		✓	✓	
	to contribute to society/the country	personal ideals			✓	✓	
	teaching as a vocation	personal ideals			✓		
	inner quest for meaning and fulfilment	personal desires	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	care for children and/or love of working with them	personal qualities	✓	✓		✓	
	teaching as a long-term aspiration	other people; previous school experience	✓	✓			
	dissatisfaction with previous careers/jobs as having a lack of meaning and/or fulfilment	previous work; personal desire			✓	✓	✓
simplistic views of being a teacher	self-perceived qualities, and/or abilities for teaching	personal beliefs; previous teaching-related work; parenting experience		✓	✓	✓	✓
	practical and pragmatic considerations	personal beliefs				✓	✓

Coding and developing themes are a complex process. As Braun and Clarke (2013) observe, constructing themes is not simply a process of digging to find hidden treasures buried within the data but more like the process of creating a sculpture. This process of theme construction required me as the researcher to read the words "actively, analytically and critically" (p. 205) beyond the obvious, explicit, surface meaning of the words and "actively make choices" (p. 225) about how to craft the data into an analysis. For instance, all the five participants talked about the sense of fulfilment they got from positive previous work experience related to teaching, but this sense of fulfilment and passion for teaching was stronger for some participants than others. Identifying the differences between participants in terms of their sense of fulfilment and passion for teaching required me to pay attention to the way they talked about fulfilment, such as their tone of voice, words, and expressions, as well as consider and understand their narratives as a whole.

In actively reading the data and making choices in the data analysis process, I was aware of Bryman and Burgess's (1994) caution of "attaining a higher order of abstraction without compromising the authenticity of the data" (p. 219). To ensure authenticity, this process of theme construction took repeated effort and involved frequently moving back and forth between exploring, categorising, reviewing, confirming, rejecting, revising, and redefining the codes and themes. In particular, considering that this is a longitudinal study and data were gathered over time, when new things and new ideas emerged in the continuous data collection, I had to go back to the previous data and analyse them again. For example, when a participant's description of their school leadership or mentor teacher was different from what they had reported in previous interviews, I would return to the old data to think about and analyse the change. This process echoed the view of Nowell et al. (2017) that qualitative data analysis is an "iterative and reflective" process (p. 4). Finally, all themes were reviewed against the whole data set and the coded data—a two-stage review process recommended by Braun and Clarke (2013) —to ensure that the themes meaningfully capture the data. Other strategies used to ensure the authenticity of the data and the trustworthiness of the research are discussed in the following section.

Trustworthiness of the Research

Trustworthiness is an umbrella term encompassing a multitude of evaluative criteria for judging the quality and value of a research study. The evaluative criteria for quantitative research are well established in the literature, including (internal and external) validity, reliability, and objectivity. However, given that qualitative research takes a different

ontological and epistemological stance (see the first section of this chapter) and there is a lack of absolute truth in this type of research, it has been argued that the trustworthiness criteria for quantitative studies cannot be directly applied to qualitative ones (Anney, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Schwartz-Shea, 2013). One fundamental set of evaluative criteria for the trustworthiness of qualitative research was proposed by Guba and Lincoln (1982). They suggested that "internal validity should be replaced by that of credibility, external validity by transferability, reliability by dependability and objectivity by confirmability" (pp. 3–4). The following paragraphs will elaborate on the concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, and explain how they have been applied in this study.

Credibility concerns the way a researcher ensures the findings are genuinely derived from the participants' original data, and that the analysis and interpretation represent the participants' original perspectives. In other words, credibility in qualitative research relies on a careful verification of data sources and faithful interpretation and representation of acquired data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A credible qualitative study allows people who share the experience to immediately recognise and resonate with the reports of their experiences (Sandelowski, 1986). There are many strategies to enhance credibility, such as a researcher's prolonged and varied engagement with participants and the context (Lichtman, 2013) and reflexivity (Schwartz-Shea, 2013). Also, triangulation (e.g., the use of multiple data sources, methods, paradigms, and researchers to confirm the findings), member checks (i.e., respondent validation), and peer debriefing all help identify any distortions in the data and contribute to credibility (Anney, 2014; Daniel, 2019).

This study involved prolonged interactions with the participants over a year, along with my reflexivity as the researcher and member checks of participants to facilitate credibility. In addition to the five sets of semistructured individual interviews from the end of their ITE programme to the end of their first year of teaching, the artefacts provided by the participants, the communication with individual participants via social media, and my visits to their schools and classrooms to conduct interviews facilitated my understanding of the participants' experiences and context of these experiences. Further, my reflexivity through the description of and reflection on the research in field notes and repeatedly listening to the audios in transcribing each interview myself also enhanced my understanding of the participants' narratives and the meaning of their narratives. All interview transcripts and the final stories were sent to the participants for their evaluation and feedback. The feedback from the participants was valuable as it enabled me to recognise the things that I had missed or

misunderstood, refine the data and interpretations of the data, and fairly represent the participants' realities (Morrow, 2005). Member checking in this way helped reduce my personal influence and bias as the researcher and establish credibility.

In terms of peer debriefing, my supervisors played the most important role in providing me with scholarly guidance and feedback. They oversaw the entire process of this study, questioned and challenged different aspects of my work, and gave me plenty of feedback and ideas at all phases of the research especially in data analysis and reporting. For example, my supervisors asked me why a question was asked in an interview and advised me about how to dig deeper in the next interview; questioned what evidence was available in the data to support a certain set of findings and/or arguments; and advised on ways to improve data analysis. Their exhaustive review of and critical comment on my work provided me with the most important opportunities to engage in "critical and sustained discussion" (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 69). Their guidance and supervision greatly helped me achieve the overall trustworthiness and credibility of the research and reduce the influence of my personal limitations as a novice researcher and someone whose knowledge of the New Zealand context was initially acquired from reading the literature.

Also, during the data collection and analysis phases, as organised by one of my supervisors and one of their colleagues, myself and two other doctoral students whose research interest were similar formed a group. Our group work in discussion and writing, along with the presence and support of the three supervisors in the meetings, provided occasions where I felt safe to present my work and express my doubts and where I had my questions discussed and answered and my writing drafts reviewed and commented on. As Russell and Kelly (2002) observe, the dialogue in the groupwork allowed multiple perspectives to be considered. Also, I received comments and feedback from peers by presenting my work at overseas conferences (i.e., the ATEA-TEFANZ-2018 in Australia, the ICERP 2019 in Shanghai) and symposiums at the University of Auckland (i.e., Doctoral and Postgraduate Symposium 2017 and 2019). In addition, I received feedback and suggestions from casual talks about my research with people at the doctoral student hubs on campus, university workshops for doctoral students, and educational conferences where I worked as a volunteer (e.g., the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australia Conference 2019 in Auckland). Talking to others about my research and answering their questions drove my reflection on the research. Sometimes such discussion made me realise some issues that I hadn't thought of such as my assumptions and biases. For instance, there were some terms I thought everyone knew, such as associate

teachers, school decile, and priority learners, but in fact people outside this research field or context might have difficulty understanding them. Also, in the initial stage of data analysis, it was by talking to other people that I realised my understanding of data was partially influenced by participants' emotions. An example was in analysing a participant's friction with her team leader, my sympathy for what happened to this participant made my initial analysis centred on her unsupportive school environment, but by talking with others and answering their questions, I started to think about the participant's personal influence and reflected on my personal bias.

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings of a qualitative study can be used to understand the researched topic or phenomenon in other contexts or with other groups of respondents. The term transferability is used to replace the interpretive equivalent of external validity and generalisability in quantitative research. Considering that qualitative research is an interpretive approach, the views of generalisability in quantitative research are unworkable for qualitative studies (Morrow, 2005; Schofield, 2011). The concepts and conclusions of a qualitative study are likely to be transferable and applied when readers note the "fit" between the context studied and their own study (Schofield, 2011). Also, a qualitative study is likely to be transferable when readers find meaning in its findings or when the findings of a qualitative study resonate with the experience of readers (Sandelowski, 1986).

Researchers can support transferability of qualitative research by providing thick descriptive data. Sufficient information about the research context enables others who may be interested in applying all or part of the findings to make the judgements about the degree of fit or similarity of the context studied and theirs (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). In this chapter, detailed descriptions of the entire research methodology, processes, context, and participants are provided to enable judgements about the transferability or applicability of the findings of the current research to other contexts and respondents. Rich data acquired by purposive and convenience sampling are presented in the following two chapters of findings, with the aim to enable people who are interested in the experience of beginning teachers to gain conceptual inferences and insights about how they make meaning of self as a teacher and teaching as a career in the process of becoming and being a teacher.

Dependability concerns the consistency of research findings. A qualitative study is dependable in the sense that comparable conclusions can be reached in light of the research decision trails and the methods of data collections and analysis (S. Johnson & Rasulova, 2016; Schwartz-Shea, 2013). Dependability can be established by keeping an audit trail, that is, making transparent

and documenting all the research decisions and activities from the initial to the final phases of the research (Anney, 2014; Morrow, 2005). Dependability in this study was established through the description and justification of all involved steps, decisions, and activities in this thesis, including: why and how the research questions were formulated, why the interpretative and qualitative approach and narrative inquiry were utilised, who was selected, in what ways and how often data were collected, how data were analysed—coded and recoded within each participant's narratives and between different participants' stories—what ethical considerations guided the data collection and analysis process, and how I, as the researcher, communicated and interacted with the participants. The records of the above research steps, decisions, and activities are kept for external audit, such as by the university in terms of doctoral requirements. Other strategies mentioned earlier, such as prolonged engagement with the participants, member checking, peer examination and debriefing (with my supervisors and colleagues), also helped corroborate research data and thus enhance dependability (Xerri, 2018).

Confirmability refers to how a researcher ensures that the findings are derived from the data rather than from the researcher's imagination or bias. Many strategies noted above help establish confirmability, such as the documentation and audit trail of the research, reflexive writing, member checking, and peer examination and debriefing (Anney, 2014; Xerri, 2018). In addition to these strategies, confirmability in this study is achieved by explaining how data were analysed in the Data Analysis section. Also, the findings presented in Chapters 4 and 5 are supported with rich, representative narratives from the participants and the actual words of participants, which helped achieve confirmability.

Some scholars suggest the use of other criteria to evaluate the trustworthiness of narrative inquiry. For example, Loh (2013) has discussed the application of two of the criteria—verisimilitude and utility, which are similar to credibility and transferability—to narrative inquiry. Verisimilitude concerns the narrative truths or the writing being "'real' and 'alive'" (Creswell, 2007, p. 250), which resonates with readers and allows them to "have a vicarious experience of being in the similar situation and thereby being able to understand the decisions made and the emotions felt by the participants in the study" (Loh, 2013, p. 10). Utility concerns the usefulness of a narrative inquiry, such as whether it helps with the comprehension and anticipation of a situation (Eisner, 1998). The recommended strategies to reinforce verisimilitude and utility are similar to the strategies highlighted in the above paragraphs, such as member checking, peer examination, thick description of the context and activities within that context and keeping an audit trail of the research processes (Loh, 2013).

Summary

The purpose of this longitudinal study was to increase understandings of how beginning teachers make meaning of self as a teacher and teaching as a career, based on the voice and experiences of five beginning teachers. This chapter has outlined the methodology and methods used to address the research questions. The qualitative, interpretative study employed narrative inquiry and a purposive and convenience sampling strategy. The ethical considerations that guided this research included voluntary, informed consent from the research participants, protection of the participants' privacy and confidentiality, avoidance of deception and potential harm to participants, and my reflexivity as the researcher. Data were collected from the end of the participants' ITE programme to the end of their first year of teaching primarily through five sets of semistructured individual interviews. The interview transcripts provided the main data sources, supplemented with field notes and social media. Data were analysed using thematic analysis. Examples of strategies adopted to ensure the trustworthiness of this study included my prolonged engagement in the research and my reflexivity as a researcher, member checks, supervision and review by supervisors, debriefing with colleagues, and records of the research process for external audit by the university's examination committee. The following two chapters present the findings of this study.

Chapter 4
Findings—The Lived Experiences of Five Beginning Teachers

Chapters 4 and 5 present the findings of this study. This chapter presents the lived experiences of the five participants. The unfolding of the five participants' experiences over time reveal how the participants made meaning of teaching and themselves as teachers over time.

The Lived Experience of Zoe

Zoe was 22 years old. She is Persian by ethnicity. Her parents immigrated to New Zealand from Iran, but she was born and raised in New Zealand. Zoe's interest in teaching started very early. In her words, "it has always been my dream to be a teacher since I was a little girl." What evoked her early interest in teaching was her mother, who was a primary school teacher and a role model for her. "Seeing my mum work as a teacher made me want to be like her—to be a teacher." Zoe had always liked helping her mother do the photocopying and enjoyed cutting, colouring, stamping and sticking things for her mother's class, and she had pretended to do roll calls and tried to teach her younger brother things like a teacher.

Despite Zoe's dream to become a teacher, her mother used to tell her "Do not be a teacher" because "teaching is hard work." However, Zoe's interest in teaching was further ignited by tutoring during her undergraduate studies. In her work as a tutor, Zoe taught students of different ages and various subjects, but she liked teaching primary children and primary mathematics most. "I really enjoyed teaching young children. I always liked teaching primary, especially mathematics." The boss of the tutoring company where Zoe did tutoring was an ex-teacher with extensive knowledge of teaching strategies and resources. He had given Zoe useful teaching advice whenever she needed it and thus became another role model for Zoe. "When I do not know how to teach something or deal with a behaviour problem, I try to think about what he [the boss of the tutoring company] would do in this situation," Zoe noted.

Given her passion for teaching, Zoe enrolled herself in a teacher preparation programme after obtaining a bachelor's degree in psychology and education and First in Course and Top Student Award. Zoe initially was going to do a 1-year graduate teaching diploma, but when she found out that the MTchg programme only took 1 year, she decided to do this master's degree. Zoe explained, "I just need to work a bit harder to get a master's degree, and it allows me to start [teaching] with slightly higher pay."

However, Zoe was upset when she heard some people say that teaching was easy and primary teaching was babysitting. She felt sad when she heard some students at the university say that they took teaching as a backup after having failed to get into other fields like commerce or law. Zoe argued that "teaching should not be a low-status profession. Education should not be a backup." Instead, "it should be hard to get into teaching. Top people should be teachers." From Zoe's perspective, teachers "influence the future generation," and primary teachers "influence them at such a young age." She held the view that the six primary school years are the "most crucial" time for children to learn the most essential things, such as lifelong skills and how to be a nice person. She believed that primary teachers influence students' personality, for students are likely to copy a lot of what teachers do. Therefore, Zoe regarded teacher's work as important and meaningful.

On practicum, Zoe found teaching all day overwhelming and knew what her mother meant by saying that teaching was hard work. She saw teachers who were generally "drained by Fridays and burned out by the end of a 10-week term." She found that a significant proportion of teachers' work was not adequately acknowledged, such as the heavy workload, long working hours, and unpaid overtime. "There is something unrecognised almost in any job, but in teaching, especially." Therefore, Zoe set herself a long-term goal of making a difference at the system level and aimed to work for change through employment at the MoE. She further explained that throughout the MTchg programme, she and her classmates had engaged in "critical thinking about the education system and whether it meets the requirements of teachers and students." Recognising the need to improve teachers' work conditions, Zoe wanted to "engage with policies" to facilitate changes that could positively affect teachers at a systemic level.

Despite the stress, Zoe felt that the MTchg programme and the practicums "really prepared" her for teaching. She enjoyed having 2 days at practicum schools and 3 days at the university every week. The weekly touch-base with the practicum schools enabled her to see how the schools ran and students progressed on a day-to-day basis. When returning to the university, she could discuss and reflect on her experience and observations from practicum with her classmates. Zoe also valued the length of the practicums. Her second practicum, where she taught 9 full-time weeks, particularly made her "feel being a real teacher." Thus, she exclaimed, "although the practicum was busy and stressful, I found it very helpful."

Zoe was thankful that she had great lecturers at the university and outstanding associate teachers on practicum. They helped her grow and develop as a preservice teacher by facilitating her understanding and practice of teaching. Take the two associate teachers for example: Zoe said that her first associate teacher had a very different personality to hers but was "able to guide me in learning strategies for teaching really well." Her second associate teacher shared a similar teaching pedagogy to hers and "really helped me understand who I want to be as a teacher."

In her conception of self as a teacher, Zoe gave the metaphor of "a marigold." It is "one of the best companion plants that protect a range of plants from pests and harmful weeds … [and] allow the garden to grow big and strong." Zoe explained that she viewed the aim of education as cultivating "active, lifelong learners" and the role of teacher as a "facilitator" who "models learning and how to learn" and "lets students explore and learn their own way." Using the metaphor of a marigold for herself as a teacher, Zoe wanted to facilitate students' learning and foster their long-term growth as learners. She emphasised, "as a teacher, my everyday goal is to be the best marigold I can be, for the children I teach" and "allow them to grow into active, lifelong learners."

To fulfil her metaphor of a marigold teacher, Zoe envisioned herself as an approachable, fun, and organised teacher. Her vision of self as teacher was influenced by both her schooling experience in the past and the MTchg programme. In terms of being an approachable teacher, Zoe noted, "I like to develop relationships with students. I do not see myself as a teacher that just comes, teaches, and goes." She remembered her own primary school teachers as being "very nice and friendly," and who made her primary school experience very positive—"the school was like a big family, away from my family." Also, Zoe explained that connecting to students' lives and experiences was one of the six facets of practice advocated by the MTchg programme. On practicum, she "liked to tell stories of myself to the children," and "liked them to share stories with me." As for being fun and organised, Zoe admired the teachers who were "well organised" and "made learning fun" when she was a student. On practicum, she encouraged student learning through fun and creative activities. Student feedback said they had much fun while learning, which made Zoe proud of the teaching she did and boosted her self-confidence as a teacher. Zoe also saw how important it was to be organised on practicum. She gave the example that on the days when she forgot to photocopy a worksheet, "the whole classroom atmosphere seemed to be affected." However, informed by her practicum experience,

Zoe admitted that it was "very hard to be always one step ahead," which "required very hard work."

Zoe accepted a permanent full-time teaching position from a school situated in a low-socioeconomic community (Decile 3) upon graduation. Zoe recalled that on her visit for the job interview, she was impressed by the school's "warm," "very welcoming" atmosphere. When she was sitting in the staffroom and waiting for the principal, every person who walked past greeted her, making her feel it was "a really good school." The principal was also "very kind," open to share stories of the school and its community and answer questions. According to her observation around the school, there seemed "no animosity between management and teachers" or "outstanding student-behaviour issues," which led to Zoe's decision that "this is the community I would like to be a part of." Hence, she took the job offer from this school.

Zoe was excited about starting her career as a teacher in 2 weeks, for her long-held dream to be a teacher was about to come true. "I have always wanted to be a good teacher, and now I get to be a real teacher." The school's description of the comprehensive support system provided to all beginning teachers also contributed to Zoe's excitement and optimistic expectations for her new job. "I have not started working yet, but from the support system they have already shown me, I feel quite confident going to the school." She expected that the school would support her well as a beginning teacher. "I am expecting they would give me a lot of support from what they said." Zoe saw the need for constant learning as a teacher and wanted to make good use of the school support and her beginning-teacher release time for continuing professional development. "I know I have a lot to learn, and I must be constantly learning." She hoped, through continuous learning, to be a "quite experienced" teacher by the end of 5 years.

In her first term of teaching, Zoe had a mixed class of Years 5 and 6 consisting of 29 children (9- to 11-year-olds). They were from diverse cultures and ethnicities with Māori, Pasifika, and Indian students accounting for the largest proportion. Zoe had a smooth transition from ITE to teaching, which she attributed partly to ITE preparation. She was glad that she started teaching straight after graduating from the MTchg programme because "everything is still fresh" in her mind.

From preservice teacher to teacher, Zoe noticed an important difference: "The responsibility shifted." Now she was the one "responsible for students' learning." Zoe noted that she used to email her planning to associate teachers to see if it was okay, whereas "now I have to make

sure if my planning is okay." Driven by a sense of ownership of the class and responsibility for students' learning, Zoe highlighted she "must step up" to ensure her teaching was appropriate for her students because "children's learning would suffer if I did not take it seriously."

Having her own class, Zoe had more autonomy in teaching than being a preservice teacher. She could "trial different teaching strategies in class" and make changes based on "how the children responded." The autonomy in teaching motivated Zoe to "keep up to date" on teaching methods and practice. Further, Zoe was "more definitive" in her actions with students. She had had no authority as a preservice teacher over setting homework or consequences when students did not do their homework, whereas now she could "bring them back at lunchtime and extend them."

Nevertheless, the move from preservice teacher to teacher also meant a heavier workload and more demands on her time. Zoe recognised "there is so much that goes on behind the scenes." She gave the example that one of her students injured his chest during the 1-hour lunch break, so she was sitting with him in the classroom, getting him ice, calling his mum, and waiting for his mum to come to school to pick him up.

> Before I knew it, my lunchtime had gone. It is those little things that some days you are like "I did not have any water today. I have not had a chance to go to the toilet. I have not been able to eat anything."

Zoe also found marking students' work and updating the grades to the school's online system, which she had not had to do as a preservice teacher, took a lot of time, sometimes even "taking away my time to plan a really engaging lesson." To balance the time, Zoe found ways to integrate marking with the students. "We marked them in groups together rather than me marking all the books. I think it works better because students can get the instant feedback and I have time for lesson planning [instead of marking] after school."

Zoe identified that support from school helped her manage the workload, stress, and time. She was grateful that the school did not require her to take on all responsibilities straight away. She was assured that she could focus on her role and responsibilities in the classroom in her first two terms of teaching without worrying about other things (e.g., to join curriculum area teams or take on administration duties). "I am lucky as a beginning teacher for not having all the responsibilities at once. Otherwise, I would feel quite overwhelmed." Zoe was also thankful that the school gave her extra time to meet work deadlines, although she managed to complete all her work on time.

Moreover, Zoe highlighted the support from her mentor teacher and other teachers. Her mentor teacher who was the associate principal, like her associate teachers on practicum, always checked how she was going and made sure she had all the resources, although there had been a few times that they had to cancel mentoring meetings because of her mentor's other schedules. Other teachers also helped her without her asking for it. "Everyone had that very warm welcoming culture, helping with resources or sending me things without me even asking for them." Therefore, Zoe did "not feel unsupported or left to settle in by myself." Additionally, Zoe appreciated that teachers were in teams and "collaboratively planned lessons" which "reduced the stress for individual teachers." With the school-wide support, Zoe was very contented: "What I expected to work here has come true. I do not regret my choice."

While Zoe valued the school's culture and values, she also felt her work and effort were valued by the school. She gave an example that after marking the latest mathematics tests, she told the maths team leader that she felt some students needed to go up to an advanced class and some needed to move down for reinforcement. A team meeting was immediately held in which all teachers looked at children's stages in maths and decided who needed to move up or down. Also, in the 10 weeks of the term, Zoe was named twice as the Teacher of the Week by her colleagues. She "was quite happy as I did not expect it." It made her feel "they do value me as part of the senior syndicate. They do appreciate me being in the school."

Zoe was very satisfied with her first-term work experience. She emphasised that although she often felt tired as a beginning teacher, she was positive and motivated about going to work.

> Many people ask me if I feel tired because they know teachers' lives are hard. I am tired quite a lot, but I do not feel exhausted to the point that I do not like my job. Tiredness comes with every job, but I always feel happy coming back to school.

In her second term, Zoe's work experience was still very good. She received consistent support from her mentor teacher and other teachers. "All teachers are very helpful when I need help. My mentor has especially been great. I am very happy with the support." Her job responsibilities remained inside the classroom. There were no big changes, except for reports to parents which she did not have to do in the previous term. But Zoe did "not feel very overwhelmed" with report writing because the reports in her school were "brief" and "straightforward."

Zoe developed her classroom practice. She felt more relaxed as a teacher and more comfortable to move things in the classroom to fit the needs of children and herself. Additionally, Zoe was

"better at prioritising what is important and what is not." She recalled that she used to focus on making many things pretty on practicum and would redo a plan if she made an error in it. But now she prioritised spending time with children.

> I am prioritising to make sure for the 20 minutes before the bell goes, I am with the children in the classroom, interacting with them and creating the relationships. I am not photocopying or doing planning and paperwork.

Zoe also made other efforts in building positive relationships with and between students. For example, she made a personal invitation for each student receiving awards at the school's prize-giving event. She spent 5 hours typing the nice comments that students had written anonymously on three other students in the class. "I was really tired, but it was like I needed to do this. I wanted the children to read something nice about themselves." She thought "it was worth it seeing they were so excited to read the comments. Their eyes lit up." With positive relationships being built in class, Zoe found the students were "more open to share things," which "helped with their learning and the classroom atmosphere."

Zoe received positive feedback from her mentor teacher and curriculum area team leaders. Her mentor teacher observed her reading and writing lessons and said, "the classroom atmosphere was really good, and the kids were engaged." The maths leader observed her maths lessons and commented, "I hope you were not too stressed by planning all of this. Your class looked really functioning." They also gave her constructive feedback, such as "tips for the future about how I can reorganise things." Zoe was pleased with the feedback and considered it important to receive feedback that affirmed her practice of teaching. "It makes me feel 'I am doing okay.' Someone else also thinks so, not just me."

At the end of two terms' teaching, Zoe was still very satisfied with her work experience and said, "it has been good two terms. I just loved every day." Zoe felt there was nothing to regret except that there were times she wished she had done secondary teaching because the pay would be higher. Zoe felt primary teachers should be paid a bit more, noting "we are paid for 40-hour a week, but we do way more. Every teacher I know, strict or not strict, cares for the children."

In her third term of teaching, which was the beginning of the 2018 school year, Zoe had a mixed class of Years 5 and 6 with 28 students of diverse ethnicities. The class included children with disabilities such as cerebral palsy, ADHD, and autism. Zoe's workload greatly increased this term. Apart from "so much testing at the beginning of the year," Zoe was "on four

curriculum teams—the language, maths, culture, and dance and drama teams." She "had a meeting after school every day except Fridays." She was also coaching the boys' soccer team for the interschool competition. Meanwhile, Zoe undertook some administration duties, such as taking over road patrol, creating rosters for each class and organising the timetables during the school's outdoor education week, as well as choreographing the teachers' dance for the outdoor education event.

Zoe was at school 50 hours a week on average and up to 60 for a few weeks. She noted,

> I have kept tracking it [working hours at school]. As soon as I come to school, I pushed a button on my phone. Last week I was here 3 days, and I did 33 hours. In the week before last, I did 57 hours.

When she got home, she continued to work, marking spelling or maths tests, which "drained me." Zoe was "not happy" about the long working hours because "a lot of the time, probably 60%," was taken up by administration duties and paperwork. She ended up with rushed lesson planning and did not have enough time for her students. Zoe felt she was "leaving out the most important thing." She gave the example that in the outdoor education week and the week before, she needed to handle students' permission slips and collect money for photos every morning from 8.20 to 9 a.m., which undermined her interactions with her students.

> I am supposed to be with the children in those 40 minutes, talk to them, and see how they are going. Instead, I was going, "Do not come to me right now. I need to finish this before the bell goes so we can start the day," because the money box has to be sent to the office by 9 o'clock.

Zoe identified the increasing workload was greatly affected by the school leadership. She explained that it was the principal's second year leading the school. In contrast to the previous year when he had kept many things the same, the principal was stepping up in the new year and following up on many details. "He is like crossing the t's and dotting the i's, making sure every little thing around the school has been done. That is where a lot of the administration work and the double handling come from." In Zoe's opinion, much of the administration work could have been done by someone else rather than teachers. She disagreed with the principal's practice of assigning a lot of administration work to teachers: "I feel as a teacher, my first duty is to the children and their learning, not to school administration."

This term, the senior syndicate underwent significant changes, which also created more work for Zoe. Only two experienced teachers from the previous year stayed whereas other experienced teachers were either on maternity leave or had left for different schools. Four new

teachers joined the senior syndicate, and three of them were beginning teachers. The team leader also changed, and the previous team leader went back to full-time teaching. The new senior syndicate was “less collaborative,” and some teachers “just liked to be on their own.” Zoe felt “support is different” in the new senior syndicate. She believed “it will be a better use of our time to be collaborative.” Also, with more new teachers than experienced teachers in the syndicate, Zoe was seen as “not new anymore but an experienced beginning teacher” by her team and assigned much work beyond her classroom. Zoe noted, “I am inside going ‘I am still new. Please give me some more time. I am only three terms in.’”

Further, Zoe’s mentor teacher, who became the middle syndicate (Year 3 and 4 classes with 7- to 8-year-olds) leader this term, only met her three times in the 11 weeks of the term because “she got lots of other responsibilities.” Zoe did not get her full release time. She was supposed to get 6 hours’ release every week but only got 2 hours. Zoe was unhappy and said, “if I calculate all the release I did not get, I am owed about a full-week release. That is so much valuable time that I will not get next year.” Zoe talked to her mentor teacher at the end of the term that it was “not fair” for her only seeing her mentor three times and that she needed to have her full release. She wanted to use her release time to observe other teachers and get new ideas for teaching:

> I always want to do better and keep improving myself. I need to take more initiative and make the most of my release time for professional development. I need to go see other teachers while I have the chance.

Owing to the above experiences, Zoe’s satisfaction with her working conditions decreased this term. However, Zoe felt her class “worked better in terms of routines and classroom culture” because she started with the students right from the beginning of the year. She still viewed the teacher’s role as facilitator and became more confident facilitating students’ learning, illustrated by her statement:

> I am confident in the classroom with my children, teaching to their needs and facilitating their learning. I am not second-guessing myself. When I look across the classroom, I can see who is struggling and who my target students are.

In her fourth term, Zoe got her weekly mentoring sessions as well as her full release. In one of the mentoring sessions, her mentor teacher did a demo lesson on writing in her class which she valued:

> Instead of my mentor and I just talking, she did a session on writing in my class. I took notes [while observing her], and we talked about it afterwards ... I got more ideas for writing—my main focus at the moment.

Also, Zoe observed her colleagues teaching maths, reading, and writing in her release, which she found "so valuable" because "sometimes you do not know other ideas unless you see them." However, Zoe noted that it had been "hard to coordinate" observations with other teachers because everyone was busy. "It was such a struggle sometimes appointing an observation, saying 'next week on Wed when I have release, can I observe you?' The teacher would say, 'sorry, but I was asked doing this and this.'"

Moreover, Zoe identified the busyness of the school hindered her from getting classroom support. For example,

> My teacher aide is a parent. I could really use some support because I do not have all the skills to train a parent to become an appropriate teacher aide. But everyone is already so busy with multiple responsibilities. I feel bad asking them to do another job.

Zoe hoped the teachers could work more collaboratively and put things in place towards this. For instance,

> Teachers usually will write up five or six questions about the book they are reading. Instead of every teacher making their own every week, I created a reading folder online where all teachers can access and share their sheets. Now it is the whole school thing.

Also, when the school changed its maths classes from stream to mixed-ability groupings, Zoe, with her strength in teaching maths, shared her maths programme in her syndicate. The teachers who had struggled with mixed-ability groupings adapted her maths programme to their students' needs. "They all used my maths programme differently, but the ideas started from that. That was one influence I feel was taken on nicely." However, Zoe mentioned that a few teachers in the senior syndicate did "not like to change things." When she or some other teachers offered a new idea or suggestion, "they will say, 'we do not do it. That is not how we do it. We do it this way.'" As a result, Zoe often felt the ideas or suggestions were "undervalued."

In this final term of her first year of teaching, Zoe learnt to say "no" a bit more when work was assigned to her. She realised that she had said yes to too many duties in the previous term. "If I genuinely have many tasks, I do not say yes to another job." However, the overall work–life balance was still unsatisfactory. She was coaching the boys' soccer team every lunchtime, and there were still meetings after school from Monday to Wednesday every week which sometimes lasted until 4.30 or 5pm. Although Zoe was proud that her soccer team won every

match except one in the interschool competition, she had to find other time to do the work she needed to do, such as morning tea or at night at home. Zoe noted,

> It is so easy to keep doing work. It is very hard to force yourself to stop for 5 minutes and take a break. At morning tea, while kids are playing and eating, I quickly do this and that. And I have to do it [school work] at home until 9, 10, or 11 o'clock.

The long working hours "exhausted" her. Although Zoe still felt her work as a teacher was "very rewarding," she did not think she would be teaching for more than 5 years unless the government could improve teachers' work conditions. Zoe explained that it was not just the money but also the pressure.

> I really love working with children, but it is a very big responsibility to do maths, reading, writing, science, sports, dance, music, and computer skills for 28 students. It just seems there is not enough time. I am already doing 45 to 60 hours a week. I am scared that if the government raises our salary, they may expect us to do more and put more pressure on us too.

Zoe wanted to get registered and then see if she still wanted to teach in New Zealand, or "to have some experiences overseas" or "to do maths specialist teaching."

To summarise, Zoe's long-term interest in teaching and her desire to work with children led to her choice of teaching as her first career—a career she viewed as important and meaningful. During ITE, Zoe felt prepared due to the integration of courses and practicum, which helped her gain a better understanding of the complexity of teaching and a clearer vision of the teacher she wanted to be. The preparation of her ITE programme and the supportive environment of her school in her first 6 months of teaching contributed to her smooth transition from preservice teacher to teacher. However, the heavy workload and the school environment becoming less collaborative and supportive in her second 6 months of teaching affected her job satisfaction and career intention for teaching.

The Lived Experience of Stella

Stella was 22 years old; she immigrated from Ireland to New Zealand with her family when she was 15. She attended 8 years of primary school and 2 years of secondary school in Ireland and then 3 years of secondary school and 3 years of university in New Zealand. Stella had an early fascination with teaching, saying, "way, way back when I was a child, I was fascinated with school" and "a part of me has always been drawn to teaching." An important influence on her aspiration to be a teacher was one of her primary school teachers. This "inspirational" teacher had a "very child-centred approach" to teaching and was "flexible in meeting diverse

learner needs" by giving students "autonomy" to make choices about their learning. Because Stella was the oldest child in her class, the teacher often gave her responsibilities to work with other students. The autonomy in learning and opportunities to work with younger students developed a "love of learning" and a "love of teaching" in Stella. Stella recalled that she would come home from school and play school with her younger sisters and create worksheets for them to do on weekends.

Stella applied to an undergraduate teacher education programme after finishing secondary school and was invited for an interview. However, at the age of 18, Stella decided that she was too young for teaching and wanted to wait till she had a bit more life experience, so she did a double degree in education and psychology. In the last semester of her undergraduate studies, Stella took a university course on mentoring and mentored a Year 8 student as part of the course requirements in areas of both academic and social performance. Although the teaching was small scale, Stella was pleased to see the learning progress of the student. She recognised teaching as "one of the most meaningful jobs in terms of the difference I can make to students" and decided "I did not want to wait [till I gain more life experience]. I really wanted to do this [teaching]." Stella was working part-time for a business organisation and had a job lined up for after graduation, but she felt the job in business was "just not fulfilling." Thus, she decided to do a teacher education programme after her undergraduate studies.

Stella's choice to be a teacher was strongly supported by her parents who had always encouraged her to pursue her interests for teaching. Stella noted that her parents "value teaching highly, much more than business." It appeared that Stella's parents did not place primary importance on making money. Their advice to Stella on her choice of career was: "Do what you love. Think about what you want to do for the rest of your life. Money will happen if you choose and pursue the right thing." Later, Stella's parents provided consistent support to her throughout her first year of teaching. Following her heart and the advice of her parents, Stella enrolled in the MTchg (Primary) programme because it had an emphasis on enhancing teaching practice for priority learners. Stella hoped that with the preparation of the MTchg programme, she could help children, including the ones from low-socioeconomic backgrounds, "enjoy learning and see it as fun" and "exceed and excel in school."

Stella was very satisfied with how her ITE programme prepared her for teaching, saying, "my master's prepared me really well." She explained that it provided opportunities to explore and reflect beliefs about teaching as well as opportunities to practise teaching. She thought there

was a “really strong” partnership between the university and practicum schools. The university courses focused on discovery and discussion of pedagogy theories, and the two practicums allowed the application of pedagogy in practice. Stella especially considered the practicums “a huge learning curve” for her. She gave the example that she had been in her second practicum school for almost 5 months, which allowed her to “adjust to the New Zealand context and settle into the role of a teacher” since she did not grow up in New Zealand.

Stella was very grateful to some lecturers on her ITE programme and the associate teacher from her second practicum. She explained that these teacher educators, along with the teachers she had had in the past, “shaped the kind of teacher I want to be.” The lecturers drilled her to think critically about teaching and learning, such as how to make connections between classroom activities and students’ backgrounds and experiences. Stella gave an example of a lecturer:

> She was really inspirational. I got so many ideas from her. She was the one who really drilled in us to think where the children are coming from, to think about things that help students make connections between school and home.

The associate teacher gave her “room to practise being a teacher,” allowing her to take full responsibility for half of the class, and sometimes the whole class, and gave her autonomy in selecting activities for the class. In her lesson planning and teaching, the associate teacher further scaffolded her professional learning by having her think and explain the reasons behind her decisions in the classroom and providing her with valuable advice. At the end of her first term of teaching, Stella again stressed the positive influence of an associate teacher on preparing her for teaching, saying, “they [the second practicum school and the associate teacher] really treated me like a teacher, so I felt I had some of that learning curve of being a beginning teacher. It helped to smooth the transition.”

Stella envisioned she would be “a kind, passionate teacher” who “cares about each student.” She wanted to create “a safe and engaging classroom environment” and “be a positive influence on students and their learning” like her own teachers. Viewing the educational aim as to “help students develop their potential and become the best version of themselves,” Stella highlighted that the role of teacher was “to facilitate rather than to direct” student learning. Thus, she gave the metaphor of teacher as a “guide,” who guides students to navigate their own learning path and fosters a love of learning in them.

Stella accepted a permanent, full-time teaching position from a Decile 3 school. Her ITE programme motivated her to make a difference to learners from lower socioeconomic

backgrounds. “I wanted to work at a low-decile school. My master’s programme was all about working in low-decile schools and focusing on lower achieving students.” Further, Stella decided to start her teaching career in this school because she liked the school environment and atmosphere. At her visit and interview in the school, she found that teachers were friendly and happy, and students were able to do their work independently and peacefully. “Things were busy but not noisy. It did not seem like a hectic place.” The interview itself was “so relaxed.” According to the school’s description of the job duties and the school community and her own observation of the school, Stella felt “it does not seem to be a high stress environment. It seems quite nice and easy going at this school, not that teaching is going to be easy, but at least they are not creating stress.” Thus, Stella took the job offer, although it would take her about half an hour to drive from where she lived to the school.

Stella was positive to start her new job in 2 weeks and looked forward to her first year of teaching. Informed by her job interview, Stella expected her first year of teaching in the school to be “an incredible learning experience,” during which she would “get to know the children, the school community, and the parents” as well as “do a lot of learning and make a lot of changes to my [teaching] practice.” However, informed by her practicum experience, Stella also expected the first year of teaching to be a challenge with “ups and downs.” Stella hoped that with the pleasant working environment and support of the school, she could overcome the difficulties of being a beginning teacher, continue to grow as a teacher, and become more confident and effective in 3 to 5 years. Stella wanted to “stay with the profession,” so she hoped that her first year of teaching experience would “shape my long-term teaching career positively.”

In her first term of teaching, Stella had a Year 1 class with 20 five-year-olds. The children were from diverse cultural backgrounds, such as Pasifika, Māori, and Indian, but there were no Pākehā (New Zealanders of European heritage) children in her class. Stella recalled that before her first day of teaching, she was excited but also nervous about the new job. “I was feeling very happy, but I also had big doubts about whether or not I could do it.” However, it turned out to be a very good term and a smooth transition for her, which Stella attributed to the school’s positive environment. She first talked about the support of her mentor teacher who also taught a Year 1 class and had a mentoring style similar to the associate teacher Stella had had on her second practicum in the way of having high trust in her. Stella valued that her mentor teacher gave her autonomy and let her run her class in her own way while providing her with scaffolding and support when she needed. Her mentor teacher helped her in many ways. In their weekly meetings, they would “go through what I need to learn, any question I have, or

anything she has noticed." They would also "look what is coming up and plan things in advance collaboratively." Her mentor teacher also did observations of her and gave her feedback and cotaught lessons with her.

In addition to her mentor teacher, Stella found support from the other staff members and school leaders. There were 26 teachers in her school, and 11 in her junior team, whom she found "really supportive." She highlighted that "the informal support is just the other teachers are willing to help. I feel like I can go to anyone to ask questions." She also received support from the school leadership at work and talked about "a good time of support when needed." It was at a science event in the school where students were doing their experiments. "As new entrants, some groups needed support for the activities. The deputy principal asked if I needed any help and jumped straight into support." The different sources of support made Stella feel "very supported" at the school.

Stella also owed her smooth transition from preservice teacher to teacher to her teacher education. She believed the "practical" courses of the programme and the "learning curve" she gained on practicum prepared her for teaching. Her teacher education also made her anticipate that being a beginning teacher would be "harder" than it was, which Stella considered "a good thing." She explained that things in her last practicum school "took longer," compared to her current school. For example, in her last practicum school, "more details were required for lesson planning, and teachers were expected to have lots of inquiries into teaching and learning at the same time." In contrast, there was not as much paperwork for planning in her current school, and teachers conducted inquiries "a bit more collaboratively."

However, Stella acknowledged that, being a beginning teacher, she "still found a lot of things challenging," especially the challenge to "be efficient" and "get things done in time." She especially worked long hours in the first few weeks, even 60 hours per week, which made her feel "a little bit overwhelmed" and "tired." She recalled, "I was setting up the classroom, realising what was working and making changes if I noticed something was not working, so I was doing long hours." What helped relieve her stress was that she was not assigned responsibilities beyond her classroom, except for duties during morning tea or lunch, which happened twice a week. The beginning-teacher release time also helped her address the challenges of time. Stella was happy that she had "a lot of autonomy" in deciding how to use her release time. Besides, on the release days she went to the external beginning-teacher course

for provisionally certified teachers, she was given classroom release time (CRT), which helped make up the lost release time.

In contrast to the challenge of time, Stella found it very easy to build relationships with her students. "I feel quite comfortable about the relationships I have set up with my students." She talked about many delightful moments with the students, especially from seeing them learning. One of such moments was:

> We learnt /ʃ/sound in a reading group. On Thursday, one little boy whose name started with a /ʃ/ came up to me and said, 'I found /ʃ/ in my name!' He used to miss letters in writing his name, but now he gets the beginning of his name right every time.

Stella was happy that the students were "actually learning something and applying it to their lives."

In her second term of teaching, Stella had four new children, which made a class of 24 students. Although this term was still busy, it was as good as her first one. She continued to get a lot of support from both her mentor teacher and other teachers in the junior syndicate (classes of Year 1 and 2 with 5- to 7-year-olds), commenting that "the experienced teachers were very generous with their knowledge." When she wanted to observe a teacher, she "could give them a message, email, or simply ask." Stella gave the example that she focused on teaching phonics this term, such as "how to spell words and how to read words by breaking down the sounds." So, she observed some teachers doing that and applied the strategies she observed to her classroom, which she found "worked really well" with her students.

Stella's school made available many professional development opportunities. For example, she attended an art professional development workshop, which helped her realise she should "just try things and have fun with students instead of wanting to create great pieces of art" in art lessons. Stella also talked that the school was "trialling discovery time, a play-based learning" in two of the new entrant classrooms. The school's efforts at better teaching practice motivated her. She noted, "it is really interesting to see and be able to know how much learning children do even when they are playing. I am trying little ways of introducing that into my class." Additionally, Stella continued to go to the external beginning-teacher course. Although this course was held once a month and she only attended it twice a term, Stella recognised it as an important support for her professional development. In a recent workshop focused on teaching mathematics, Stella noted that "there were loads of tips and tricks for teaching maths. After

this course, I feel I can bring different activities and more exciting things into math teaching, and I have noticed the students are a lot more engaged."

Stella became more "confident," "relaxed" as a teacher and "flexible" and "adaptable" in teaching her students. One change she noted was "I am still keeping up with the routines but do not have to follow them so closely." Stella was happy to see that "the children are progressing well." Taking reading as an example, she commented, "when they are reading, I see how proficient they are now. Some of them have already gone up quite a few levels, which is really positive to see." Also, the recognition of the difference she could make to student learning made Stella feel that her ideal was realised. Stella said, "I have met my expectations. I hoped to make a difference and I think I have."

Stella's mentor teacher confirmed her growth and development as a teacher by giving her "lots of positive feedback" in her appraisal. Her mentor teacher praised her for "caring about the children" and "differentiating the programme to suit different children." The affirmation from her mentor motivated her for constant professional learning. She expressed her desire for ongoing learning: "I realise that learning is ongoing, and I need to continue to grow. I still have a lot to learn as a teacher, and I think every teacher does. Even my mentor is still learning."

Stella emphasised that the school's values about teaching and learning aligned with hers in many ways. For instance, the school encouraged student learning autonomy, which Stella considered "very important" because she also believed that "students need to have the ownership of their learning." Besides, the school offered "wide curriculum areas," providing students with a lot of extracurricular activities. Stella, believing in holistic education, valued the opportunities provided to students. She commented that "this is something I really like about the school. They do not just focus on reading, writing, and math. They focus on the whole learner, not just the academic learner." Therefore, Stella noted that "my beliefs of learning and teaching and those of the school aligned." The alignment in values about teaching and learning with the school, along with the school support to her, made Stella believe that the school "provided her with the conditions to become the teacher I wanted to be."

Further, Stella liked that the school "valued teachers' talents and passions" and was "open to teachers' ideas." For example, she shared a template related to reading strategies that worked well in her class with the junior syndicate. The junior syndicate appreciated this idea, made school-wide copies of this template, and distributed them amongst all the teachers. Stella felt valued by the school and teachers, and this feeling contributed to her comfortable and confident

participation in the school. Stella said that she was not afraid of "pushing myself out of my comfort zone a little bit." She coached the Christmas dancing group, even though "I would not have considered myself much of a dancer before." Stella further noted that she was ready to "get more involved in things outside of my classroom next year like curriculum teams and extracurricular activities and in the wider school life."

By the end of two terms of teaching, Stella was a bit "exhausted." However, she felt "very positive," "excited," and "happy" about heading to school. She thought "teaching is challenging, but it is incredibly rewarding. It is nice to have a job you love and one that does not make you not want to get out of the bed in the mornings." Owing to her positive experience in her first 6 months of teaching, Stella felt "a really good match" between herself and teaching. She felt that the first two terms of her teaching "allowed for trial and error," during which she "got to try things and made changes when they did not work." Stella expected that she would be "a bit more organised" because of "knowing what routines and procedures I want in the classroom and what I want the students to achieve." Thus, she confidently looked forward to her third term of teaching.

In her third term of teaching, Stella had 23 five-year-olds in her Year 1 class, which she described as an "energetic," "boy-heavy" class with "more learning needs" and "more behaviour issues" than the previous year. She explained, "this year some of the students come from more challenging circumstances than last year," which affected their behaviour in class. There were "more children shouting, acting out, and hitting." The difficulty for her as the teacher was "having to spend so much attention and time to deal with disruptive behaviours," which she felt a challenge to juggle with teaching. Luckily, she was not left unsupported. She turned to her mentor and the special education needs coordinator for ideas, and she was also sent to a seminar on children's behaviour by her school. With these support and guidance, Stella found "a lot more at ease" addressing student-behaviour issues and managing the classroom.

At her release time, Stella worked with the children that needed more guidance, "to have them share their experiences, to see their personality come out," which also helped with student behaviour. By working one on one with her students in her release time, Stella built a very strong relationship with the students, including the ones with behavioural issues. Strong relationship building made a difference to students' behaviour and learning, which brought much joy to Stella.

> They have settled into the classroom. I can see students who were a bit anxious feel comfortable now. I can see students who struggled at the beginning really started to come along. They are happy to come to school every day, and their learning has improved so much. Now it is a pleasure to have them in the classroom.

This term, the junior syndicate changed. Year 1 (for 5-year-olds) and Year 2 (for 6-year-olds) teams separated because "it was such a big team with 12 teachers." Stella welcomed this change. She thought "it helps target the students' learning. It makes easier to differentiate the learning programme." She found the teachers in the new Year 1 team were "more collaborative" in lesson planning. With two more beginning teachers joining the junior syndicate, Stella went "from being the newest person last year to right in the middle this year." Feeling a bit more experienced, Stella extended her involvement in the school and undertook work on two curriculum teams: the Māori curriculum team and the maths curriculum team. Stella "enjoyed" the additional responsibilities. There were more professional development opportunities offered to her. For example, she was offered an off-campus maths course in addition to on-campus maths professional development workshops and getting ideas from other people on the maths curriculum team.

In addition, Stella continued going to the beginning-teacher course for provisionally certified teachers. In this third term of teaching, she started doing the course for second-year beginning teachers, even though she was still a first-year beginning teacher.

Stella worked around 50 hours weekly this term, which she considered "a lot less than the previous two terms" when she had sometimes done more than 60 hours a week. She gave several reasons for the reduced hours. First, she attributed it to the increased collaboration in her Year 1 team. Secondly, she became quicker at things as a result of having done them once in the previous two terms. Also, as she became more confident in her teaching, Stella learnt to be "less hard" on herself and not to spend too much time pursuing perfection in everything. She gave the example that:

> There is not going to be a perfect lesson, no matter how many times you plan it, write it, or reword it … I put something together and see how that goes, rather than saying that it has to be perfect the first time.

Last, Stella talked about the influence of a big medical issue that had happened in the holiday before the term, which changed her perspective on life. "I woke up in the hospital and realised how important my health is. It made me appreciate being alive. I do not take things for granted

as much as any more." Stella learnt that "just enjoy every day," and she noticed that "when you are happier, the kids learn better."

By reducing the hours of overtime at work, Stella experienced a better work–life balance. She was very satisfied, noting that her experience as a teacher so far "exceeded" her expectations by "not having to give up my whole life to teach, but still having some of my weekends off for me." She recalled that "I heard on practicum that in the first years of teaching, expect no life outside of teaching." Thus, "it is a [work–life] balance I did not expect to have, but I feel like I do." Because this sense of managing the workload and life balance, Stella considered herself "the most satisfied with teaching" this term.

In her fourth term of teaching, Stella noticed more positive effects of the relationships she had formed with students on their learning. She was happy to see "how comfortable the children felt coming in, taking risks in their learning, and trying new things." She highlighted the importance of teacher–student relationships to student learning in a metaphorical way: "I started to see the product out of the roots I planted." She was better at balancing classroom management and meeting student interests. "You need to be strict but also know when it is time to not to be strict, when it is time for going off the plan and taking a lesson in a different direction based on students' needs."

Stella was contented with her growth as a teacher in her first year of teaching. "I am happy with where I am now." She remembered that "at the beginning [of teaching] I was nervous whether they [students] are going to learn anything," whereas now "I am confident in knowing that the way I teach students, they learn." Stella stressed the importance of student learning to her positive sense of self as a teacher: "It is so reassuring as a teacher to know that students are learning while they are with you. It is one of the most important things."

Stella was playing a bigger role on the two curriculum teams she had joined since the previous term. Being on the maths team, she had "been able to help other teachers try our new maths programme this year." Being on the Māori curriculum team, she went to a Matariki (the Māori new year) course to learn about the Māori culture where she got teaching ideas to share with her team. She also took part in the whānau (family) consultation as the junior team representative, where she met all the Māori families and talked to them. Stella was happy and proud, saying, "I felt really welcomed and accepted, though obviously not being Māori." It was her first time representing the junior team. Stella noted, "it really stretches you, but it is enjoyable."

Stella was "still very well supported" by her mentor teacher in this last term of her first year of teaching, although she found that she did not need to draw on her mentor's support as much as before because she had a better understanding of how things ran at the school. She also continued to get lots of support from the other members of the junior syndicate. Finishing her first year of teaching, Stella noted once again how the positive working environment helped her relieve stress of beginning teaching and reinforced her career intention for teaching.

> I am pretty tired but feeling happy, pretty satisfied with my choice of teaching. The positive culture and environment at the school has helped me to relax … My choice of teaching has definitely been solidified.

Stella was looking forward to her second year of teaching and preparing herself for "the release time to be cut in half next term."

To summarise, Stella's long-held aspiration to be a teacher and desire to positively influence children's learning led to her choice of teaching as her first career. The meaning Stella brought to teaching was supported by her ITE programme which focused on lifting the achievement of priority students, and her school that served children from a low-socioeconomic community. With the preparation of her teacher education and the consistent support of her school, she realised the meaning of teaching and saw the value of her work as a teacher. A positive interplay of personal, school, and ITE influences helped her manage the challenges and stress of beginning teaching and find a balance between work and life. She became more confident as a teacher in her class and as a full member in her syndicate and school, and meanwhile her long-term intention for teaching as a career was solidified.

The Lived Experience of John

John was a 30-year-old European New Zealander. He grew up in Auckland and had a double degree in marketing and psychology. John had worked in the corporate sector, but he felt the corporate environment was "limiting" and "not very fulfilling." He did not enjoy sitting all day in an office doing paperwork that caused back pain. John had friends who worked as teachers, so teaching was "not complete foreign to me." He was also flatting with two teachers. "They said 'I feel you can be a teacher.' So, that opened a few doors." Prompted by his friends' advice to be a teacher and also his desire to travel and learn Spanish, John went to Chile and taught English there for a year. John enjoyed this teaching experience. Compared with previous work in the office, he thought teaching had "more physical variety," allowing teachers to walk around in the classroom; it was also "more fulfilling" by making a difference to student learning. Thus, after 1 year of language teaching abroad, John returned to New Zealand and decided to

undertake teacher education. His family was supportive of his decision to embark on a career path as a teacher, and thought teaching was a secure job.

John "struggled for a while" in terms of whether to do primary or secondary, so he visited a few primary and secondary schools, asking people "if you do primary, is it easy to go up to do secondary? Or if you do secondary, is it easy to go down to do primary?" The feedback he got was it was easy to go up from primary to secondary, and that was "one of the things that swayed my decision [to choose the primary programme]." There was also consideration of time, and the MTchg programme only took 1 year. Besides, John thought a master's degree might become a basic requirement for teaching in New Zealand in the near future. "Some other countries do that [require a master's to become a teacher], and there was talk in New Zealand."

John recollected his relatively negative intermediate school learning experience and emphasised relevancy for student learning. He commented, "I was in certain classes and could do those subjects, but I couldn't see the relevance." On the MTchg programme, John further broadened his understanding, highlighting the importance of "acknowledging the diverse experiences and capabilities students bring to class." He also gave examples of teaching strategies he learned on ITE to make learning relevant to students:

> What I have learned is when I introduce a topic or a new idea, kids want to share, and it is good to get their ideas out. I can say a little bit and get them talk to each other about what they already know about this topic.

John felt the ITE programme helped him "see the big picture of learning and teaching" through rich exploration of theories of education and develop better understanding of children. For example,

> A kid might not be doing well in maths, but you cannot just write them off and say, "You are dumb at maths." There could be many reasons. The master's gives you a wide view of what the reason might be.

John thought the teacher's role "is about being a facilitator rather than an expert who stands in the front telling students what to do." He wanted to encourage peer learning and group work among students in his teaching. "Kids learn from other kids. They're more comfortable asking each other questions, like I am with my peers. I know I will get help at my level, whereas a teacher might not always understand what a student really needs." John also felt peer learning and group work was a way to help improve education equity. "It you could get the advanced kids to teach the struggling kids, they [the struggling kids] could get a double up of the guidance and teaching. That [ability grouping] is an idea I want to stick to [to teach for equity]."

John experienced and observed the busyness of teaching on practicum. He saw teaching was "not like the 9–5 grind [of his previous office work]." Rather, it involved different demands. "Like today, the [practicum] school's got hockey and kapa haka [Māori group dance]." John believed extracurricular activities "are really valuable, because the kids love them." However, he was uncertain whether he could balance his time with the work demands in and out of class. "I was not required to do any extracurricular activities outside the classroom on practicum, but the ones [activities and responsibilities] in the classroom already kept me busy."

John thought the 1-year teacher education was not long enough for him to be prepared for teaching.

> We ended up in a 1-year programme. It was impossible to learn everything … I think for a teacher to teach well, it needs more than a year. Every teacher I talked to tended to say it takes 4 years to understand your job.

John talked about his confusion regarding implementing the curriculum and used maths teaching as an example to explain what confused him.

> For example, with maths, there are the Ministry of Education's requirements relating to National Standards, *The New Zealand Curriculum*, and the number framework. It seems to be complicated than it needs to be, which just creates extra work for a teacher. That happens across a lot of subjects.

John took a full-time, fixed-term teaching position at a small country school at Decile 7 (medium–high). It had only seven classes from Year 1 to Year 8 (for mainly 5- to 12-year-olds). John chose this school for several reasons. Firstly, "I guess it is out of pressure." John expected fewer behaviour-management issues and administration pressures and a more relaxed environment in a small country school. He felt less pressure would make being a beginning teacher more manageable. Further, John explained that the location of the school was important to him because he grew up down the same road. "I quite like knowing the area and being able to incorporate that knowledge into teaching the children, like where to go swimming or some farms they might go to." It was also the primary school he attended. John remembered the school "was like a little family." His primary school years had been such "a good time" that he had written a diary after he went to the intermediate school about how he did not like his intermediate school as much as his primary school. His goal for teaching at the moment was "to feel comfortable as a teacher" and "to be confident in what I am doing" in 3 to 5 years. Considering the high workload but the relatively low pay of teaching, John said it was "hard to look too far ahead" in terms of how long he would be a teacher for.

In his first term of teaching, John had a mixed Year 5 and 6 class of 25 nine- to eleven-year-olds. From practicum classes where "you were always with an associate teacher or even often with another preservice teacher" to being on his own, John said "it was quite scary" in the first week because "you still do not know a lot about the procedures or things in the school. What do I do when something happens?"

John identified mismatches between his expectations and the reality of his school. First, he had expected fewer student-behaviour issues in a small school. However, he had a boy-heavy class (16 boys) who were "quite chatty" and "distract[ed] the whole class, making teaching quite hard." In handling student-behaviour issues, John felt there was not much preparation from the MTchg programme in this respect. He described:

> things like fights in the playground, or disputes like two students come to you and [you] get different stories about what happened, or kids say something behind the things you did not know about. You have to figure out how to deal with these things. It can cause a bit of anxiety for new teachers because you do not get taught how to do it.

Further, there appeared to be more pressure on teachers in a small school. Because of the small number of teachers, John found "if you can do something, you kind of have to because in the small school there is no one else to do it." For example, he had to take on the senior choir in the school's music production in the 4th week, which was "pretty full-on." Also, because it was a small school with only one Year 5 and 6 class, John had the pressure of delivering the curriculum all by himself. "I have to tell my class what to do, because there is only one Years 5 and 6 class. No other class does the same thing." His practicum experience had been with Years 3 and 4 (7- to 9-year-olds), so the curriculum for Year 5 and 6 was new to him, or "unknown essentially." Because of the unexpected workload, John felt "very busy" and "very tired." He "normally spent about at least half of a weekend day and 2 to 3 nights a week at home" to keep up with work.

In addition, the school principal "announced his resignation in the first week and left unexpectedly in Week 3," which "threw things all into a tangent." With the sudden departure of the principal, John did not get the class records from the previous teacher. "There have been quite a few things like that which I did not know before I sorted them." The deputy principal became the acting principal while the board of trustees was trying to find a new principal. The acting principal seemed to be "not trying to put her mark on the school because she is holding the position for just a term or two." As a result, John felt the school was "holding a bit," noting:

> I think a school principal should drive curriculum knowledge and the culture we want, and provide clear guidance on student-behaviour management and criteria for assessment and marking. But with the acting principal, I am not sure that is happening.

That said, John valued the emotional support offered by the acting principal. "She was not that onto it academically, but she was actually very good emotionally. After the principal left, the acting principal had the senior syndicate talk to me, and it was all good to have."

There were three teachers in the senior syndicate, including John with the mixed class of Years 5 and 6, his mentor teacher with Years 4 and 5, and another beginning teacher who was a year ahead of John and had Years 7 and 8. His mentor teacher was the team leader. John appreciated that his mentor teacher and the other beginning teacher were "happy to share their knowledge" and had been "supportive of any issues or challenges" he had in the classroom with ideas. His mentor teacher was especially "the first point of call" when questions or issues arise. However, John raised his concern that for his mentor teacher, it was "the first time being a mentor teacher and also a leader," and "there is no kind of training for her in those roles." He did think he was learning, but he felt the induction and mentoring programme was "not structured."

John got his release day every Thursday and also CRT 2 days a term, which were primarily spent on testing and meetings with students with behavioural needs. Because of a lack of time, John did not undertake other professional development activities except for the weekly mentoring sessions with his mentor teacher. He hoped to observe other schools in the following terms. "I need to see other people teaching to get ideas. There is only one class in my school with this age group, so I would like to observe other schools."

In his second term of teaching, John was even busier, having "a lot of report writing and testing" at the end of the year. John identified the report writing in his school was "a quite long process," involving repeated revision and writing:

> We did our reports and sent them to someone, who read and checked them, highlighted all the mistakes, and sent them back. You fixed them, which then went to the next person, and then things came back to you, and you fixed up again. And then it went to the principal, and he fixed it. And then it came back to you again.

The "massive" reports posed a challenge for John to balance time between paperwork and teaching. He compared the teaching he did this term with last term:

> In Week 5, 6, 7 and 8 last term, I could plan a lesson, do the lesson, write down the feedback for it, and repeat that loop. But that did not happen at all this term. There was a lot of on the day planning.

John also remarked on the imbalance between work and life. To keep up with work, he "only had 1 or 2 weekends off and worked a day the other weekends." He thought the pressures on beginning teachers were "not recognised."

> The [acting] principal and my mentor teacher say that just be prepared to kind of have no social life during a school term. I think that devalues the profession and your time as a teacher. I think that is not a very healthy thing. Yes, you get holidays at the end, but it is like having no life in 10 weeks and then having a life. It has to be more manageable.

Besides, John did not have time to observe other schools, although he started going to the beginning-teacher course for 2 days this term. "I really would like to observe other schools, but I did not get to do it at all. The term had been so busy."

John had the same mentor teacher and met with her every Thursday. However, John seemed to be dissatisfied with her mentoring this term. He felt his mentor teacher gave him too many instructions at a time, which overwhelmed him. John said, "I think to get better, you need some simple, clear goals, focus on them and tick them off, and then work on something else, rather than to do 15 things being at once."

The school had not found a new principal, and the acting principal was "kind of holding the position and role." There was a staff meeting every Tuesday, and the senior syndicate meeting was every Wednesday. John believed there were "too many meetings" a week. Further, the staff meetings "demotivated" him because he felt the content of staff meetings was "not quite relevant" to him and "not build[ing]" him as a teacher.

> At the start of the meeting, it may be for everyone. Then it starts going away from being useful for me. It is common that one person interrupts and what he is talking about only applies to two or three people there. I'd rather spend that hour [of staff meetings] clearing my thoughts on what happened in the class while all is fresh.

Not satisfied with the working conditions in the school, John had thought about changing to a different school. However, considering he had already "spent 6 months getting to know this school" and it would take him "almost the same amount of time to get to know a new school," John decided to stay in the same school till becoming fully registered. He hoped the working conditions in the school "would be different with a new principal" next term.

Despite his dissatisfaction with the working conditions in the school, John put in his time and effort for students. He tried "balancing up the reading, writing, and maths learning with doing some more engaging things" to enrich students' learning. For instance, he did sports with students during lunch time and organised field trips to his parents' farm where students conducted an inquiry into insects and bugs. He also did music lessons in which students wrote their own songs and recorded the songs with the musical recording gear he brought to school. John also did different things to address student-behaviour issues, such as giving students 15-minute choosing time when they could independently select activities at the end of the day, letting them write their names on the board as an incentive for good behaviour.

Over time, John got better at "being consistent" at managing student behaviour and balancing "being strict and letting students have fun at school." As a result, student behaviour was improving. John explained, "the kids knew I was going out of my way to do things at lunch time for them. They kind of sense a bit of gratitude." John also saw the positive influence of his work on students' learning.

> Some kids say they enjoy what they are doing during class. They say this guy teaches us things we do not normally do. You sometimes can see from the kids that just the way they are, get excited about something. They can remember something you taught them last week. Oh my gosh! [laughing]

With students' behaviour and learning improving, John became a bit more relaxed and confident as a teacher:

> When you were a new teacher, you were a bit nervous, but then you learn that if you want to do something with students, such as setting up a routine, you just have to follow through with it, and students will do it eventually.

John received positive feedback from his mentor teacher and other people regarding the work he did for students. His mentor teacher said, "You have done really well. It has not been an easy class to come through. The students do seem a lot more settled." Another teacher told him that parents were impressed that there was "less fuss" in the school during lunch time because he did a lot of sports with students which no other teacher did.

In his third term of teaching, John had a mixed Years 5 and 6 class of twenty-nine 9- to 12-year-olds. There were 22 new children and seven Year 5 students from the previous year. A few students had special learning needs like ADHD. It was also a boy-heavy class. The challenge for John was to manage the 16 Year 6 boys who were "quite competitive" and

"clash[ed] with one another." What John found helpful was that the school had a new principal this term who supported him in addressing student-behaviour issues.

However, the new principal did not seem to bring about improvement to school culture. John said there was no increase of collegiality among teachers. "I talked to another teacher [in the senior syndicate] the other day. She thought it might be good to do a bit work on school culture because there is a bit of competition between teachers rather than sharing [resources]." Further, there was still disconnect between the school support for teachers and its expectations for and requirements of teachers. For example, the principal aimed to improve student achievement in maths, but there was no professional development session for teachers to improve their teaching in maths. John commented, "it would be useful to have one or two maths sessions with an expert, but we just have to figure it [maths teaching] out by ourselves." Also, when the school decided to deliver its maths programme online, there were not enough computers. John only got one textbook and he had to "scan the pages and upload them online" himself. John noted, "it took a lot of time [to scan and upload the textbook]. I did not enjoy not having a cool resource, not knowing what to teach and how to teach it [the online maths programme]."

John continued to face the challenge of workload. "It is still a quite busy school … a lot of work on top of teaching." For example, he started teaching Year 5 to Year 8 students Spanish and ukulele, and there was a team-sport tournament to organise. Although John "enjoyed" teaching those extracurricular activities, he felt "the workload was quite big." Time for professional learning was still hard. Although he received feedback from his mentor teacher and the new principal following lesson observations which indicated areas for improvement, John found it difficult to find time to improve his teaching.

> The feedback was good, but obviously there are always going to be things you need to work on. And you know them [areas for improvement]. You just do not get time to work on them, so it is a bit annoying.

The imbalance between work and life remained. "Just a lot to organise, but there was not enough time. You need to make time for work somewhere else so that often is the weekends." John wished he could have "less work on the weekends." The workload and the imbalance between work and life made John "less thrilled about teaching." He had thought about whether he should change to another job.

> It [teaching] is a great job. There are lots of good things about it. You work hard because you want to do good things for kids. You get enjoyment. However, at some point, it

> just goes way beyond that. As you have less social life, you start to wonder like, you want a work–life balance.

In his fourth term of teaching, John had 31 students. Compared to the previous term, John was happy that "the boys were settled down" and "some of the behaviours were better too." He commented that he did not have a teacher aide even though "there is a teacher aide in another class. I have got as many, if not more, special kids than her. I do not know why I haven't got one too."

John saw himself "getting better at teaching maths, knowing where to pitch questions, so they are not too hard or too simple. So, make the questions a little harder but not a lot harder, especially for the priority students." He also did some creative lessons with the students. For instance,

> I bought a kayak to school, and kids had to recreate an event. We had some logs and we put the kayak on the logs. The Māori tribes used to do that, so kind of got the kids to imagine what it used to be like. It is like experiential learning. They were doing it rather than just reading a book. It is good to do that, and I would like to do more of that kind of learning.

However, John felt he would have further developed his teaching if there had been time:

> I think to really grow, you need to have the time for planning, doing it, and reflecting on it. You need to really think what you could have done better and take that to inform some kind of change. Then you can do better in the next run. Cycle on that. But you do not have the time to fix your mistakes.

Because of the busyness of the school, his mentor meeting was every 2 weeks, and he was not observed this term. John felt the school needed to do something to help teachers manage the workload and challenge of time, enabling teachers to teach better and balance work and life. He believed "the biggest goal should be to see what things can be cut out and what things can be done quicker," such as reducing the amount of paperwork and simplifying relevant procedures and formats. However, he did not think the school would consider that: "It [helping teachers manage the workload] is just not a priority." He tried to convince the principal to simplify the procedures and formats of the reports to parents, but he "did not get much good feedback" on that.

To conclude, John had chosen teaching for several reasons, such as his dissatisfaction with previous work, his pursuit of fulfilment in work, pragmatic considerations (e.g., job security,

physical variety, travelling), and the influence of teacher friends. During ITE, especially on practicum, John recognised the demanding nature of teaching. He had chosen a small school to start his teaching career hoping he would have a more relaxed work environment and fewer student-behaviour issues and administration pressures. However, reality turned out to be the exact opposite. John not only encountered student-behaviour issues but also was confronted with workload challenges. Not managing stress and work–life balance affected John's career intention for teaching.

The Lived Experience of Sophie

Sophie was a 30-year-old European New Zealander. Prior to entering the MTchg (Primary) programme, Sophie had a bachelor's degree double majoring in marketing and advertising and worked as an account manager. However, Sophie did not feel challenged by her work as an account manager and wanted something that was "worthwhile." Also, she needed to be social as an account manager, but having a 6-year-old, she often could not be.

As Sophie wanted to change career, she mentored an 11-year-old, a family friend of hers, in her free time outside of work. The child grew up in poverty and was always between houses. Sophie helped this child navigate through her hard home life in a foster situation and develop her literacy skills, an experience she found very rewarding. Sophie saw first-hand how important education was in improving children's lives. She realised that teaching was something fulfilling for herself and something good that she could do for society.

Sophie also saw her personal fit for teaching. One was that her career history had "always been about relationship building." She "like[d] working with people, and children more." Additionally, being a mother of a primary-school-age child, Sophie felt it was easy, or "natural," to work with young children, which she believed would give her an advantage as a primary school teacher.

At Sophie's decision to teach, her parents expressed concern over the expected pay decrease. Sophie convinced her parents that "teaching is right for me" because "it makes me happy to be able to facilitate learning and provide children with positive school experiences." She stressed that "if I was happy in something I was doing, it would make my life better. I do not need just money." The fact that her sister was a secondary teacher made Sophie believe that she would also be okay with a teacher's income.

Sophie enrolled in the MTchg (Primary) programme because it had a particular focus on improving the learning of priority learners. She was very pleased with how her teacher education prepared her. In her view, there was much in-depth enquiry into theories about teaching and learning, which made her more aware of problems when things went wrong. In terms of teaching practice, although her first practicum experience was "very bad" because the associate teacher seemingly did not want to be an associate teacher and was "not encouraging or supportive" in guiding her, Sophie described her second practicum as "amazing." She viewed her second practicum school as a school that "modelled" the modern-day educational practice and the values about teaching and learning advocated by her ITE programme. Sophie described the curriculum in this school as emphasising key competencies such as managing self, and the classroom resources were up to date, including one-to-one iPads for students. This school also provided a positive environment and climate for preservice teachers to practise teaching with supportive teachers and leadership. "There was heaps of help available. Everyone was working together. No one was afraid of asking for help." Sophie liked the strong collegial ties among teachers, enjoyed the relationships she built with the teachers and other staff, and considered these relationships "a highlight" of her practicum. She also liked that the leaders in this school did not hesitate to give teachers nice compliments to acknowledge their work. As the school seemed to meet all her expectations for the work environment, Sophie really wanted to start teaching in this school, but it was far away from her home.

Sophie was especially grateful to her associate teacher from her second practicum school, who inspired her teaching. She described him as "so supportive and funny," "so into modern-day education" and "really good with the children." This associate teacher was also the team leader of the middle syndicate, having a leadership style Sophie "really related to."

> He did not make you feel like he was the boss. He encouraged teachers to bring ideas and let them run meetings. When you presented an idea, he would listen, and the whole team would listen.

Motivated by this associate teacher, Sophie was "really keen" to start teaching at the completion of her teacher education.

In elaborating her conception of the role of teacher, Sophie gave the metaphor of teacher as a "guide" and perceived teaching as "guiding"—"helping students navigate their learning journey." To guide students in learning, Sophie highlighted the importance of differentiating students' individual learning styles and needs and making learning relevant to students' lives in a culturally diverse country like New Zealand. Her emphasis on differentiation and relevance

in teaching appeared to have been influenced by her ITE programme that emphasised "connecting to students' lives and experiences" as an essential facet of practice for equity and by her practicum experience. Seeing "how diverse a classroom could be and how many different learning needs there were" on practicum, Sophie placed importance on connecting students' individual backgrounds to their learning. "You have to understand that your children might be from very culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and their backgrounds could affect how they learn, especially in their early years."

In terms of the kind of teacher she would like to be, Sophie stressed the importance of teacher–student relationships. Her practicum experience informed her that strong teacher–student relationships enabled "students to communicate if they had a hard or easy time" and "teachers to target the learning to individual students and better engage them." To establish good relationships with students, Sophie saw herself as a teacher who would be "open," "passionate," "friendly," "not very strict," and "not a grumpy teacher that would yell at children." She also talked about the influence of a literacy lecturer on her vision of self as a teacher. "She was really passionate. I would imagine her never ever yelling or so strict in her classroom." Besides, Sophie wanted to be a fun teacher and imagined her classroom to be "somewhere fun, relevant, and engaging for students." She recalled that when she was a student, her favourite teachers were the ones that had "made learning fun," though she remembered there was a lot of rote learning in her own primary school experience.

By graduation, Sophie had sought to find a teaching position in a low-socioeconomic-status school like her second practicum school. However, the lowest decile school near her home was Decile 7 (a middle to high-socioeconomic-status school) with about 400 students. She took a fixed-term full-time teaching position at this school. Regarding her fixed-term contract, Sophie said, "fixed term does not worry me. If you want to stay on and the school wants you to stay on, it will make a position for you."

According to the answers to her questions at the job interview, Sophie thought the school "had high expectations" for teaching and learning and "encouraged extensive collaboration" among teachers, which led to Sophie's belief that "it aligns with my values and interests. It just seems like somewhere I want to teach." She expected the school would offer "a lot of help," and she would "gain a lot of learning" in beginning teaching. Sophie hoped to "be a team leader" like her sister. Her favourite subjects were reading and writing, so she wanted to be a team leader in the curriculum area of literacy.

In her first term of teaching, Sophie had a new entrant class with ten 5-year-olds who had just begun school. They were from Chinese, Korean, Filipino, Māori, and European ethnic groups, comprising a diverse mixture of cultural backgrounds. Sophie was happy to have the new entrant class. She saw the first year of primary school was very important, and as a teacher, she could "have great influence on the children at the beginning of their schooling." She put in time and effort into building relationships with the children and felt much more responsibility than being a preservice teacher. "It is on me if something is wrong. I know I have got to do it the right way." Meanwhile, Sophie felt an increase in workload and the pressure on time and identified assessment as particularly time consuming.

However, Sophie thought the biggest challenge in her transition from preservice teacher to teacher was not the increased workload of full-time teaching but a mismatch between what she had expected of the school and what she experienced. The school turned out to be very different from the impressions she obtained from her job interview. She had had the impression that her new school held high expectations about teaching and learning, but she found it was "a very old system" lacking modern-day thinking about teaching and learning and up-to-date classroom resources. Sophie thought her school had a heavy focus on students' academic learning, especially literacy and handwriting, but it did not give equal importance to the key competencies for children identified by *The New Zealand Curriculum,* such as managing self. She described her school as having "no choosing time" for students, "no classroom resources" like the one-to-one iPads for students in her second practicum school, and "no budget" for teachers to buy classroom resources. Sophie was very disappointed when she went to the classroom and only found some old resources like "old broken pieces of Lego." Because she wanted to do the best for her students, Sophie spent "about $800" of her own money to get maths equipment, writing cards, play dough, other teaching resources, and baskets to put things in.

Further, Sophie felt disappointed that the teachers worked in isolation in the school, and the five teachers in the junior syndicate worked on their own. Sophie had expected from her job interview that teachers would be collaboratively planning lessons. However, "they are not at all. Our work is very separate. It is different from how they presented in the interview because it was one of my questions—collaborative planning." Additionally, Sophie found teachers did not mix classes at the school, which she disagreed with and said, "if I could, I would like to mix with another class in the afternoons to get students to move around the classes and to know all the teachers." Sophie made suggestions in the meetings like the idea of mixing up classes,

but "the [other] teachers just laughed." The negative response made Sophie feel undervalued. "My views are not important, I think."

The school principal was "retiring" in one more term and did not seem to exercise strong leadership around the school. The team leader of the junior syndicate had a much stronger influence on Sophie's work. Sophie found this team leader had a very different leading style from her associate teacher who was also a team leader in her second practicum school. The leading style of the team leader in her current school appeared to be like "this is what we are doing, so you should do the same."

Sophie preferred a student-centred approach to teaching influenced by her ITE programme, but her team leader appeared to take a more traditional, teacher-centred approach. Their different beliefs about teaching and learning caused frequent friction. For example, her team leader believed that a teacher should "be in front of the class teaching." Sophie disagreed, "No, teaching does not work like that now." She believed that "it is not me standing in front of the class teaching. I am moving around and sitting with the students. I am very open about learning things along with them." Also, Sophie valued the key competencies for children identified by the national curriculum and wanted students to have a period of reflection time in the afternoons during which the children were getting a pillow and lying down to reflect on what they had done or learnt on the day. But her team leader disagreed and criticised her in front of the students.

> In front of the children, my team leader said, "it is not the time for that. You should be reading them a book." And I said, "No, it is their routine. It is managing self—one of the key competencies."

Sophie's friction with her team leader had obvious negative effects on her work. She felt being "micromanaged" by her team leader who was "popping in my class unannounced several times a day and constantly watching and picking on me with everything I do." On her release days, she "often had to teach, to be observed, or to meet parents or people from kindergartens." Her beginning-teacher course, which was 1 day every month, was scheduled on her release days, so she did not get release time in the 2 weeks she attended the beginning-teacher course. In the weeks when she went to the beginning-teacher courses and lost her release time, Sophie found it "really hard" to keep up with work. Additionally, it appeared that her team leader never gave her positive feedback or said constructive things to her, but just "criticism" and "sarcastic comments." Sophie's feeling of being micromanaged and belittled by her team leader led to

her anxiety and doubts in herself as a teacher. She said in frustration, “there seems nothing I can do right.”

The friction between her and her team leader seemed to affect Sophie’s sense of belonging in her syndicate and school. Sophie emphasised that “it is her [the team leader’s] school and team” and that she never went into the staffroom for morning tea. Instead, Sophie spent the 20 minutes of morning tea with her students. It appeared that Sophie only had a relatively close relationship with her mentor teacher, who was sitting next to her. Sophie described her mentor teacher as “the main resource” for her. “If I have ever got any question, I go to my mentor.” Her mentor teacher was also the only one that she told about her friction with her team leader. However, her mentor didn’t want to get involved in Sophie’s friction with the team leader and did not provide much help or guidance to Sophie in this respect. Sophie thought it was because her mentor “did everything by the book” and “probably had got a friendship with the team leader” as they had worked at the school for 20 years.

As a result, Sophie had a very low job satisfaction and considered her first term of teaching experience “awful” and “terrible.” She emphasised that “what I have been taught is not what I am seeing in the school” and that the school “should not have taken on master’s graduates if it did not believe in modern-day education and not give teachers autonomy in running their classes.” The negative feelings that resulted from the conflict with her team leader got so bad that Sophie regretted her choice to teach in this school. She talked to the school principal about her intention to resign in the last week of the term. The school principal encouraged and convinced her to try another term. Sophie explained, “literally just the children pushed me to go back to the school.”

In her second term of teaching, Sophie had 18 five-year-olds in the mornings and 28 in the afternoons. Despite having a larger class size, Sophie felt “so much better and less stressed.” She commented,

> I am not as stressed because my team leader who used to pick on me has started a new classroom. She was busy, so I got left to do my own work more this term. I was still watched a little bit but not constantly.

Further, Sophie noted, “not until this term I felt it was my own class. And suddenly it was my own, it was amazing.” With greater autonomy running her class, Sophie saw herself as becoming “more confident” as a teacher. She talked about how she “used to look at the clock

going and rush" and think "we have to finish this. We have to do that." But now she was "getting patience" and allowing students "to learn at their own pace."

> The children were really beginners, and some learnt slower. They did not have to do what everyone else did, as long as they did the best for themselves and tried their hardest.

As a result, Sophie felt her class programme was running "smoother" and her teaching was "more individualised."

Sophie was very satisfied with how she managed her class and handled children's daily emotions and behaviour. One example was she put a little tent up in the classroom, and any student who was upset or angry could go in the tent and read a book.

> The children loved that, and they all got used to it. I was really happy I handled it like that, not telling children off. You cannot just yell at them. It is more about understanding what they need and why they behave like that.

Sophie was pleased to see the routines and values she had promoted in the class come out in the students. For instance,

> I have reinforced the key competencies like agency from the first day of school, and now they are such a good team. They help each other and care for each other.

She was also proud her children progressed well. "There was one little girl who used to say 'I cannot write. I cannot do it' at the start, but now she is way above the national standards of reading and writing." Also, a boy in her class who was a selective mute (an anxiety disorder featuring children who are unable to speak or communicate in settings where they feel uncomfortable or insecure) started speaking to her and participating a bit more.

> He now speaks to me and starts to listen a lot more. When he saw me testing someone else's phonetic knowledge, he really wanted to be tested on his words. He did not have to do it, but he was actually very excited to do it.

Sophie thought students' progress was "the biggest" motivation for her. "It is very rewarding when you see the progress the children make, from what they were at the start to what they became at the age of 5. It is really motivating."

Sophie placed importance on relationships with students' parents. She believed that developing a trusting relationship with students also involved "getting to know their family." Thus, she talked to the parents a lot when they brought their children to class and established good relationships with them. The parents' feedback gathered through the school's feedback forms was very positive, which made Sophie feel that her work as a teacher was valued.

> A lot of the parents said they were very appreciative of the development of their child at the entrance of school. They were very happy the way I handled the children at the beginning stage of their school life, making it not a scary place.

The feedback from the grandmother of the selective mute boy was particularly encouraging. "His grandmother is Chinese. Another parent translated her information. She said that I am the best teacher for her grandson." Sophie noted that she really valued the positive feedback from parents also because she did not get much positive feedback from the school, especially her team leader. With the progress of students and the affirmation of parents on their children's learning progress, Sophie highlighted that she was "relaxed a lot more" and learning to relieve stress.

As Sophie became happier at work this term, her relationship with her mentor improved. The following statement showed her high satisfaction with the support of her mentor teacher:

> My mentor teacher has been providing me with support. Nothing is a problem. I can always go into her classroom with anything, and she makes time. I can also text her or email her, and she always helps me.

However, her beginning-teacher course was still scheduled on her release days. In the weeks of attending the beginning-teacher course, Sophie had to manage her work without release time.

After this term, Sophie resigned. Although she like her class, she wanted to find a better school. She emphasised, "I definitely want to be a teacher because I enjoy teaching. It is what I want to do." However, she hoped to find a school that would model the modern-day educational values, resources, and practice. She hoped to find a school with supportive management that would allow her the autonomy to run her own class and with people who shared similar philosophies of teaching and learning. So Sophie wanted to do relief teaching instead. "I want to find a better school. If I do relief teaching, I can see what other schools have got to offer and decide which one is better for me."

However, Sophie did not do any relief teaching in schools in the following 6 months. She got a job from an education company, teaching maths to 8- to 10-year-olds in small groups 1 day a week. She was also doing parent help in her daughter's class. Sophie did go to schools for job interviews, because "I miss the relationship with children, and I miss making a difference [to children's learning]." However, given the negative experience in her first teaching position, Sophie noted that she was "very picky" now in job interviews. Taking her recent job interview for example,

> I spent 2 hours with the assistant principal, looking around and asking her questions. I told them what happened to my last job, why I was put off teaching, and why I also want to come back … I really liked the assistant principal, but the other lady in the interview was … I had this horrible feeling even in the interview, just not connecting. Whatever I said I felt she did not respond to it, so that went down.

Sophie did not worry about not getting the job though and emphasised that it was not just her being interviewed, but she was actively choosing a school suitable for her. "It is me interviewing them too. I am not rushing to get anything."

To sum up, Sophie's change of career to teaching was prompted by a combination of reasons, such as her dissatisfaction with her previous career, her need of time for family, her enjoyment of working with children, and her desire to help underprivileged children and contribute to society. She chose the MTchg programme which had a special focus on improving learning for children from low-income families. The MTchg programme and her second practicum experience had greatly influenced her beliefs and expectations of teaching. However, the school where she started teaching turned out, in the end, to be very different from her beliefs and expectations of what teaching should be. The misalignment in beliefs about and practice of teaching with the school, the lack of a sense of autonomy in running her class, and the feeling of being isolated and undervalued posed challenges to her being as a teacher and led to her decision to resign and to look for a better school.

The Lived Experience of Annie

Annie was a 29-year-old European New Zealander. She grew up in a middle-class family and described herself as "enjoy[ing] working with people" and being "quite public-minded" by which she meant she wanted "to work for the country." It appeared that Annie's primary school experience had profoundly shaped her, more than other levels of schooling. Annie explained, "primary school is a time when you work on your social skills and learn how to interact with other people. My primary school was strong on social relationships. It was like going home." She recalled that there were great teachers who were passionate about what they were doing and remembered one of her favourite teachers as being a particularly warm person. She also recalled that students worked closely with each other, and she loved working with her classmates with special education needs in mainstream classrooms. Later, when Annie was doing the MTchg (Primary) programme, she noted that "there have been a lot of returning back to the things I was doing in the primary school through this programme, which reminded me

of how good my primary school experience was." Annie thought her personal attributes of enjoying working with people and being public-minded made her "suitable" for teaching.

Prior to entering the MTchg (Primary) programme, Annie had completed a graduate diploma in visual arts. She had worked as a secretary in business but felt that "I was doing a job to get by that did not have any meaning for me." So, for a while, she had been "wondering what to do and trying to find meaning in work." In her search for meaningful work, Annie did some voluntary work in her community and taught visual arts to prisoners and intellectually disabled adults. Annie found that her interest in arts translated quite well to practising teaching. She said, "I tried not to be too prescriptive [in arts classes]. I gave people a lot of freedom and let them explore for themselves, which made a vibrant classroom atmosphere." Importantly, Annie found that "teaching what I knew to other people, especially those who are disadvantaged in some way, was very fulfilling." She explained that she had "an epiphany of wanting a better world" and "a belief that people can achieve if they are given opportunities," and teaching was "a calling" that spoke to her epiphany and "a vocation" through which she could help people in disadvantage and do something good for her country.

Annie's interest in helping the disadvantaged through teaching led to her choice of the MTchg (Primary) programme because it placed an emphasis on lifting achievement for priority learners. Annie chose this programme also because it was only 1 year at master's level, which was "a level up" from her graduate diploma in arts and advanced her personal learning. Annie's decision to become a teacher received positive feedback from those close to her. "My parents and friends thought that teaching was a good thing for me to go into. Everybody I told was saying, 'That is perfect!' They thought teaching was a good match for me, something I was suited to." Annie recalled that her father said, "teaching is perfect for you because you give people time." Later, when Annie was on practicum, she did enjoy giving children time, hearing their stories, and working with them.

Annie was contented with the MTchg programme. She described the programme as being "holistic" and "structured really well" by which she meant it had a good combination of theory and practice. She recalled that there was much exposure to theories about teaching and learning and discussions about why certain teachers do what they do, along with opportunities to apply the theories and ideas to classroom practice at practicum schools. Through the university courses and application of theory into practice on practicum, Annie felt the MTchg programme "set me up really well." Although Annie recognised that it was impossible to be fully prepared

by the 1-year long ITE programme, she felt the MTchg programme, the courses, and practicums, "supported [her] to carry on" with her learning.

The MTchg programme exerted a strong influence on Annie's understanding and beliefs about teaching and learning. She noted that it deepened her understandings about lifting achievement for students in low-socioeconomic communities in New Zealand. She gave the example that on the programme, there was a lot of discussion of "societal issues" in education and of "students who might not get catered for in our educational system." Such discussion influenced her perceptions of the aim of education as "to subvert the inequalities" and an important role of teachers as to recognise the needs of unprivileged students and provide them with "equitable" learning experiences. Also, the MTchg programme emphasised the importance of connecting teaching to students' lives and experiences. This idea influenced the emphasis Annie placed on attending to each student's individuality. In giving a metaphor of teaching, she compared teaching to "raising a bed of wildflowers rather than a plantation of daisies," by which she meant "raising students to be successful as they are rather than what the exclusive vision of success might look like."

Practicum experiences greatly influenced Annie's perceptions of herself as a teacher. She saw herself as a "responsive" and "inquisitive" teacher and stressed that building relationships with students was a favourite of her practicum experience.

> Building up that relationship [with students] was actually the thing I enjoyed the most. They would tell me about their family and what they did at the weekends. I enjoyed hearing the stories from them and tried to be as responsive as possible to the children.

Additionally, Annie recognised the importance of being confident in front of students and described herself as a "relaxed" teacher, "if not on the inside, then on the outside." She noted that she tried to "put out a confident and open vibe" in class, and she found that when she acted confidently, she could "get the students to settle down, organise them to do activities, and stop them from any disrupting behaviours straight away." By being able to manage the classroom on practicum, Annie said she found a "firmer" voice as a teacher.

Annie wanted to go to a full-time teaching position and said that she had a desire to use her strength and passion in visual arts and wanted to take a leadership role in this curriculum area one day. However, at the end of the MTchg programme, she took on a part-time relief teaching position at the school where she had her second practicum. Annie explained that the school did not have a full-time teaching position available in the middle of the year when she graduated

from the MTchg, but she really wanted to start teaching at this school. It was a Decile 4 school located in a low-socioeconomic community. There were 15 teachers, a number of support teachers, and approximately 350 students from diverse cultures. The majority of students were Samoan, Indian, and Māori. Annie thought that an advantage of starting teaching at the school was that she knew the teachers and knew how the school worked and where the resources were. More importantly, Annie emphasised that she liked the school leadership. She observed on practicum that there was much autonomy for teachers but little unnecessary pressure on teachers from school management. Annie commented, "there was a lot of freedom for teachers to respond to their class and children. There was also a lot of humour and emotional support." Annie also liked the school values. Many students enrolled in the school were from low-income families, and the school's purpose was to "make it a happy and safe place as possible for the children," which she found "really admirable." She was "quite motivated" by this goal, saying, "I really get fascinated by how I can make the children feel happy and safe at school."

In her first term of teaching, Annie was relieving mostly at the Year 1 and Year 2 levels, which she had taught on practicum, with 5- to 6-year-olds (the junior school). She usually relieved full days and sometimes little blocks too, but only Fridays were permanent. As it was not a full-time teaching position, Annie did not experience any difficulties making the shift from preservice teacher to teacher. Rather, she found teaching as a reliever "quite easy" because she was "not even doing half of the job of a full-time teacher." She did "not do any formal assessment or reports" and was "less stressed with student behaviour" compared to her full-time colleagues. She arrived at school about 8 a.m. and left at 3.30 or 4.30, "not having to work overtime." Because she was teaching part-time and it was the school where she had her second practicum, Annie noted that she felt like she was "still on practicum" for quite a while.

Although Annie didn't find starting teaching challenging, she did say that at the beginning of the term she had been a bit "nervous" about going to new classes where she did not know the students (there were eight classes in the junior syndicate) and being required to teach to someone else's plan. As time went by, Annie became "comfortable" with relief teaching, because she was "getting to know and talk to a lot of children" who "began to trust" her. The school's supportive environment also made Annie feel comfortable as a relief teacher. As a reliever with only one permanent teaching day a week, Annie was not eligible for the school's induction and mentoring programme, but there was "the support of surrounding teachers, the deputy principal, and the principal," who always told her "just come to me if you need anything."

Teachers in the junior syndicate had been especially helpful. “They always check if I need any help during the day or when I attend their meetings. I know I can go to them if I am not coping.”

As a reliever, Annie considered her contribution to the school community was “not huge,” but she felt her work was “valued” by the school. For example,

> The principal stopped me the other day and let me know that he likes how I treat the children, how I talk to them. That made me realise that he noticed how I am relating to the children and I am on the right track.

Despite not being a full-time teacher, the gradual establishment of relationships with students and colleagues and the support and recognition from the school gave Annie a sense of belongingness and made her increasingly “feel like a member of staff.”

Overall, Annie was happy with her first term of teaching, except for “the unpredictability of work” as a reliever and “not getting the satisfaction of seeing a child develop” over time because of moving around classes. She hoped to get a full-time position in her third term of teaching (at the start of the year 2018) and expected even higher job satisfaction if she had her own class.

In her second term of teaching, in addition to relieving in her second practicum school, Annie started part-time relief teaching in two other primary schools located in higher socioeconomic communities. Relieving in three schools developed Annie’s sense of self as a teacher. First, Annie became more aware of her role shift from a preservice teacher to teacher. As mentioned above, Annie had felt like she was still on practicum in her first term of teaching because she worked in her practicum school. However, when she started relieving at other schools, Annie felt strongly that “Ah, I am a [provisionally] registered teacher.” Also, working in different schools and working from different teachers’ lesson plans gave Annie more teaching ideas she wanted to try. “It was really good to see the different ways in which teachers in different schools taught literacy, maths, and arts. I have been going around, photographing little things in the classrooms to gather ideas.” Additionally, relieving in other schools enabled Annie to “get a feel for different schools.” She noticed the differences between the three schools in terms of their leadership styles, school culture, teachers’ classroom practices and discipline styles, and student behaviours in the classroom, like the level of respect for each other and for the teacher. Seeing these differences helped her develop a clearer idea of the school environment and working conditions she looked for herself as a teacher and where she lay in terms of “how much control” she would like to have over her work. Out of the three schools, Annie still liked

the leadership and school culture of her practicum school most and wanted a full-time teaching position at this school.

Annie talked about her development in teaching practice after two terms of relief teaching. She used to worry that the vocabulary she used to give instruction or explain things in class might be too difficult for the children to understand. Over the first two terms of teaching, Annie realised the importance of making things clear to the young learners and learnt to adjust her language to meet their needs. “5- to 6-year-old children do not have much prior knowledge. Being explicit is really key to a smooth learning environment.” Annie also felt she had become more flexible and adaptable in teaching. When she had to change a plan at the last minute, she was “more confident” in doing it, whereas she used to “get a bit flustered” when that happened. In addition, Annie had become calmer when dealing with difficult situations and student problems, saying that “I can now just walk into a situation and cope with it, even though on my inside, I might be going, ‘Oh god, how am I going to do this?’ I am getting better at just doing it.”

At the end of the term, Annie’s practicum school offered her a permanent full-time teaching position to start from the following term, which really excited her. She noted that getting the permanent full-time teaching offer was “a dream that came true.” Annie expected that full-time teaching was going to be hard, considering that some work would be new to her, like assessment. However, she felt she would be able to manage the stress of full-time teaching given that she had “a really good team, a really supportive principal and deputy principal” and she knew “a lot of the students.”

In her third term of teaching, which was the beginning of the 2018 school year, Annie had her own class with 18 Year 1 and Year 2 students aged 5–6 years. She was “very happy to have my own space” and was delighted to teach the two grade levels, because they were what she had been most used to since practicum. Also, she had built a close relationship with teachers of the junior syndicate in the last 6 months of relief teaching. “My whole practicum was with Year 1 and Year 2 classes. I know that part of the curriculum the best. I also most know and like the junior syndicate of this school.”

Different from relief teaching where she could be “a bit more lenient” as a reliever, Annie said she was “stricter” with student learning and discipline. “I am a lot harder on students. If I know they can do something but they have been lazy, I really push them or try to make them interested.” She joked, “I feel like I am a dragon sometimes.” Having her own class, Annie was

"using more of [her] teacher education" in her teaching. She noted that what she had learnt from the MTchg programme underpinned her practice as a teacher. Annie sought to "differentiate and tailor [her] teaching to individual child's needs as much as possible." She recognised the challenge of fostering individuality for 18 young children of "different personalities, learning styles, and abilities in literacy and maths" and admitted that she had "to work with a certain amount of rigidity" in terms of establishing routines to have a calm classroom. However, within this structured routine, Annie tried to encourage students' creativity and individual expression through the work they produced in class, the role they played in activities, and opportunities for discussions. An example was "a student must have their hand up if they want to say something when the whole class is sitting on a mat, but they are encouraged to express different opinions."

Moving to full-time teaching, Annie recognised the demands on time and emotion. Now, she was responsible for lesson planning, assessment, report writing, and communications with parents. She found the biggest challenge was getting "time to do everything." Annie got release time 1 day every week and a 2-hour block every 2 weeks. Assessment took up most of her release time. Besides, she used her release time to plan lessons, create resources, work one on one with students who needed extra help, and publish the class blog for parents to see what children were doing at school. Despite getting release time, Annie was working long days. She was in the school at 7.15 a.m. or 7.30 a.m. and stayed there till about 5 p.m. or 5.30 p.m., and then she might do more at home. Also, the increased responsibility of full-time teaching made Annie recognise more emotional demands from constantly working with young children. "It is a very full life. The little ones are just exhausting. I am exhausted." Not surprisingly, she thought "the whole job was different" after moving to full-time teaching.

Interestingly, Annie laughed when she made the statement that "the little ones are just exhausting. I am exhausted." It appeared that despite being exhausted, she remained passionate about her work as a teacher. Pleasant working conditions helped explain why Annie stayed positive about teaching. Despite the increased demands on her time in full-time teaching, Annie found the paperwork in the school was easy. For instance, the format of reports to parents was straightforward at this school, making report writing not hard for her. "I am writing reports at the moment, and I find it quite easy. When I've got all the data there, I can just pull what I need and make some judgements."

Moreover, Annie emphasised that there was "enough support" for her, both professionally and emotionally, in the school. Professionally, Annie was assigned a mentor teacher who had been her associate teacher on practicum and provided her with constant support.

> She is always giving me resources. If I have a problem, she always has something to help me. Last week, she did an observation on me, after which she gave me feedback and helped me with my inquiry goals.

Annie also valued that her mentor teacher gave her autonomy and let her "discover things for herself." However, Annie noted that she "learnt more" from her team leader, who "had more experience and expertise" in areas Annie needed to improve, such as how to teach very young readers. "Both my mentor teacher and I are observing our team leader to get better in our own practice." Apart from the support of her mentor and team leader, teachers in the junior school team "work collaboratively to plan lessons, do team sports, mix up students, and share resources and books." Annie especially valued the collaborative planning which guided her to "cover every curriculum area," and meanwhile, allowed her to "use and interpret according to the needs" of her own classroom. In terms of emotional support, Annie gave the example that when a lesson observed by her team leader and mentor did not go very well, she "got some silly thoughts into [her] brain like 'I am bad at my job.'" Knowing Annie had those thoughts, her team leader said, "Do not worry. We all have those thoughts. I have them every term." The encouragement from her team leader soothed Annie's anxiety and enabled her to regain confidence. "My team leader has been teaching for over 20 years. Her words made me feel like I was not alone feeling that way. It was not wrong to feel that way." Annie was "very grateful" for the school support and thought her first term of full-time teaching had "been a great start" for her.

In her fourth term of teaching, Annie had 19 Year 1 and Year 2 students. Annie was a lot more emotionally drained than the previous term because of student-behaviour issues. She had three boys who appeared to be "very attention seeking" whose disruptive behaviours hindered the smooth running of teaching and the learning of other children. "I have been struggling with their behaviour and trying to manage and modify it. Because their behaviours are disruptive, you do not get much learning done. Other students are affected." Annie talked about one student. "He would willingly hurt others. He shouts back at me, runs away, and hides under the table." It appeared that "it was a behaviour developed at home" and there was a lack of support from the student's parents who "had different ways of dealing with it at home." The repeated behaviour problems were very stressful for Annie.

> I'm trying to make the classroom a nice place to be for all the children. Part of me feels sorrow for him and really wants to help him, but the other half of me is like I am going to put my energy into the children who are respectful … It has been a battle to keep things as they were going. I found it really draining.

The stress resulted from persistent discipline issues negatively affected Annie, as she noted,

> There have been quite a few days I do not want to be at school. Getting up in the morning, I am just like I cannot deal with these behaviours again. There have been a few weeks I feel like this is not worth it.

That said, Annie did not stop trying to resolve the student-behaviour issues, and her mentor teacher and her team leader provided her with "the biggest supports" in student discipline. "My mentor teacher and my team leader are very experienced with different types of children and types of behaviours. They always give advice on why something is happening and what I can do to address it." The deputy principal was also supportive and comforted her when she had a bit of cry one day caused by student-behaviour issues. "The deputy principal said to me, it is a really hard job … She made me feel I was right to feel upset and I was not overacting." With the support from her mentor teacher and leaders at the team and school levels, Annie was getting better at addressing student discipline and managing her emotion. She finally managed to resolve the behaviour issues with two of the students, although one student was still "quite tricky to manage."

Although Annie had not attended an externally provided beginning-teacher course, she was not concerned as she thought there was sufficient support for her in the school. Also, given the demands of full-time teaching, she felt "I've got enough in my brain at the moment." Additionally, after waiting for the full-time teaching position for 6 months, she was eager to learn through trial and error on the job. "I work hard to build my own practice and see what I need … I am learning as I go, and it is a big learning curve."

With greater teaching experience, Annie felt her "confidence grow." Increased confidence came from being able to "establish classroom routines and create a cohesive group" in her class. She was proud that the students were "reminding each other" about their behaviour, showing "what they have come to expect from being in our classroom." Moreover, her confidence grew from creating "a really active and engaging classroom." For example, she did a lesson on outer space, in which she brought together science, maths, experiment, arts, and writing to teach astronomy, planets, and stars. "Students really loved that. They were really engaged and thinking about the physicality of outer space. Nobody was asking me why we cannot go on the

iPads." The success of the outer space lesson inspired her to "bring in lots of aspects of the curriculum into one activity," such as integrating "arts and other areas of the curriculum into reading, writing, and maths." By doing this, Annie hoped "to give more to the children who are good at rugby, dancing, drawing or something else but stressed with reading and writing and maths in a pure form" and "to make them feel they can achieve just as much as their peers." When Annie was assessing the students, she enjoyed "seeing the effect" of her teaching on students' learning. She noted, "it was in front of you that they have learned what you have taught. That was fulfilling."

Beyond her classroom, Annie was doing the arts term plan and organising arts projects for the junior syndicate. She was delighted to undertake these additional tasks and perceived them as opportunities to use her interest and expertise in arts. The positive feedback from her colleagues on the art works that students had completed made her feel her effort was worthwhile and valued. She said delightfully,

> The teachers know I have a background in arts and are using it within the school. They ask me for ideas or give me an art project to do … We showed our arts in the school assembly last week. The students did the introductions and presented their work. Teachers were coming and saying, "The art was great!" You get the sense that "Okay. I did that right."

By the end of her first year of teaching, Annie's career intention for teaching remained. Although she recognised teaching as a demanding job that required a teacher to grapple with many demands, Annie got "so much joy" from teaching. She compared being a teacher with her previous job as a secretary and commented,

> My work before was as a secretary. Although I was good at it, I hated it. It did not reflect my interests or values, whereas with teaching I can bring all those things into it. It is a job you can bring yourself into, which is really satisfying.

In summary, Annie's choice of teaching as a career was influenced by her desire for meaningful work and doing something good for the country. Her choice of an ITE programme that had a focus on lifting achievement for students in low-socioeconomic communities and of a low-socioeconomic school to start teaching aligned with her desire for meaningful work. Although she encountered challenges with beginning teaching (e.g., the workload of full-time teaching, student-behaviour issues), the professional and emotional support in the school helped her resolve and manage these challenges. The positive working environment and the joy and

fulfilment from applying her expertise in arts to do meaningful work reinforced her career intention for teaching.

Summary

This chapter presented the lived experiences of the five participants and how they made meaning of teaching and themselves as teachers over time. Zoe and Stella had chosen teaching as their first career, while Annie, Sophie and John changed careers to become teachers. The participants had similar reasons for choosing to teach, such as their desire to make a positive difference to children's learning and development and to have meaningful and fulfilling work. Sophie and John also had pragmatic considerations, such as a need of time for family or job security. During ITE, especially on practicums, all participants came to recognise the demanding nature of teaching. Zoe, Stella, Sophie, and Annie who were content with how their programme prepared them for teaching were more positive about starting teaching and intended to teach for the long term. However, John felt one year was not enough to get prepared for teaching and was not sure that he would be able to manage work demands. He did not have a long-term plan for teaching.

In their first year of teaching, all five participants encountered similar challenges, such as time pressures, meeting the diverse learning needs in their classroom, and student-behaviour issues. Stella and Annie had consistent strong support from their school which helped with their transition from university to teaching. Having a match between their experiences and expectations helped them develop a positive sense of self as a teacher, contributed to their high job satisfaction, and reinforced their long-term career intentions for teaching. In contrast, Sophie and John who experienced mismatches between their expectations and the reality of their school experiences did not acquire such a positive sense of self as a teacher which influenced their career intentions. The five participants' experiences revealed the critical role their schools played in their meaning making of teaching and themselves as teachers.

The next chapter, Chapter 5, presents a cross-case analysis of the findings.

Chapter 5
Cross-Case Analysis of Meaning Making of Self as a Teacher and Teaching as a Career

Introduction

The overarching research question that guided this study was: How do beginning teachers make meaning of teaching and themselves as teachers over time? Associated with the overarching question are the following three subquestions:

(a) What meaning do beginning teachers bring with them to teaching?
(b) How is meaning constructed and reconstructed in beginning teachers' first year of teaching?
(c) How does the construction and reconstruction of meaning influence beginning teachers' career intentions?

This chapter presents a cross-case analysis of the longitudinal data primarily gathered from 24 individual interviews. The interviews were conducted with the five participants at five different time points: 1) the end of their ITE programme in June 2017; 2) the end of their first term of teaching in September 2017; 3) the end of their second term of teaching in December 2017; 4) the end of their third term of teaching in April 2018; and 5) the end of their fourth term of teaching in June 2018. The interviews aimed to capture how participants made meaning of teaching and themselves as teachers over time. The interview data were supplemented with field notes and information collected through social media.

The chapter consists of three parts that address the above three subquestions. The first part presents the findings in relation to participants' meaning making of teaching and themselves as teachers before and during ITE. The second part addresses participants' meaning constructions and reconstructions in the first year of teaching, and the third part reveals the influence of meaning constructions and reconstructions on participants' career intentions.

What Meaning Did Preservice Teachers Bring With Them to Teaching?

Presented below are the meanings of teaching and self as a teacher that participants made before and during their ITE programme.

Meaning Making Before ITE

The cross-case analysis showed that in the main the participants chose to go teaching for idealistic reasons. The first ideal was to positively influence all children's learning and

development, illustrated by comments like "I see the meaning of teaching as fostering the learning and growth of students" (Stella) or "doing something good for the children" (John). The second ideal was to help disadvantaged children. This was evident in three participants' choice of the MTchg programme which had a focus on promoting educational equity for what the MoE called "priority learners." For instance, Sophie stated that "I did my master's because it's got a focus on priority learners, which is very important to me." The third ideal was to contribute to the good of society. For example, Annie went teaching because "it [teaching] is something I can do for my country," while for Zoe, "the meaning comes from that we [teachers] are raising, influencing, the future generation." The above examples revealed positive constructions of teaching, suggesting idealistic notions of being a teacher and views of teaching as a socially valuable and important job.

Nevertheless, the degree of idealism varied between participants. The two youngest participants (Stella and Zoe) had expressed an early interest in teaching and had always aspired to be teachers. Their choice of teaching as their first career aligned with their ideals to make a difference to children's learning and development and to contribute to society. Their long-term aspirations for teaching are shown in the following statements: "I always wanted to be a teacher" (Zoe) and "I kind of always liked the idea of teaching. I knew that someday I would be a teacher" (Stella). Such long-term aspirations contrasted with the three older participants who had chosen teaching as a second career. Their previous careers did not adequately match their desire to have a meaningful or fulfilling career so they changed to teaching to better align their work with their ideals, such as to make a difference to children and/or to society. Two career changers' choice of teaching was also influenced by pragmatic considerations (presented in the following paragraph), which suggested they did not go into teaching with the same degree of idealism as the other participants.

Sophie and John had pragmatic reasons for choosing to change careers to teaching. They saw teaching as being compatible with family life, job security, and/or job mobility. For instance, Sophie, as a parent of a primary-school-age child, went teaching partly because of her need for time for family. She said, "as an account manager, I needed to be social, but I could not always go to my work events. I've got a family." John, whose previous job was doing office work, didn't like sitting at his desk all day. He valued having physical variety and thought that teaching would let him walk around the class, stating that "it [physical variety] was a funny small thing but actually came to my decision [to be a teacher]." John also mentioned job security and opportunities to teach and travel abroad: "My family think that teaching is a secure

job" and "another reason [to teach] was the travel aspect." The data indicated that participants displayed different degrees of idealism, possibly linked to the different reasons that led them into teaching.

The choice of the MTchg programme had also pragmatic, along with idealistic, reasons. Two participants talked about the slightly higher starting salary that teachers with a master's degree attracted compared to graduates from other programmes. Stella, for instance, said, "it was not the only motivating factor but certainly it was a bonus that you start with slightly higher salary." All participants valued a master's degree for qualification advancement. John in particular thought a master's degree was likely to become a basic requirement for teaching in the near future. He believed that "teacher education might be going down the road where you must have the master's to become a teacher."

The data also showed that the participants had multiple influences on their decision to become a teacher. These influences included other people, personal qualities, a desire for meaningful and fulfilling work, and previous school and work experiences. These influences are presented in detail below.

Influence of Other People. The influence of other people was very evident in participants' choice of teaching as a career. For the two youngest participants, who had always aspired to be teachers, influential people included former teachers, parents who worked as teachers, or parents who valued teaching and had encouraged them to pursue a teaching career. Zoe talked about the influence of her mother, who was a primary school teacher, on her early interest in teaching: "It was good to see a teaching role model in my life from a young age." Stella spoke about the influence of an inspirational primary school teacher on her early interest in teaching, noting that the teacher "grew a love of learning and also a love of teaching in me." Stella also stressed the influence of her parents who valued teaching and encouraged her to pursue her dream of being a teacher:

> My parents really wanted to push me into doing education and becoming a teacher. Since [I was at] an early age, they were kind of, "You are made to be a teacher. That is what you need to go into."

With the modelling of parents working as teachers and the nurturing of a love of learning and teaching by former teachers, both Zoe and Stella had imagined themselves as teachers since a very young age and played school with their siblings.

The influence of other people was also evident in two of the career changers' decision to teach. However, rather than parents and former teachers, two career changers highlighted the influence of friends and siblings who were teachers. For example, John highlighted the influence of his teacher friends on his consideration of teaching as an alternative career: "Sometimes you do not really see it [to be a teacher] yourself, but other people's opinions do help you make the decision." In Sophie's choice of teaching as a second career, her sister, a secondary school teacher, helped her set aside her concerns about teachers' salaries and set her career goal for teaching: "The salary [for teaching] is not what I got as an account manager, but that is okay. My sister is a teacher" and "I would like to be something like my sister, to be a team leader [one day]."

Interestingly, the influence of other people was not always positive. Two participants were discouraged from their parents in their decision to teach because of concerns about the workload and the stress or the low pay. For instance, Zoe mentioned her mother, herself a teacher, tried to dissuade her from teaching and encouraged her to look at other professions. "My mum used to say do not be a teacher. She said it is hard work. I got top in my business class in the university. So she said, 'do not be a teacher. Go into business.'" Sophie's parents expressed their concern about the reduction in her income when she told them about her decision to switch from marketing and advertising to teaching. "My parents were worried because of the pay decrease. The money [teachers' income] is much lower." Nevertheless, these two participants still went teaching, despite negative reactions from other people.

Influence of Personal Qualities and A Desire for Meaningful Work. The participants had all highlighted that personal qualities were important for being a teacher. For example, in explaining their reasons for going teaching, four participants emphasised that they cared for children and/or loved working with children. The following quotations exemplify this: "I always have the innate drive to teach, to work with children. I care a lot about the children" (Stella), and "I love working with children. I found it quite natural to work with children. I feel comfortable around them" (Zoe). These statements not only showed participants loved working with children but also suggested their construction of teaching as a caring profession. These examples demonstrated participants' awareness of the importance of having an innate liking of, or care for, children to be a good teacher.

Three participants identified other personal qualities suited to teaching. For instance, Annie and Sophie highlighted their personal qualities of being good at relationship building and

enjoying working with people. Sophie stressed that being a parent of a primary-school-age child made it easy or natural for her to work with children, which she thought would give her an advantage as a primary school teacher. John also talked about his personal qualities that he thought suited him to teaching: "There are little ways which I think are uniquely me, like how you respond to a student. I could use a bit of humour to balance up when they do something wrong."

All participants, regardless of being first- or second-career teachers, placed an emphasis on an inner quest for meaningfulness, purpose and fulfilment in their choice to teach and viewed teaching as "fulfilling," "rewarding," and/or "meaningful." For example, a first-career teacher said: "I got into teaching because I wanted a job which was meaningful" (Stella). The three participants who changed careers to teaching all felt dissatisfaction with previous jobs as having a lack of meaningfulness or fulfilment. They thought that teaching would be better able to meet their needs for meaningful or fulfilling work. For example, Annie was dissatisfied with her previous job as a secretary and explained her choice of teaching as "a search for meaning." By choosing to teach, Annie noted "I have found something that gives me direction. I find it [teaching] meaningful." Sophie explained that she changed her career to teaching because "I wasn't challenged by my work as an account manager, so I decided I needed something that was worthwhile and something fulfilling." In contrast, she felt "teaching would give me meaning in my career and my life." John compared his previous work and teaching, saying, "my job before I went overseas [teaching English in Chile] was not very fulfilling … I feel teaching would a bit more fulfilling." These statements indicated that the career changers expected teaching to provide them with higher job satisfaction by aligning their desire for meaningfulness and fulfilment in their work.

Influence of Previous Teaching-related Work Experience. The participants' positive attitudes towards teaching were influenced by their previous teaching-related work experience. Examples of previous teaching-related experience included tutoring or mentoring children in academic and/or social areas, language teaching abroad, and voluntary work teaching arts. Although none of the participants' previous teaching experience had been extensive, it had enabled the participants to see the positive impact they could have on students. These experiences helped them make a decision to teach. For example, Stella, commenting on her experience of mentoring a Year 8 student, said: "It was such an incredible experience. Seeing the impact you could have by doing something like that [teaching through mentoring] was what drove me to realise that I needed to do this [teaching] now." Sophie talked about her experience

of mentoring an 11-year-old child: "I saw how education was very important, something could change her [the child she mentored] life for the better. I believe in education, so I became a teacher." In addition, previous teaching-related work experience gave rise to positive emotions, such as enjoyment, fun and happiness. Examples follow: "Doing tutoring made me realise that I really enjoy teaching" (Zoe), "I had enjoyed teaching, not much experience in the past, but that was quite fun" (John), or "teaching really made me happy" (Annie; Sophie). However, the participants' previous teaching-related work was small in scale and/or short in time or not in New Zealand school settings. While such experience oriented them towards teaching, they may not have prepared them well for the realities of teaching.

The findings indicated that previous teaching-related work experience may have led to participants' positive constructions of themselves as teachers. For example, Zoe linked her perceived teaching ability to tutoring children of different ages and subjects and emphasised her strength and passion for teaching primary mathematics. She said, "I feel quite confident to teach maths. I love showing students new ways of thinking about maths." Annie, through teaching arts to prisoners and intellectually disabled people, felt "my practice in arts translated quite well to practising teaching." Their perceptions of their teaching ability indicated that the participants had imagined and constructed themselves as teachers.

Influence of Previous School Experience. The participants' constructions of the teachers they wished to be had been influenced by their previous school experiences. Three participants talked about how their positive school experiences influenced their emphasis on relationships with students, a child-centred approach to teaching, and/or the professional qualities they considered important and wished to develop. For example, Annie valued relationships with students influenced by her own primary school, highlighting her primary school was "strong on social relationships" and "a time that really shaped me." Stella, inspired by a favourite teacher who had grown a love of learning in her through a very child-centred approach to teaching, wanted to emulate this approach. She wanted to enable her students to "enjoy school and develop a love of learning." Zoe's desire to be a well-organised teacher was influenced by a former teacher she had admired. She remembered the teacher as being very well organised:

> This teacher always wrote out on a piece of paper the instructions for the day. I remember everyday she would pull out a new one, whereas I had other teachers who wrote on the board in the morning the last 5 minutes before the bell. I liked how she

was always so well prepared. I always admire teachers like that. That's the kind of teacher I want to be. I want to be organised.

In contrast to positive school experiences, two participants provided examples of how negative school experiences influenced their constructions of the teachers they wished to be. John recalled his experience at intermediate school which made him recognise the importance of making teaching relevant to students: "Now looking back, a lot of those classes … just did not seem relevant." Sophie, remembering "a lot of rote learning" in her primary schooling, wanted to create a "fun and engaging" classroom for students. So, for John and Stella, their negative school experiences influenced their wish to do things differently and to provide better learning experiences for their future students.

The following section presents findings in relation to meaning making during ITE.

Meaning Making During ITE

The data showed that a number of influences shaped participants' meaning making of teaching and themselves as teachers during ITE. These are discussed in the following sections regarding the programme, practicum, other people, and the interplay between participants and ITE.

Influence of the ITE Programme. The participants thought that their ITE programme broadened their understanding of the purpose of education. Three participants emphasised the importance of education to bring positive changes to the disadvantaged or to promote educational and social equity. For example, Sophie thought that "the role of education is a vehicle to change people's fate." Annie talked about the influence of the ITE programme which stressed that the aim of education was "to transform, to subvert the inequalities that we see or we don't see." She further added, "I am very aware of what a Western education system we have and how you analyse practices within it that might be failing our Māori and Pasifika groups … that's what this programme teaches us." Additionally, all participants placed value on a holistic or rounded approach to teaching and learning, evident in their statements: "It is important to take a holistic approach and see student learning in a lot wider areas than just reading, writing and maths" (Stella), and "education is to prepare children for what they are going to face in the future, in all aspects, not just the academic aspect" (John).

The ITE programme developed participants' understanding of how students learn and how they could foster students' learning as teachers. They valued the focus on individual difference between students, aware that "not all learners learn the same way" (Sophie). As shown in

Chapter 4, the participants' teaching metaphors embodied a student-centred approach to teaching and learning and placed importance on helping each child achieve their potential. As such, they viewed the teacher's role as facilitator and valued student learning autonomy. For example, Stella said,

> Teachers might be experts in some areas, but that is not the most important thing. It is more how they can facilitate students' learning about themselves and the wider world, allowing them to navigate their own way and getting them to explore different things to learn and develop the skills they need.

Relationships with diverse students were seen to be particularly important, and participants felt their programme had prepared them to teach and connect with students of different cultural backgrounds. The programme emphasised the importance of taking students' backgrounds and prior experiences into consideration to promote learning relevancy and engagement. For example, Zoe said, "the master's programme emphasised the six facets of practice, and one of them was connecting to students' lives and experiences." Sophie stated,

> We learned a lot about why we do things, why students need to learn this or that. It is all about understanding that different cultures have different world views, and it is important to make it (learning) relevant and engaging, connecting to students.

The participants provided examples of teaching strategies they had learned from the MTchg in promoting learning relevancy, engagement, and connection to students. For instance, Stella learned the importance of using appropriate examples and resources in teaching, "to make sure things in the classroom relate to their [students'] home environment instead of talking about snow when it does not snow at all."

All participants talked about how the programme developed their critical thinking and their ability to reflect on their beliefs and practices as a teacher. Annie, for example, commented on how the MTchg taught her to be critical of herself as a teacher:

> What the master's taught me was it has to be conscious [about my teaching] as much as possible because there is so much that can come pass your lips that you have not even thought about what you are saying. Sometimes I can mumble, say gonna instead of going to. It is really hard to shut your own beliefs, your own ways of thinking, or your own patterns of talking. I just try to be conscious as much as possible, to be aware of it and find ways to solve it better.

The ITE programme also influenced the participants' desire for continuing professional learning when they went teaching. For instance, Zoe, looking forward to being a first-year teacher, said,

> We got lots of advice from the programme about how we should use some of the release time to learn to teach in new ways, because we do not have 1 day every week to be released from classroom after the first year. I definitely want to take the advantage of the release days and do a lot of professional development.

Influence of Practicum. Practicum was a key influence on changing participants' views of teaching. The participants experienced and observed the busyness of all-day teaching on practicum which helped them construct a more complex understanding of what teaching involved. They described teaching on practicum as being "busy" and "lots of work" which made them feel "overwhelmed." For instance, Zoe said, "I got quite overwhelmed during my practicum," and commented that "I had been in my mum's class a lot, but I never really realised how much work teaching is until I did it myself." John thought that while teaching was not like the 9–5 grind of his previous office work, it involved different demands. He commented, "it is hard enough just to be a teacher in class, let alone the sports and cultural activities that take time out of class." Annie stated, "it [teaching] is hard. I am just amazed they [teachers she saw at practicum schools] can do all the testing, all the reports, and still have a life." These examples suggest that practicum provided participants with opportunities to develop a better understanding of the demands of teaching.

For four participants, being on practicum boosted confidence in themselves as teachers. For example, Zoe who wanted to be a fun teacher, increased her confidence as a teacher by successfully facilitating students' learning in fun ways:

> During practicum, I was trying to find fun ways to change things up and encourage learning through fun and creative means of exploration. By the end of the practicum, I worked very successfully.

Annie spoke about how her practicum experience boosted her confidence as a teacher through being able to manage the classroom and organise students to learn: "Realising that I can get them [students] to do what I want made a big difference to my confidence." Sophie talked how her practicum experience enhanced her understanding and confidence in teaching students of diverse cultural backgrounds: "When I was teaching these students [in practicum classrooms], I understood why differentiation was very important, always learning about the students, their backgrounds, to choose interesting subjects for them and establish very strong relationships."

Stella also linked her feelings of confidence to being well prepared for practicum, saying, "I think I was prepared as much as I could be, apart from actually having my own class." In contrast, John appeared to be not as confident as other participants. As the previous chapter showed, he did not feel prepared to teach, particularly in terms of curriculum implementation.

The four participants who talked a lot about how their confidence as a teacher had been boosted on practicum valued what they saw as a strong partnership between the ITE programme and practicum schools. They believed this strong partnership helped them connect theory and practice and prepare them to be teachers. For instance, Stella said, "the partnership between the master's programme and the school was really strong. The two of them really prepared me." Annie thought the partnership gave her a "chance to look at the higher ideas about why certain teachers do what they do and societal issues and then bring all that down to the classroom." Zoe also highlighted the benefits from having a strong university–school partnership. She valued the way courses and practicum were integrated and the way this supported her learning to teach:

> I liked the idea that we had 2 days at school and 3 days at university. That weekly touching base with the school was really good as we could see the daily running of the school. Then we went back to university, talking about what we saw and analysing it.

Three participants emphasised the importance of having extended periods on practicum for preparing them for the teacher's role. For example, Zoe commented: "Having my second practicum that continued for 9 full-time weeks really helped me feel prepared." Stella, commenting on the benefits of being in one practicum school for a length of time, said:

> I really got good opportunities to practice being a teacher. A big part [of the practice] was my second practicum. I started on the first day of the year and I was there with the kids for almost 5 months, so I really felt like a teacher.

Influence of the Profession. The influence of lecturers at the university, associate teachers and other teachers at practicum schools, and peers in the MTchg programme was evident in the participants' meaning making of teaching and themselves as teachers during ITE. Three participants gave examples of university lecturers who had positively influenced their understanding and practice of teaching by modelling teaching strategies and a passion for teaching. Examples follow:

> One lecturer told us about how teachers gave generic worksheets, which were not personal to the children in their class, and the children found them hard to engage. Her

> idea was to rewrite and change the names, so the children in your class have their names in the worksheet. There are lots of different cultural names in New Zealand. Children do not get to see their names on books or in textbooks, so it is a way to connect them. (Zoe)

> She [a university literacy lecturer] was so passionate about what she did. I love her passion. I was like "Wow, she would be an amazing teacher." For me if I have to think back on teaching, she was great. (Sophie)

Two participants appreciated that their associate teachers allowed them autonomy to practise teaching and at the same time provided invaluable support:

> It is not an easy thing to step back and let someone else have your classroom, but she did really well, in a way that I felt I have autonomy to do what I wanted but I did not feel unsupported. (Stella)

> My associate teachers wanted me to succeed. They allowed me to learn on my own and make mistakes in a safe environment where there was another teacher present. (Zoe)

Two participants were inspired by associate teachers' passion for teaching and/or other teachers' commitment to teaching at practicum schools.

> He [associate teacher] was great. I liked everything he did in the class. I learnt so much from him … That is why I was so motivated to learn to teach. (Sophie)

> I really admire them [teachers from her practicum school]. People in it work very hard for the children. (Annie)

In contrast, two participants gave examples of negative experiences with other teachers when on practicum. Sophie talked about an unsupportive associate teacher: "My first practicum experience was very bad because the associate teacher was not encouraging or supportive. She did not seem to want to be an associate teacher." John discussed how other teachers tried to persuade him to not go teaching: "So many people tell me not to do this [teaching]. Every school I was at for practicum, there was always one teacher who was like 'I should not be a teacher. There is so much work.' It was like they were serious."

Two participants spoke specifically about the positive influence of peers in the MTchg programme on their learning to teach. John valued how his peers understood his questions and confusion in learning to teach and supported him, stating that "what I've noticed from this programme is how much I learn, not necessarily of lecturers, but from and of each other, like

my peers." Zoe also valued "being with like-minded people who want to be teachers and bouncing ideas."

Interplay Between Participants and Their Programme. The data suggested the interplay between participants and their programme could lead to differences in attitudes towards learning to teach. Take John and Stella as examples. While both commented on how their programme did not place emphasis on how to implement *The New Zealand Curriculum*, one talked about it negatively and the other more positively. Stella felt that it was a strength of the programme to focus on pedagogy rather than having a narrow focus just on how to teach the curriculum:

> They [the lecturers] were clear with us "we are not going to teach you *the New Zealand Curriculum*. The curriculum might change while you are a teacher at some point. You will learn the curriculum on your practicum. Every school does it a bit differently. So we do not want to teach you this one set way. What we want to teach you is the skills and concepts related to teaching. You can take and apply them as you choose." So I think that is definitely the strength.

In contrast, John wanted more guidance on curriculum implementation.

> Like the curriculum, at the end of the year, a Year 3 student should be able to do XYZ of a subject, but it does not break, like what WK3 or 4 might look like, for reading, writing or maths. What my priority here is give me a bit of guidance.

It seemed that although John was aware of the importance of teaching to students' individual differences, he still wanted a recipe for lesson planning:

> I understand that everyone's classroom is different, but still it would be useful to know the direction or what the sequence [of lessons over each week and term] is. I figure, for instance, a maths specialist who is really good at teaching maths knows how to break it [the curriculum] down and design a really good lesson.

John recalled his practicum experience regarding teaching the curriculum, thinking it was a waste of time for teachers to plan lessons in different subject areas:

> There were about 10 classes in the middle school (Year 3 and 4 with 7- and 8-year-olds), and each teacher taught a different lesson plan. For me that is like 10 teachers each take an hour or two to do lesson plans. Why cannot the school get its best maths teacher to write up a plan? Everyone kind of got to do that. It just seems a whole lot of duplication of workload. It just does not seem to be much efficiency to it.

John's comments above suggested that although he, informed by his teacher education, was aware of the importance of attending to students' individual needs, his beliefs of pursuing efficiency prevailed. John's pursuit of efficiency appeared to be influenced by his previous work in business. He said,

> In the business world, your productivity is very important. Look at education from the business' point of view, it is about the children and their learning, but you do have to value teachers' time.

John's argument for efficiency and productivity suggested a seeming misalignment between the meaning that he brought to teaching and the aim of his programme.

At the End of ITE. In accord with the development of a greater understanding of the complexity of teaching and being a teacher, all participants expected beginning teaching to be challenging and to require them to grapple with the multiple work demands. Examples include: "I expect it [beginning teaching] to be an incredible challenge" (Stella), "[I'll] probably be in a flap somewhere, not keeping up with some work" (Annie), and "honestly it will be so much about the survival mode" (John).

Four participants maintained their passion for teaching, saying that they were "excited," "very happy" and/or "really keen" to start their teaching career. Stella particularly said that she hoped "to stay with the profession, to continue to make the difference for learners." Anne and Sophie set long-term goals for their teaching career. For instance, Annie said, "I'd love to be leading the art part of the curriculum. I'd love to be, if not always in the same school, then somewhere similar, taking care of the welfare of kids." In contrast, John expressed some concerns regarding the workload, pressure, and financial reward of teaching: "I have not thought about it enough how long I will be a teacher for, because it is a lot of work, whether it is worth the money, worth the stress, and the time."

All participants expressed a desire to continue learning. For example, Sophie said, "I expect to learn a lot and develop strategies to help students." They understood that some aspects of the teachers' work could not be learned until they started to teach. For instance, Annie said, "for some aspects of teaching, you need to learn on the job, because otherwise it is out of context. For example, I cannot learn how to do a running record fully if it is not within a context." Likewise, Stella emphasised, "you know there is some learning you have to wait." John thought "you need constant professional development. One year [teacher education] was not enough."

In choosing their first teaching position, three participants aligned their personal desire to make a difference to student learning and/or help disadvantaged children by seeking positions in low-socioeconomic schools. For example:

> For me, working at a low decile is appealing. I feel I can help more there, helping parents and students have a positive experience of education system. A lot of my classmates choose low-decile schools. That is where we were trained to go to. They want to make a difference and be part of the change of the underachievement of the lower income families. (Stella)

> The [low-decile] school had a lot of meaning for me … I always would rather go to a lower decile school because it is more child-focused and there are the kind of challenges I like to work with. (Annie)

However, Sophie, who had wanted to work at a low-decile school like her second practicum school, in the end chose a medium-to-high-decile school near her home. She explained her pragmatic consideration of school choice: "My second practicum school was way too far away … If without my daughter, I would definitely want to work in that school." John's choice of a small country school was partly a way to mitigate work pressures on him as a beginning teacher. He thought that "at a smaller school, you can sort of have a more relaxed environment and less behaviour and administration issues."

The next part presents findings on meaning constructions and reconstructions in the participants' first year of teaching and related influences.

How was Meaning Constructed and Reconstructed in Beginning Teachers' First Year of Teaching?

This part presents the findings in relation to meaning making of teaching and self as a teacher in the participants' first year of teaching. The sections below address how meaning was maintained over time, how meaning was reconstructed, and what influenced meaning reconstructions.

Meaning Maintained Over Time

As first-year teachers, the participants continued to believe in the importance of spending time getting to know their students and building relationships. The rationale given by participants was that knowledge of students and gaining their trust was a prerequisite to successful teaching. For example, Sophie stated,

> I feel getting to know them better is the most important, because they are who I am teaching. If they do not trust me and I do not know them all enough, how am I going to teach them successfully or effectively? So, I have been putting a lot of effort into building those relationships.

Stella also said, "it [teaching] is down to your relationships with the kids. So focus on the relationships with the kids first, and then teaching will come from the knowledge of your kids."

All participants continued to view teachers as facilitators who valued student-focused approaches to learning and teaching. For instance, Zoe noted,

> Although I am quite a nurturing and caring person, these children do not really require me to kind of mother them. They are quite independent. There are lots of days I feel like a facilitator. I just have to have the content knowledge, and I can deliver a little bit and let them take over the rest.

The other four participants also maintained a student-centred approach to teaching. They spoke about their efforts to make learning relevant and connect to students of diverse backgrounds and interests in order to promote equal learning opportunities. For example, Annie highlighted,

> I always try to put my maths and arts together or science and arts, to give more to the children who are stressed with reading and writing and maths in a pure form—to give all of them a sense of success.

Two participants identified some difficulties in terms of being able to attend to individual students' needs when they had full responsibility to teach all children in their class day in and day out. For example, Annie admitted that teaching 18 children who just started school was very demanding and constrained her efforts to meet children' individual needs. To address this, she said she had to teach with some "rigidity." By this, she meant she had to "implement routines for the children to follow to have a calm classroom." Zoe talked about difficulty in meeting the learning needs of four boys who were more advanced in maths, saying, "I learnt very quickly that I needed to extend them but it is hard when you have 29 students. How do you extend four of them and also focus on all the other children?"

All participants maintained their beliefs on the value of their work as teacher from seeing the difference they made to student learning. For instance, Stella said, "what I've done has kind of made a difference. That makes me realise the value of the work that teachers do." All participants emphasised the enjoyment and fulfilment they experienced from helping students learn. They identified students' enjoying learning and making progress as a key motive for their work as teacher, as evident in the following comments: "When you see the progress they

make, it is just amazing. It is motivating. It is very rewarding" (Sophie), and "going home, I cannot wait for tomorrow's activities. It is just awesome to see the children's faces light up when they get to do fun activities. It is quite rewarding" (Zoe). Over their first year of teaching participants continued to see the value of their work as teacher and gain meaning from facilitating student learning although they still experienced tiredness.

Meaning Reconstructed Over Time

In the first year of teaching, the participants came to grips with what teachers' work really involved. As first-year teachers, they took on much more work than on practicum and recognised the workload of full-time teaching was more intense and of wider scope than formerly perceived. For example, Sophie said, "there is much more work to do, seriously, compared to the practicum. It is crazy, such a full-on job." Zoe also stated, "as a preservice teacher, I was doing just the day-to-day teaching. As a teacher, I realise the things teachers do behind the scenes that take a lot of efforts." From the third term of teaching, two participants' workload increased substantially. John was taking a range of extracurricular activities, such as sports, Spanish, and ukulele. Zoe also undertook a lot of work beyond her classroom, including extracurricular activities (e.g., boys' soccer team), work related to curriculum teams, and administration duties. Whether or not participants took on extra school work, they all had intense first-hand experience of grappling with competing work demands, which led to their reconstruction of teaching and being a teacher as challenging work. This is evident in the participants' description of teaching as "hard work" (Stella, Sophie, John), "a very difficult job" (Annie), and "a tough job" (Zoe).

All participants were faced with time pressures to get things done, illustrated by the following statements: "The challenging aspect is time management, getting things done in time" (Stella) and "I think the challenge is to get all done, to fit in lesson planning, teaching, testing and marking, all of the day" (Zoe). When Annie changed her position from relief teaching to full-time teaching, she also encountered time pressures, commenting: "I feel like I do not have time to do everything."

To keep up with work demands, all participants worked around 50 hours per week on average. In fact, two participants noted they sometimes spent 60 hours a week at work. All the first-year teachers said they had to do teaching-related work at night and/or on the weekends at home. Sophie, who went teaching because she thought teaching would be compatible with family life, noted, "it is not an easy ride. It is not an 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. job. You are there a lot longer and you

take your work home with you." Three participants highlighted having to take work home and continue working as being stressful. John said: "I carry my work home a lot and that has stressed me a lot." These statements suggested that, for some in particular, work as a teacher was seen as taking up too much time and negatively affecting their personal life.

In addition to the imbalance between work and life, John and Zoe whose workload increased substantially (e.g., having been assigned many extracurricular activities and/or administration duties) from their third term of teaching identified other tensions. Paperwork and administration duties took up too much time, leaving insufficient time for lesson planning, teaching, and working with children. For instance, Zoe said, "I found I was doing a lot of other school things [administration duties]. When I can actually sit down planning the lesson and listening to the children, that is rushed." Competing demands also took away time for professional learning, as demonstrated by the statement: "I want to do professional development to get better at teaching, but you do not have time to do it. You have got so much work to do, you need to get it [work] done first" (John). These comments suggested that participants' desire to work for children or desire for professional learning t to improve their teaching sometimes had to give way to more urgent paperwork and administration duties.

Four participants appeared to be disappointed by some children's reactions to learning and with student-behaviour issues. For instance, Zoe commented, "not all the children are responsive. Some children do not know how much effort you put in." Stella also said, "sometimes when I've put together something, the kids do not take care of it, or they don't sort of give it a go. Instead, they were really loud, pushing and hitting each other." Two participants found it challenging to meet children's learning needs because of behavioural or emotional issues as shown by the following comments: "The kids sitting in front of me have not just academic needs. There are behavioural needs. I spend more time teaching behaviour than teaching" (John), and "I know it is my job to balance everything. It is just hard trying to get them to learn all the curriculum, and also attend to their emotional lives" (Annie).

In addition, participants recognised being a teacher involved lots of emotional ups and downs. For instance, Stella said, "my experience so far is a roller coaster, ups and downs. It changes a little bit day by day depending on what we have or how organised I am for the day." Similarly, Annie commented, "some days I feel incapable of being a teacher. Some days I feel quite a professional. It is very up and down." These statements suggested the participants experienced some emotional vulnerability in reconstructing themselves as teachers.

Two participants identified student-behaviour issues as particularly demanding on their emotions, which drained or exhausted them. They stated that what they wanted after work was just to sleep. For instance, Annie said, “sometimes when I get home, what I want to do is just to go to bed.” John stated, “in general, you finish a day without much energy to enjoy anything after school. You just want to go and sleep.” John explained why it was so draining: “you are dealing with student-behaviour issues constantly. It is an intense situation. It happens every block.”

Nonetheless, one participant said she was learning to set boundaries to reduce the negative influence of student-behaviour issues on her emotions:

> I have learnt how to step back, not to let them [students with repetitive student-behaviour issues] influence my emotions. I am getting better at not thinking what I did wrong to cause that child to disrupt everything and kick me. (Annie)

Three participants highlighted the importance of managing their own emotions in front of students, and not taking their own negative emotions into the classroom. For instance, Zoe noted that although she was stressed from the heavy workload, she did not want her stress to affect her students. “I know if I look upset or stressed, the children will feel upset and stressed. Sometimes on the inside I do not feel relaxed and happy, but on the outside, I smile.”

By the end of the first year of teaching, all participants, especially the ones in more supportive school environments, identified they had improved their teaching practice and become more confident as a teacher. For example, Stella, Zoe, and Annie mentioned from time to time in their first year of teaching that they had become more “comfortable,” “confident,” “flexible,” and/or “adaptable” as a teacher. Two participants in less supportive school environment were dissatisfied with their self-development as a teacher and insufficient school support.

As the previous chapter showed, by the end of the first year of teaching, all participants continued working long hours. Two participants particularly felt challenged by the workload, not managing the work stress and life balance. That said, four participants talked about how they had learnt to manage stress over the year. For example, Sophie commented, “I think I have learnt to relieve stress a lot more.” Stella also learned to “be easy on” herself, “not to spend too much time trying to make perfect worksheets or lesson plans.” Similarly, Zoe learnt to “not be so hard on yourself. It is a challenging job. Do not expect it ever to be perfect.” It appeared that these participants learned to manage stress partly because they were more confident in their teaching, as suggested by the following comments: “A large part of it [learning to manage

stress] is I become more confident in myself and in my teaching. I know they [the children] are going to make progress" (Stella) and "all the children are progressing. You can see the change, huge changes that I am so content. I think I am relaxed a lot more" (Sophie). Also, learning to relieve stress was related to recognising the limitation of time and the need to better organise their work. For example, Zoe stated,

> I am learning my boundaries. I have only so many hours a day and I can only do so much … I started saying no a bit more [to work assigned to her beyond her classroom]. I am not taking on too many tasks when I have already got lots of jobs. Also, my organisation is getting better. I am getting better knowing what needs to be done at when.

The participants' confidence in participating as a full member of their school varied. Three participants (Stella, Zoe, Annie) who were in more supportive school environments, appeared to be more confident and active than the other two (John and Sophie) in participating in school-wide activities. For instance, Stella was "stepping up a little bit" and "starting to play a role" on the two curriculum teams she joined. Also, the three participants in more supportive school environments seemed to be more confident to speak up, making their voice heard in school meetings. For example, Zoe noted, "I am speaking up a little bit more. If I have a good idea, I am more confident sharing to the other teachers." In contrast, Sophie and John had lower confidence in expressing their ideas and participating as member in their school, suggested by their comments: "My views are not important [in syndicate meetings], I think" (Sophie), and "I am still trying to fit into the school, trying to figure out whether I should express my personal feeling and argue over things I disagree with" (John).

The following section presents findings related to the influences that shaped participants' meaning reconstructions. These influences included the demanding nature of beginning teaching, the schools, person, and the interplay between the person and school.

Influences on Reconstructions of Teaching and Being a Teacher

The following sections outline contextual and personal influences on the participants' meaning reconstructions of teaching and themselves as teachers in their first year of teaching.

The Demanding Nature of Beginning Teaching. A major influence on the first-year teachers' meaning reconstructions of teaching was related to increased responsibilities and associated work demands. The participants highlighted a big shift in the responsibilities they experienced as first-year teachers compared to being on practicum. As first-year teachers they

did not have the "backup" from experienced teachers compared to "practicum classes when you were always there with an associate teacher" (John). According to Zoe, "the responsibility is ten times more now."

Along with increased responsibilities came a greater amount of work for the first-year teachers. Two areas of work were identified as being particularly time consuming. The first was the assessment of student learning and associated paperwork. Sophie said, "the workload is hard like all the assessments … trying to get through the millions of assessments I have to do." Four participants said testing took up most of their beginning-teacher release time. For example, Zoe stated, "that [release time] is most going into testing," while Annie noted, "on most release days, if a test is due, I am testing." The second area that was time consuming were the numerous meetings in a week participants had to attend, such as staff meetings, syndicate meetings, and curriculum team meetings, as well as mentoring meetings. Zoe gave an extreme example, saying, "I almost have a meeting every day after school except for Fridays, which is a lot."

As the participants' stories presented in the previous chapter showed, the first-year teachers felt increased responsibilities as well as work pressures catering for the needs of the diverse students in their classes. The students in the participants' classrooms came from diverse cultures (Māori, Pasifika, New Zealand European, Asian), and had diverse teaching and learning needs. There were also children with special education needs in every participant's classroom, including those with ADHD, cerebral palsy, autism, or selective mutism. The participants spoke about the time and effort they invested in trying to make learning relevant by connecting to students' different backgrounds, experiences and interests as illustrated by Annie's comment that "children come to school with various backgrounds and experiences. You hope that in the classroom they all have an equal chance."

Although the participants had 1 release day every week as first-year teachers, they believed it was not enough to help them meet all the demands they needed to meet as first-year teachers. One participant thought it was "not fair" for beginning teachers to be "trying to do the same job as someone with 20 years' experience" (John). He argued,

> We actually do everything for the first time, but we are almost treated the same. It is not that beginning teachers cannot do everything, but you need to make life achievable. You get an extra day release, but it is still not enough [to manage the workload].

The following two sections present findings on schools' influence on workload and stress, and schools' influence on support and resources. The two sections on workload, stress, support,

and resources essentially reveal the contextual influences on participants' meaning reconstructions of teaching and themselves as teachers.

School Influence on Workload and Stress. The findings suggested school contexts influenced participants' workload and stress, and thus participants' reconstructions of teaching and being a teacher. First, two participants noted that they had had few responsibilities beyond their classroom in their first 6 months of teaching, which helped make workload and stress more manageable. For example, Stella talked about her school: "When you first start, they do not put you on anything outside the classroom. They said just focus on your class." Zoe elaborated:

> I just have responsibilities for this class in my first two terms. I have not been put into any curriculum areas or other responsibilities. They have not enforced upon me to join anything while I am new. I found that is quite helpful for me to just settle down as my first role as a teacher. (Zoe)

Zoe also appreciated that her school gave her "a little bit of slack," ensuring her that "if I need more time [for some work or deadlines], that is okay." In contrast, John, working in a small school with a small number of teachers, was assigned work outside the classroom from his first term of teaching. He thought "in small schools, teachers are relied upon to do more things. It creates more work for a teacher."

The participants' narratives suggested differences between schools in terms of paperwork requirements. Take report writing for example. Three participants (Annie, Zoe, and Stella) identified their schools adopted concise formats and simple processes that made report writing less daunting. For example, Stella said, "the school does not make things hard, even reports. I talked to friends and theirs are kind of really difficult. Our school does very simple, very easy reports that did not cause me any difficulty." Similarly, Annie also found the report writing in her school was "quite easy." In contrast, the report writing in John's school appeared to involve a much longer procedure and repeated revision and writing, as the previous chapter showed.

Four participants were allocated year levels that they had not practised on practicum which was a source of stress for some. Two participants who did not experience too much stress were in syndicates where there was collaborative planning with experienced teachers. For instance, Stella said, "we are planning our maths together, sharing the ideas and the workload." The other two participants in syndicates where every teacher worked in isolation experienced stress in implementing the curriculum and planning lessons just by themselves. For instance, Sophie

described teaching in her syndicate as "single cell" and found the work of planning was "quite full-on."

Two participants identified school leadership as affecting their workload. For example, Zoe attributed the big increase of administration work in her second 6 months of teaching to her school principal. She stated, "last year was his [school principal] first year so he just kept a lot of the things the same. This year he stepped it up. He is following up on every little thing." John felt a disparity between his school principal's goal towards student learning and the school reality that paperwork took up much time away from teaching. "The new principal is always pushing goals towards learning, which is good, but there is a bit of disconnect. It is good to want that [goal], but teachers still have to deal with other things."

School Influence on Support and Resources. The data revealed schools' support to beginning teachers varied from context to context in terms of leadership, mentoring, other professional learning opportunities, collaboration between teachers, release time, and teaching resources, which influenced participants' reconstructions of teaching and being a teacher.

Overall, two of the participants (John and Sophie) had less support and resources in their school than the other three participants (Stella, Annie, and Zoe). A key influence on the support and resources available in a school was the school principal. John and Sophie felt they did not have sufficient support and resources in their school because there was not strong school leadership. This was either because the principal resigned without a new one taking the position immediately or because the principal was going to retire.

Two participants' mentor teachers helped their professional learning in many ways, such as setting inquiry goals and working towards the goals through co-planning, co-teaching, co-reflection, observing classes, modelling teaching, and regular discussions and feedback. For example: "She [her mentor teacher] did observation on me last week, helping me with my inquiry goals" (Annie), and "in her room there is co-teaching with her, still going on really well" (Stella). In contrast, John and Sophie's mentor teachers appeared to support them more with issues they encountered in their daily work, as suggested by their comments: "My mentor teacher, every week in our meetings, talks about how you are coping with behavioural issues" (John), and "she [her mentor teacher] has been looking at, like an assessment is due. She lets me know these ones are due, so I do not fall behind" (Sophie).

Two participants reported some issues with the mentoring they received. One participant believed what hindered adequate mentoring support to him was a lack of training for his mentor teacher to get prepared for the mentor role. His mentor teacher appeared to give him too many instructions at a time, whereas he wanted clearer, achievable goals. He commented, "I think there are differences between being a teacher with experience and being a mentor teacher … You need to give clear instructions and recognise when to stop overwhelming people." Also, this participant noted that the busyness of work and a lack of time hindered mentoring. For example, in his fourth term of teaching, his mentoring meetings happened "every 2 weeks," and he was "not observed" by his mentor teacher. He said, "I thought it would be at least once a term. It was just too busy."

Another participant thought the many leadership responsibilities her mentor teacher undertook caused difficulty, as her mentor teacher often could not meet up with her for mentoring due to other schedules. This participant said, in her first term of teaching, "my mentor teacher is also the associate principal. There have been a few times that we have to cancel mentoring meetings because of her other schedules." In her third term of teaching, when her mentor teacher stepped into a new leadership role, the mentoring sessions only happened three times in the 11 weeks. She talked about the challenge caused by her mentor teacher being too busy and often unable to spare time for mentoring:

> We did not have a lot of our mentor teacher time because she was very busy with other responsibilities. She would ask me "Are you feeling okay?" I say, "I am okay." She said, "okay, I am not going to see you this week." It is not fair that I have actually seen my mentor three times. I need some help sometimes. Do not leave me alone just because I look okay.

In this same term, the participant found a lack of feedback from her mentor teacher on her teaching.

> My mentor teacher managed to observe me once, but I did not get a lot of feedback. It was pretty much "You are doing good. Keep it up." For me, that is nice, but I would like some ideas and tips to improve.

Three participants identified some features that promoted their experience of mentoring. Two of them thought having the same year level as their mentor teachers contributed to better mentoring support. For instance, Stella said, "she teaches the same level as me, new entrants as well. We looked through all the events happening and what we wanted to achieve and co-planned all that." Another participant believed her mentor teacher and her in the same office

facilitated the support, saying, “she is right next to me. If I have ever got any question or anything, I go to her.”

Among the five participants, Stella seemed to have been provided the most professional development opportunities by her school and syndicate. In addition to mentoring and an external beginning-teacher course, she talked about other professional development opportunities:

> I had lots of opportunities for professional development, like I went to a Matariki course this year … I had someone come in as part of the maths team development. We were co-teaching maths … I went to an art professional development workshop which really helped me … I have also been sent to a seminar on behaviour. I went to a maths course on a Saturday a few weeks ago.

Two participants felt there were not sufficient professional development opportunities in their school. For instance, John stated,

> The school got only one teacher for each age group. I think they could do beginning-teacher development a bit better like let me go to other schools and observe. But you just learn on the job. You do it and they say you do not do this and this … You do not know what good looks like. I need to see an example.

The participants whose experience of being a teacher had been positive (Stella, Annie, and Zoe in her first 6 months of teaching) emphasised supportive school culture. They appreciated support, not just from their mentor teacher, but also from other people in their school, especially the teachers in the same syndicate. For example, Stella noted, “it [her school] is a really positive class, teacher, staff environment. I found the other teachers are really supportive.” Zoe also valued the support of other teachers in her smooth transition to the school, saying,

> When I first started, all teachers, not just my mentor teacher, were so kind and going out of their way to make me feel welcomed. I really appreciated that, because there was so much that one person [a mentor teacher alone] cannot teach you in a system.

The participants whose experience of being a teacher had been positive valued both professional and emotional support from their colleagues. For example, Annie highlighted the support from her colleagues in addressing student-behaviour issues: “I have a really good syndicate. I have learnt a lot from them in terms of their approach to student behaviour issues.” Stella valued professional learning from observing colleagues, noting that “having such great support and being able to see other classes motivated me with my own programme.” She also

provided an example of being emotionally supported by her colleagues: “If I have a hard day, it is nice to talk about it with them, and they are willing to help in any way they can.”

The two participants, in more isolated school culture, had limited support from their colleagues. This is evident in their comments: “It does not feel like a team” and “it feels like you are with your children and you are just everything” (Sophie), and “some of the support is not there, so you are kind of left to be isolated” (John).

Interestingly, Zoe, feeling warmly welcomed and supported by her colleagues in her transition from ITE to school, highlighted that she wanted to “pass on” that supportive culture. She said, “when somebody else new comes in, I have always gone out of my way to try help them because that was what was given to me.” In contrast, Sophie who did not have the same warm welcome or support from her colleagues as Zoe, said that “I never go into the staffroom for morning tea.” Her comment suggested a low degree of interaction and connectedness with her colleagues. The two examples indicated beginning teachers were likely to pick up the (positive or negative) norms and culture of their school. Also indicated was the influence of school culture on beginning teachers’ sense of belonging in that community.

Two participants identified changes with their syndicate as positively or negatively influencing the support they had from colleagues. For instance, Zoe, in her second 6 months of teaching, identified teacher mobility (e.g., experienced teachers leaving and new teachers joining) had made her syndicate less collaborative. As a result, she started to feel a lack of support. In contrast, Stella found her syndicate was “working even more collaboratively” in planning after Year 1 and Year 2 teams split up, which contributed to “less individual stress.”

All participants valued the importance of having release time to keep up with their work. For example, Annie highlighted, “I do not know what I would do without my full-day release every week.” However, some participants reported they did not always get all their release time. For example, Zoe, in her third term of teaching, only got one third of her release time. Also, Sophie noted, “I have only had a little bit of my release time.” It appeared that she had not much freedom in how to use her release time and had been assigned work in her release time: “Even though release days are nonteaching time, I have been teaching three times.” Additionally, on the release days when she went to an external beginning-teacher course for provisionally registered teachers, she did not get the lost release time made up and had to manage her work without release time. “They offer me a beginning-teacher course which I take on my release

days, but that means I miss my release day." In contrast, other teachers (e.g., Stella and John) got CRT when they had to attend the external beginning-teacher course.

Two participants felt a lack of teaching resources in their school. Sophie said "there were no resources when I went to the classroom. I have no classroom budget, so I buy everything myself." John, when his school decided to deliver maths programmes online, found "the computers are low. There is a lack of textbooks and resources." He highlighted a lack of teaching resources that made it difficult for him to teach: "It is very hard to keep this [maths] programme going … for beginning teachers, you need a bit more guidance and better resources."

While all teachers encountered student-behaviour issues, only three of the participants found sufficient support and guidance from their schools. For example, Zoe highlighted, "there are quite a few behaviour issues, but in the school we have a lot of senior school privileges. Most of the students know to make sure their behaviours stay to the highest expectations." Stella also valued that "the school has got very firm expectations on behaviour and very clear consequences. You can really see the influence of that in the classroom. Children know what is expected of them behaviourally." In contrast, John had identified a lack of clear guidelines from the school before the school found a new principal. Also, the data suggested varied support to the participants from their schools in terms of addressing students' special education needs. For instance, Stella found she was well supported by the special education needs personnel in her school, whereas Sophie got little help from her school with the selective mute student in her class. She said, "I do not get any social help in class. I wish I could have a teacher aide sometime every week."

Interplay Between Person and School.

The three participants who had had a smooth transition from preservice teacher to teacher emphasised that the reality of their school matched their expectations. For example, Zoe said, "my expectations of working as a teacher are pretty much the same [as her experience]." Stella even pleasantly found out the working conditions of her school exceeded her expectations. In contrast, the two participants (Sophie and John) who had a less positive transition, and even experienced transition shock, highlighted the discrepancies between their expectations and the reality of their school. For instance, Sophie found that her school was "so different" from the impression she had got from her job interview, in terms of school culture, values, and teaching resources.

In talking about the (mis)matches between their expectations and realities of their school, participants talked about the role their teacher education played. For instance, Stella highlighted that her teacher education meant she “anticipated being a beginning teacher to be harder work than it is” and thus, “I kind of over prepared myself for it.” Stella thought it was a good thing to be overprepared, noting that “I was pleasantly surprised rather than the opposite. I think all in all it [the ITE programme] did pitch things at the right level for us.” In contrast, John, who was challenged by student-behaviour issues in his transition from preservice teacher to teacher, felt his teacher education did not provide sufficient preparation for managing student behaviour. He commented, “you identify a lot more behavioural issues than acknowledged [by the ITE programme] in the university.” When coming to deal with student-behavioural issues, he felt “there were not many practical activities [on the ITE programme] you could fall back on.” The comments from the participants suggested ITE played a mediating role in the participants’ interaction with their school through shaping participants’ expectations of being a teacher and influencing their preparation for the reality of teaching and school.

Interestingly, as the previous chapter showed, Stella had overprepared herself for beginning teaching because work in her practicum school took more time. In the mismatch Sophie experienced between her expectations and the realities of her school, her practicum school also played a role. However, different from Stella, the positive working environment of Sophie’s practicum school shaped her high expectations for working conditions. This appeared to have influenced her judgement of the school she started teaching in. In explaining her transition shock, Sophie highlighted “this school is so different to my last practicum school.” The two examples suggested the working conditions of practicum schools shaped the participants’ expectations and judgement of the working conditions at their workplace.

The participants whose experience of being a teacher had been positive identified alignment in values with their school. For example, Stella stressed her beliefs about learning and teaching and those of her school “aligned” and said that “I feel like I fit in here [her school] really well.” Similarly, Annie noted, “in this school, I just feel I really fit them, or they fit with me.” In contrast, the participants whose experience of being a teacher had been negative frequently found misalignment in values with their school or with school leaders and/or mentor teachers. For example, Sophie highlighted that her school was “not somewhere that aligns well with my interest.” She also highlighted the misalignment with her team leader in beliefs about teaching and learning, saying, “her philosophy [of teaching and learning] and mine are very different.

There are a lot of things going on I do not agree with." John also experienced misalignment with his mentor teacher over managing workload and life balance.

> I talked to my mentor teacher [about my concern over work–life imbalance]. She thinks it is okay to work weekends and that is expected of you. I do not think that is the right way to view teaching.

Three participants, who identified misalignments with their school or others in their school, emphasised that they quite often had to do things they disagreed with. They did not think that they had much control over their work. John expressed this idea saying,

> As beginning teachers, you are right at the bottom. There are many little things that are hard to put your finger on … some of the things you do not agree with, or you think can be done better, but you cannot change them.

In the interplay between the participants and their schools, schools' attitude towards beginning teachers appeared to be critical to the participants' positive or negative reconstruction of being a teacher. The participants with positive experience appreciated that their school had trust in them, allowed autonomy, and valued their knowledge and ideas. Annie expressed this idea, saying, "I feel professionally supported when they [her school] kind of trust me that I can do it [my work as a teacher]." Stella noted, "my school values what teachers' talents and passions are and is open to teachers' ideas and really appreciates them." In contrast, one participant (Sophie) believed her school did not have trust in her, and did not allow her autonomy or value her knowledge and ideas. To illustrate, she said her team leader micromanaged her and often responded to her ideas with "this is how we do it. There is no [other] way." This participant argued the importance of having trust and autonomy to her development as a beginning teacher:

> Finding your feet as a beginning teacher is very important. I would like to see myself have more agency, like more agency to try new things. There should be "Okay. That is fine. You can try, or you can try it that way."

The participants who felt trusted and valued tended to be more confident and participated more actively in their school. For example, in her first term of teaching, Zoe suggested reallocating students in maths classes, which was valued by her syndicate which immediately held a meeting in which all teachers looked at children's stages in maths. This made Zoe feel valued and boosted her confidence, as she commented, "it was good I could approach something, and it worked out well for teachers and students." She joined four curriculum teams and organised many school-wide activities from her third term of teaching partly because the feelings of being trusted and valued encouraged her active participation in her school. Similarly, feeling trusted

and valued, Stella was not afraid of pushing herself out of her comfort zone to coach the Christmas dancing group in her school and got more involved in things outside of her classroom like starting to play a role in the curriculum teams she joined. In contrast, Sophie, feeling undervalued by her school, was not as confident or active as her peers in her participation in school activities. Her comments that "I cannot change it [e.g., bring changes to her syndicate such as the noncollaborative culture]" and "no one listens to me" illustrated her feelings of being undervalued and low confidence in participating in school activities.

The participants placed importance on recognition of their work and effort by school leaders, mentor teachers, and other members in their school. For instance, Stella, said that "it is really nice [getting recognition]. You feel like you have been noticed and appreciated for the hard work you have been doing." In contrast, Sophie felt undervalued partly because she never had positive feedback from her team leader. She said, "it is not because I need compliments, but I just would like to know that I am doing okay." These comments suggested getting recognition from their school was important to beginning teachers' positive reconstructions of themselves as teachers.

Notably, Zoe felt that because she was recognised as a capable beginning teacher, she was assigned a lot of work which overwhelmed her. She commented, "lots of other teachers kept giving me things. They said, 'you are organised. You can do this.'" Zoe's comment suggested that her colleagues might have taken advantage of her in her participation in the school.

Personal Influence. The findings suggested that participants' personal passion for teaching played an important role in reconstructing the meaning of being a teacher. For instance, Stella worked 50 hours or so every week as the other participants did, but she felt she had achieved a work–life balance. It seemed that her personal passion for teaching made her willing to spend time at work and better able to withstand stress, as suggested by her repeated emphasis that "my motivation to be a great teacher and my enjoyment of it really help motivate me," "I love it," and "this is what I want to do for as long as I can plan ahead." In contrast, one participant, whose choice of teaching had been influenced by pragmatic considerations, frequently described teaching as being "pretty full-on" and emphasised the stress of being a teacher.

The participants who had entered teaching with a greater degree of idealism appeared to have made more efforts in ongoing professional learning than their peers. For example, Stella "did the first-year beginning-teacher course [for provisionally certified teachers] in the first 6

months of teaching" and was on the second-year beginning-teacher course in her third term of teaching. Zoe also highlighted that her desire to positively influence children motivated her to continue learning and become better at teaching: "I want to help children. If I am teaching not to the best of my ability, then I am not really helping them. So, I want to constantly learn." She actively engaged in ongoing professional learning by attending the external beginning-teacher course and organising opportunities to observe her mentor teacher and colleagues teach.

One participant had frequently emphasised her belief in progressive modern-day teaching and learning, and used the words like "old," "just old," and "quite old-fashioned" to describe her school. She also commented that "that is old. Now it is about modern-day education" and "you should not take on master's students if you do not believe in modern-day education," which suggested her belief that a student-centred approach and a teacher-centred approach to teaching and learning were completely irreconcilable. Her overemphasis on the contrast between her more student-centred approach to teaching and learning and her school's more teacher-centred approach seemingly showed the rigid nature of personal beliefs, suggesting personal bias may have influenced her reconstructions of being a teacher in that school.

One participant highlighted the influence of personal life events on her reconstruction of being a teacher. She spoke about a big medical issue, which had happened in the summer holiday before her third term of teaching, that "changed my perspectives of life" (Stella). When she woke up in the hospital, she realised the importance of her health, noting "I do not want to be putting myself under unnecessary stress." This awareness of the need to avoid unnecessary stress and setting a limit to the amount of work she undertook appeared to contribute to her positive reconstruction of being a teacher in her second 6 months of teaching. She did not have as much work and responsibility beyond the classroom as two other participants (Zoe and John) did, which helped her achieve a better balance between work and life than her peers.

Two participants had consistent strong family support for their career as a teacher in their first year of teaching, which contributed to their positive reconstructions of being a teacher. Stella said, "I have good support of my family and everyone. They all see how happy I am with my job and all happy for me. They have been really supportive." Annie stated, "they think it is the best job for me. They love hearing about the children and also hear about them from the class blog. They really enjoy looking at what I teach the children and what we do."

Two participants mentioned pay, thinking they were not adequately paid given their working hours. John said, "you got paid all right but not great." Zoe stated at the end of her 6 months of teaching that she wished she had done secondary, "because you would get paid a little more."

The sections above show how first-hand experience of being a teacher led to a fuller and more realistic reconstruction of teaching and being a teacher. As first-year teachers the participants experienced the demands and responsibilities associated with teachers' work in the classroom and in the wider school. Meaning reconstruction was also driven through experiencing the complex nature of teaching, particularly in relation to meeting the teaching and learning needs of diverse students. The role of the school was also shown to influence how the first-year teachers reconstructed the meaning of teaching and being a teacher. The following part focuses on how meaning reconstructions influenced the participants' career intentions.

How Did the Construction and Reconstruction of Meaning Influence Beginning Teachers' Career Intentions?

By the end of their first year of teaching, four participants' career intentions remained the same as at the end of their ITE programme. Stella and Annie still had long-term plans to teach, and Sophie wanted to return to teaching although she had resigned after 6 months of teaching. The two other participants, Zoe and John, intended to get teacher registration, after which they thought they might seek overseas teaching opportunities or other jobs related to education or children. Thus, Stella, Annie, and Sophie maintained their long-term career plan for teaching and John who had not had a long-term plan for teaching maintained his intention to not teach for long. Zoe was the exception as she had changed her mind about being in teaching for the long-term, saying:

> I do not think I will be teaching for more than 5 years … I am often questioning what else I could do if I wasn't a teacher. I've researched other jobs working with children but not in a classroom where there are 28 children.

Many of the factors previously identified as being influential in the participants' meaning reconstructions of teaching and themselves as teachers impacted on their career intentions. One factor was the complexity, busyness, and demanding nature of teaching. Other factors related to school contexts included attitudes towards beginning teachers (e.g., trust, autonomy, recognition), levels of workload and stress (e.g., the amount of administration duties and paperwork, extracurricular activities), resources, professional support (e.g., provision of mentoring and other professional learning opportunities, degree of collaboration between

teachers) and emotional support (e.g., connectedness with colleagues). There were also strong personal influences, such as aspiration and passion for teaching, life events, and family support. ITE influence on participants' preparation and expectations for teaching was also evident.

The findings suggest that school, personal and ITE influences together influenced how the first-year teachers managed the challenges and stress of beginning teaching, which in turn influenced their career intentions. For example, for Stella and Annie who continued to view teaching as being a long-term career, there appeared to be an alignment between their aspirations and passion for teaching and consistent family support, their ITE programme which they felt prepared them for the reality of teaching, and their supportive school contexts which promoted trust, autonomy and collaboration and provided resources related to teaching and professional learning. Their schools' positive environment and working conditions were especially valued by these two participants. For example, Stella stressed, "if the school was a really negative environment, it would probably kill my motivation. But because it is very supportive, it helps me stay motivated." As their stories presented in the previous chapter showed, Stella and Annie identified their supportive school contexts as helping them address challenges and manage the stress of beginning teaching which contributed to maintaining a positive reconstruction of being a teacher despite their recognition of the demanding nature of teaching.

In addition, for Stella and Annie, there was an alignment of personal meaning of teaching with their ITE programme and their school. Both wanted to promote the learning of children from priority groups, which was also the goal of the MTchg and their schools located in low-socioeconomic communities with a high proportion of "priority learners." The realisation of personal meaning of teaching in their daily work contributed to their high job satisfaction and thus their career intentions. This is evident in the following statement: "My positive experience has reinforced to me the value of my work as a teacher and the fit that teaching has with me. I cannot imagine doing something else now" (Stella). Similarly, Annie who had changed her career from secretary to teaching in her search for meaningful work, found teaching "really satisfying" which reinforced her intention to make teaching her long-term career.

In contrast, the other three participants worked in schools that did not appear to provide strong and consistent support. Unsupportive school environments challenged these teachers' personal meaning making of teaching and being a teacher and their career intentions. As shown by the stories presented in the previous chapter, these three participants often identified misalignment

or even friction between them and their school which affected their reconstructions of teaching and how they saw themselves as teachers in the future. Two participants reconstructed rather negative views of teaching related to the stress they felt from being overloaded with work demands which impacted on their work–life balance. This affected their satisfaction with teaching and thus their career intentions. According to John, “I guess job satisfaction is determined if I am succeeding in my job or not, am I doing well. With more of home time being taken up by teaching, I feel I am not succeeding in teaching.” Zoe also talked about not always succeeding as a teacher, saying, “sometimes I feel like I am always behind, which is hard to feel like I am doing a good job.” While both John and Zoe were still teaching at the end of their first year of teaching, both had considered changing jobs and/or changing to a different school during the year. For instance, John, in his second term of teaching, said that “I did plan to look for another school because there were jobs around,” and in his third term of teaching, noted “I looked at other jobs the other day because I have had enough of teaching.” Zoe talked about being a maths specialist instead of a classroom teacher: “Sometimes I feel like I would put my skills in better use if I only did math specialist teaching. I can really help the children.”

For Sophie, who resigned after 6 months of teaching, her meaning making of teaching and being a teacher was related to her team leader’s behaviour towards her, saying “I hate the put-downs, the sarcastic attitude to me. It made me feel like I wanted to leave so many times.” Sophie noted that “I know now you need to find the right school.” By “right school,” she highlighted the importance of a school’s attitude towards beginning teachers, and the importance of working with teachers who “are supportive” and who “you can connect with.” Interestingly, Sophie believed that her feelings were related to her particular school’s culture, and she intended to return to teaching when she found the “right” school.

Zoe and John believed that the challenges they faced were not just caused by their particular school but were because of the nature of the teaching profession. That is, they believed that stress caused by the pressures of the jobs and not enough time to meet work demands were problems facing all teachers. For example, John commented,

> The biggest problem is teachers are just time poor. Trying to do too much but there is not enough time. That is a lot of teachers [working overtime], not just beginning teachers. You are not the only one in that struggle.

Because Zoe and John believed that the stresses facing teachers were inherent in teaching, they did not see classroom teaching as a long-term career option. Zoe said that she would not be teaching for more than 5 years “unless the government changes something. It is not just the

money but also the pressure." This comment may help explain why she did not intend to teach for a long time despite her strong desire to work with children and having gained confidence in and satisfaction from her teaching in the classroom. In contrast, Sophie thought the major challenge she encountered—a lack of autonomy at work—was context specific. Thus, she maintained her career intention for teaching.

As this part shows, by the end of the first year of teaching, three of the five participants maintained affirmative constructions of teaching and being a teacher, which positively influenced their career intentions.

Summary

This chapter presented a cross-case analysis of the five participants' meaning making of teaching and themselves as teachers over time. The findings were presented in three parts which addressed the three subquestions of the study. The findings showed that the participants came to teaching wanting to positively influence children's learning and development, although two participants also had pragmatic, along with idealistic, reasons for teaching. Their initial meaning making of teaching and being a teacher revealed the influence of other people (e.g., parents, former teachers, friends, and siblings), their perceived personal qualities for teaching, their desire for meaningful and fulfilling work, and their previous school and work experience. Despite their passion for teaching, they were not fully aware of what teachers' work really involved.

During teacher education, the ITE programme, extended practicum, and people working in teaching (e.g., lecturers, associate teachers, and other teachers at practicum schools) along with peer preservice teachers on the same ITE programme shaped their further meaning making of teaching and being a teacher. Practicum experiences particularly enabled the participants to acquire first-hand experiences of classroom teaching and a more realistic understanding of teaching and being a teacher. The different interactions between participants and their ITE led to different constructions of self as a teacher and teaching as a career upon completion of ITE. Four of the participants felt prepared and had a long-term intention for teaching, while one participant had a lower level of preparedness for teaching and did not have a long-term plan for teaching.

In their first year of teaching, the participants' meaning of teaching and self as a teacher was continually constructed and reconstructed. With greater full-time teaching experience, the participants understood the size and scope of teachers' work, the demanding nature of teaching,

and the diverse learning needs of their classroom. They also identified a key influence of their school on their work as a teacher by influencing the requirements and demands on them, the resources and support for them to meet work demands, and their autonomy at work.

While the participants continued to value the enjoyment and meaningfulness from positively influencing children's learning and development, only three participants maintained their career intentions for teaching as a long-term career. School support appeared to play a critical role in helping beginning teachers manage workload and address challenges and stress of beginning teaching, reconstruct a positive sense of themselves as teachers, sustaining high job satisfaction and solidify career intentions.

The next chapter discusses the key findings in relation to the literature.

Chapter 6
Discussion

Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the key findings in relation to the research question that guided the study: How do beginning teachers make meaning of teaching and themselves as teachers over time? The participants provided a rich source of data on how they constructed and reconstructed meaning of teaching and themselves as teachers over time. The findings are discussed in relation to the literature.

The chapter consists of four main sections that discuss the key findings revealed by the study. The first discusses idealistic constructions of teaching and being a teacher. The second discusses a shift from simplistic to more complex reconstructions of teaching and being a teacher. The third discusses the influence of school context on beginning teachers' reconstructions of themselves as teachers. The final section discusses personal influence in beginning teachers' reconstructions of themselves as teachers.

Idealistic Constructions of Teaching and Being a Teacher

This section discusses the initial idealistic views of teaching and being a teacher that the beginning teachers had constructed when they chose teaching, and the ideals they maintained over time.

Initial Idealistic Constructions of Teaching and Being a Teacher

The study showed that all participants came into teaching with idealistic constructions of teaching and being a teacher. High ideals of teaching included a desire to have a positive impact on children's learning and development, as well as a desire to make a positive contribution to society. Other studies have also found high ideals are associated with choosing to go teaching. For example, Kane and Mallon (2006) in their mixed-methods study find that the prime reason for New Zealand teachers to choose teaching is wanting to make a positive difference to children's learning and to society. Similarly, the international literature reinforces the notion that people tend to go into teaching wanting to positively influence children's learning and development, or society (e.g., Jungert et al., 2014; Manuel & Hughes, 2006). High ideals related to a desire to positively influence children's learning and development and society suggest preservice teachers come into teaching with a commitment to serve the interests of students and society. Thus, it can be argued that it is important that preservice teachers are

exposed to teaching and learning experiences that support them to retain this commitment. However, scholars have cautioned that the idealistic constructions of teaching and being a teacher that preservice teachers bring with them into teaching can be problematic (e.g., Cole & Knowles, 1993; Giboney Wall, 2016). For instance, Cole and Knowles's (1993) analysis of preservice teachers' reflective journal accounts from two teacher education programmes suggests that difficulties, dilemmas, and dissonance are likely to arise and ideals may be shattered when the realities of teaching do not match idealistic constructions of being a teacher. Retaining teacher ideals presents a challenge for teacher education in terms of how to facilitate preservice teachers' realistic understanding of teaching and being a teacher while at the same time protecting their ideals.

In this study, enjoyment of working with children underpinned idealistic constructions of teaching and being a teacher, and was a major reason for people to choose to teach. Similar findings are confirmed in numerous studies (e.g., Hayes, 2004; Kane & Mallon, 2006; Lovett, 2007; Watt et al., 2014). For instance, in both Lovett's (2007) interviews of 57 New Zealand third-year teachers and Watt et al.'s (2014) surveys of 246 American primary and secondary preservice teachers, enjoyment of working with children was found as a major reason for choosing to teach. Similarly, Hayes's (2004) surveys of 546 preservice teachers in England reveal many participants were idealistic and attracted to teaching because of their enjoyment of working with children. In the current study, liking children and enjoyment of working with children appeared to be linked to a commitment to caring for and building caring relationships with children, as teachers. This finding is in line with previous studies (e.g., Brown et al., 2008; Goldstein & Lake, 2000). For instance, Brown et al.'s (2008) study of 123 American primary preservice teachers shows that participants identified personal liking of children as one of the most important qualities of a caring and effective teacher.

However, idealistic constructions of teaching and being a teacher centred around liking and working with children could be problematic. First, preservice teachers may underestimate what the full scope of teachers' work involves. For example, the focus may be more on affective issues and on caring relationships with children rather than on student learning (Brown et al., 2008; Thomson et al., 2012). Second, preservice teachers may overemphasise the importance of personal qualities for teaching but neglect professional standards and competencies for effective teaching (Brown et al., 2008; Goldstein & Lake, 2000). Goldstein and Lake (2000) caution that an overemphasis on personal qualities for teaching (e.g., liking of and enjoyment of working with children), or the view that being a teacher is a natural instinct that one has or

does not have, may lead preservice teachers to become disenchanted with, and even exit, teaching when they inevitably experience difficulties or failures when learning to teach. These concerns suggest preservice teachers' beliefs about what constitutes good teaching need to be examined, questioned, and reconstructed during teacher education.

The current study suggests the high ideals people came to teaching with were related to an inner quest for meaningful and fulfilling work. Similarly, Kane and Mallon's (2006) mixed-methods New Zealand study and Manuel and Hughes's (2006) surveys of 79 Australian preservice teachers, both find that a search for meaningfulness, purpose, and fulfilment was intimately bound up with people's aspirations to teach. Further, the present study showed that a dissatisfaction with previous work because it lacked meaningfulness and/or fulfilment could lead people to consider teaching as a second career. Lovett's (2007) interviews of 57 New Zealand third-year teachers, of which 35 were from other careers or jobs, also find one of the reasons for people to change to teaching was wanting more meaningful work. Studies from other countries, such as Bauer et al.'s (2017) narrative inquiry of 17 Australian mature preservice teachers and Crow et al.'s (1990) qualitative study of 13 American preservice teachers, also reveal people change their careers to teaching because of dissatisfaction with previous work and the desire to pursue more fulfilling, meaningful work. In the present study, whether career changes or not, perceptions of teaching as a meaningful and fulfilling career were predominantly related to the opportunities and desire to make positive contributions to children's learning and to society.

Ideals Maintained Over Time

This longitudinal study showed that beginning teachers upheld their ideals to care for children as teachers and positively influence children's learning. Beginning teachers continued to place importance on caring for children and caring relationships with children in their first year of teaching. This finding contrasts with Flores and Day's (2006) mixed-methods study of 14 Portuguese beginning teachers in their first 2 years of teaching. Flores and Day find that while participants had viewed caring for children as being a crucial feature of their role as teacher during teacher education, this was not evident when they started teaching. In the present study, enjoyment of working with children and seeing children making progress in their learning were primary sources of satisfaction for the beginning teachers and key motives for their work as a teacher. Similarly, in Grudnoff and Tuck's (2003) surveys of over 400 New Zealand beginning teachers after their first term of teaching and interviews of two cohorts of 20 beginning teachers

at the end of their first and second years of teaching, the participants identified seeing their role in children's learning and achievement as being particularly satisfying.

The present study revealed that meaningfulness and fulfilment derived from work as a teacher, such as helping students learn and progress, were important intrinsic rewards of teaching, and were also associated with job satisfaction. Those who placed greater value on the intrinsic rewards of teaching (e.g., a sense of meaningfulness, purpose, and fulfilment) appeared to be committed to their work and resilient to the stress of teaching. Similarly, Burgess et al.'s (2018) mixed-methods study of Australian primary, secondary, and special school beginning teachers' wellbeing and career intentions suggests that the meaningfulness and fulfilment from making a positive difference to students are core intrinsic rewards that encourage beginning teachers' commitment to teaching.

However, the longitudinal data from the present study revealed some concerns and challenges related to the ideals to caring for children and positively influencing children's learning. First, the present study showed that although beginning teachers come to teaching with a desire to positively influence children's learning, they may not be prepared for children who are not motivated to learn and frequently disrupt the class. Repeated student-behavioural issues increase beginning teachers' stress and negatively affect their job satisfaction. Second, despite liking children and having a desire to care for children, beginning teachers may find it overwhelming to meet the diverse learning needs (e.g., diverse cultural backgrounds, personalities, ability levels, learning abilities, and special educational needs) of all children in their classroom day in and day out. Challenges for beginning teachers related to student-behaviour issues (e.g., ERO, 2017; Perryman & Calvert, 2020) and classrooms full of children with diverse learning needs (e.g., Fontaine et al., 2012; Grudnoff et al., 2016) are well recognised in both New Zealand and international literature. This stresses the importance of ITE preparing teachers to work successfully with diverse learners and the need for support from schools for beginning teachers.

Further, this study showed that the daily work of teaching involved many activities, demands and duties that did not necessarily lead to meaningful and fulfilling work. As Hammerness (2003), in her surveys of 80 American teachers and interviews with 16 teachers, argues, teachers' work will not be ideal every day but will be ordinary for most of the time. In the current study, some participants found paperwork and administration duties arduous and felt such activities took away too much of their valuable time from what they saw as meaningful

work like teaching and interactions with children. Burgess et al.'s (2018) Australian study also shows many beginning teachers were surprised that much of their time was taken up by administration work rather than the more intrinsically rewarding activities such as connecting with and teaching children. Thus, a teacher's inner quest for meaningfulness and fulfilment may not always be found in the day-to-day work of teaching.

What is worth consideration in the current study is that some beginning teachers expressed a desire to have a higher salary. This suggests that despite being crucial, intrinsic rewards alone are not enough to counter the stress and time demands of teachers' work. Watt and Richardson (2008), in their large-scale study of Australian preservice teachers' reasons for choosing teaching as a career, question whether the intrinsic rewards in terms of work fulfilment and meaningfulness are enough to compensate for the relatively low pay of teaching. How to balance intrinsic rewards with external incentives such as salary in relation to teacher retention is worthy of future research.

Interestingly, the present study showed the concerns and challenges discussed above did not always have a negative effect. Rather, the findings suggested beginning teachers who were supported to make meaning of their challenges (e.g., student-behaviour issues, diverse learning needs, work demands), may get better at addressing these challenges, reconstruct a deeper understanding of teaching and being a teacher, and improve congruence between their personal expectations of being a teacher and the reality of teaching. This seems to support the argument made by some scholars that challenges and tensions are not always negative but can be seen as opportunities for professional learning and development (e.g., Cook, 2009; Hong et al., 2018; Pillen, Beijaard, & Brok, 2013). Thus, a key task for schools is to provide beginning teachers with support, time, space, resources, and strategies to turn challenges and tensions into opportunities for development.

The following section discusses a shift from simplistic to a more complex reconstructions of teaching and being a teacher.

From Simplistic to More Complex Reconstructions of Teaching and Being a Teacher

This section first discusses the simplistic constructions of teaching and major reasons behind these simplistic views, and then discusses the more complex reconstructions of teaching along with key influences.

Simplistic Constructions of Teaching and Major Reasons

The study showed that people tended to come into teaching with simplistic views of teaching and being a teacher. As indicated above, the choice of teaching as a career was motivated by their enjoyment when working with children along with a desire to positively influence children's learning and development. Thus, when choosing to teach, these beginning teachers did not fully understand what teachers' work would involve nor how other factors (e.g., a school's culture and expectations) might influence teachers' work. Their view of teaching tended to be simplistic. Other studies have also found that people who go teaching underestimate what teachers' work involves and the influence of external factors on teachers' work (e.g., Galman, 2009; Giboney Wall, 2016; Kettle & Sellars, 1996). While some participants in this investigation heard from parents or peers who were teachers telling them that teaching was hard work, without first-hand experience of teaching in school settings, they did not fully realise the hard work associated with teaching.

The present study revealed two main reasons behind simplistic views of teaching. First, the study showed the influence of teaching-related prior work experience which cultivated a simplistic view of teaching. While studies have identified teaching-related work experience as an important reason for choosing teaching (e.g., Chang-Kredl & Kingsley, 2014; Schutz et al., 2001), the influence of teaching-related work experience on simplistic views of teaching is not well recognised because many of the studies have only explored reasons for choosing teaching but not investigated how reasons for choosing teaching influence constructions of teaching and being a teacher. The findings of the present study show previous teaching-related work experiences tended to be with a small group of students and took place over a short time frame. While enjoyment from previous work with children contributed to a sense of being able to positively influence their learning and development, previous teaching-related work didn't usually happen in school settings or require people to assess children's work or teach to the national curriculum. Thus, participants' rather limited experiences meant they were not exposed to the full extent and complexity of teachers' work in schools. Their views of teaching based on teaching-related prior work experience appeared to underestimate both the challenge of meeting the diverse needs of all children in a class, day in and day out, and the influence of the competing demands that make up the reality of teachers' work.

The second reason associated with a simplistic construction of teaching is that some teachers in the current study had been attracted to teaching for practical reasons like allowing more time for family, job security, or job mobility. Such considerations resulted in an underestimation of

the work associated with being a teacher as discussed above. However, studies into early-career teachers' attrition (e.g., Clandinin et al., 2015) have cautioned that beginning teachers may leave teaching because of the challenges to work–life balance and to time with family caused by the demands and complexity of teaching. A survey conducted by NZEI in 2019 found the prime reason associated with 81% of the primary school teachers who left teaching in 2018 was because of work/life imbalance (NZEI Te Iru Roa, 2019). This suggests the importance of providing people with rich, accurate information about the scope of teachers' work to help with their career decision. In addition, preservice teachers who are attracted to teaching for practical reasons need ITE/practicum experiences to recognise and counter a simplistic perception of teaching they may hold.

More Complex Reconstructions of Teaching and Key Influences

The study showed practicum experiences were associated with preservice teachers initiating reconstructions of teaching and being a teacher that were complex. When preservice teachers had first-hand classroom teaching experience on practicum, they began to recognise the size and scope of teachers' work and understand what teaching as hard work really meant. In practicum school settings, they experienced the complexity, busyness, and multiple demands of teaching. This finding is confirmed in numerous studies (e.g., Cole & Knowles, 1993; Galman, 2009; Giboney Wall, 2016; Tannehill & MacPhail, 2014; Wideen et al., 1998). For instance, in the longitudinal study of Giboney Wall (2016), a cohort of American preservice teachers who entered teaching with simplistic preconceptions of teaching was found to quickly recognise that teaching was demanding and complex through their experience on practicum. The present study found conceptions of teachers' work expanded after teaching children, doing paperwork (e.g., lesson planning), along with other tasks such as sport and music activities, parent communication, and staff and syndicate meetings. Preservice teachers observed how the work of teachers involved long hours which could lead to burn out from the job. That is, the simplistic notions of teaching and being a teacher with which they had come to teaching were challenged and over time were reconstructed on practicum.

The study suggested extended practicums helped preservice teachers reconstruct a more complex understanding of teaching and being a teacher. The participants in the present study had practicums with two schools: one was situated in a high-socioeconomic community, and the other one was located in a low-socioeconomic community. They were extended in both schools by having 2 days every week on the first practicum followed by 3-week full-time practicum in the first 6 months, and then 2 days every week on the second practicum followed

by 9-week full-time practicum in the second 6 months (see Appendix 6). The length of time on practicum contributed to deepening preservice teachers' understandings of the complexity of teaching, classrooms, and schools. In addition, the way practicum was structured provided preservice teachers with opportunities to apply theories of teaching and to integrate theory and practice. The practicum structure appeared to help preservice teachers understand and apply the theory, concepts, and strategies they had learned in coursework to their teaching. The extended practicum also helped them to delve into the teacher's role; work with children, especially priority learners; and build relationships and collaborate with experienced teachers. Thus, over time practicum experiences facilitated a more in-depth understanding of teaching and being a teacher. Some scholars raise concerns that too early exposure to practicum may overwhelm preservice teachers (e.g., Anspal et al., 2012). However, in the present study, the integration of practice periods in manageable chunks early on, as well as throughout the programme, helped preservice teachers become familiar with life in schools and classrooms and prepared them for the increased demands of full-time teaching. The benefits of extended practicums and integration of practice periods with coursework enabled complex understandings of teaching. This highlights the importance of strong university–school partnerships to support preservice teachers' learning (Grudnoff et al., 2017; Jenkins, 2018; Oerlemans, 2017).

The study showed that with increased experience, the beginning teachers further reconstructed their understanding of teaching and being a teacher. It was evident that, with increased experience gained through working as a full-time teacher, a more complex understanding of teaching and being a teacher was reconstructed. They recognised more fully the extent of teachers' work by undertaking a lot more activities compared to those undertaken on practicum (e.g., report writing, updating marks to their school's electronic system, administration duties, organising school activities, building relationships with parents). As beginning teachers, they experienced more stress and exhaustion in fulfilling competing demands on their time in and out of class. Managing a work–life balance was a challenge. This is in line with the findings of previous studies (Flores, 2001; Grudnoff, 2011; Schuck et al., 2018). For instance, the New Zealand participants of Grudnoff's (2011) study identified differences between practicum and full-time teaching in terms of the size and scope of teachers' work. They experienced tiredness and were challenged when attempting to maintain a work–life balance. In the present study, a more complex reconstruction of teaching and being a teacher also included beginning teachers' recognition of the influence of school conditions on their work as teacher (e.g., leadership at

school and team levels, school culture, school demands and accessing resources). Beginning teachers at times experienced tensions between their personal desire for work autonomy and their school's emphasis on accountability. The differences between practicum experiences and the reality of teaching suggest practicum is unlikely to adequately replicate the complexity of teaching (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). This highlights the importance of ongoing professional learning and support for beginning teachers in their early years.

The following section discusses how beginning teachers reconstructed themselves as teachers in the school context, based on the data of this study.

Reconstructing Self as a Teacher: The Influence of School Context

The findings from this study clearly showed that the school context plays an influential role in beginning teachers' reconstructions of themselves as teachers and teaching over their first year of teaching. School context encapsulates the way in which policy and practice is implemented by leaders and teachers which in turn informs the school culture. The present study showed that some school contexts were very supportive and actively promoted beginning teachers' positive reconstructions of themselves as teachers, whereas school contexts for some beginning teachers were less supportive which negatively affected their reconstructions of themselves as teachers. The following sections discuss the major influences of school contexts, including school leadership and induction and mentoring, on beginning teachers' reconstructions of themselves as teachers.

Influence of School Leadership

The study showed that leadership within a school and at team level influenced how beginning teachers reconstructed themselves as teachers. The present study suggested school leaders' attitude towards beginning teachers influenced how beginning teachers reconstructed themselves as teachers. In the present study, it appeared that some beginning teachers enjoyed a greater degree of autonomy at work (e.g., they had autonomy to make decisions in running and managing their classroom) because the leadership in their schools had high levels of trust in their teachers, including their beginning teachers. In these schools, beginning teachers were encouraged to make decisions for themselves. Further, their knowledge was valued, they were listened to, and their ideas were taken seriously by their school or team. Similarly, in Blömeke and Klein's (2013) surveys of 221 German third-year beginning teachers' perceptions of supportive school environments, the participants thought the degree of autonomy (e.g., control over their classroom and participation in decisions at school) greatly depended on the climate

of trust facilitated by leaders in a school. The present study showed beginning teachers in schools where the leadership had high levels of trust in them became more confident in their teaching because they were able to make decisions related to their children and classrooms. This is in line with the findings of Trevethan (2018) wherein beginning teachers developed their confidence in teaching and were motivated to continue improving their learning when trusted and respected to make decisions in their teaching. In this study, leadership that promoted a high-trust culture was likely to promote confidence in a beginning teacher's ability to make decisions.

In contrast, the present study showed the leadership in some schools had low trust in their beginning teachers' ability to make professional decisions and emphasised accountability over beginning teachers' work. Beginning teachers in these schools had limited autonomy at work, and even felt micromanaged. This is similar to other studies that argue that accountability and performance management agendas limit beginning teachers' professional autonomy. For instance, Dymoke and Harrison (2006), in their qualitative study of seven second-year English beginning teachers, find that schools that adopted a managerial approach to beginning-teacher development reinforced accountability and emphasised performance management agenda rather than beginning teachers' professional autonomy and agency. In schools where leadership had low levels of trust and where their work was micromanaged, beginning teachers were left questioning their ability to teach. Further research is required to investigate how high- and low-trust environments facilitated by leadership influence beginning teachers' reconstruction of themselves as teachers and their teaching practice.

The study showed beginning teachers were more likely to positively reconstruct themselves as teachers when their work and effort were recognised by school or team leaders. Kelchtermans (2019) argues that a central concern for beginning teachers in reconstructing themselves as teachers in a school context is to be recognised by important others like school leaders as a "proper" teacher. In the present study, recognition from school leaders helped beginning teachers validate themselves as teachers and confirm that they were doing the right thing. Recognition from school leaders also made beginning teachers feel their work and contribution were noticed and valued, which contributed to their confidence and motivated them to continue to do their best at work. Other studies have also confirmed the importance of recognition and acknowledgement by school leaders on beginning teachers' confidence (e.g., Buchanan et al., 2013; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002). For instance, Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002), in their mixed-methods study of 14 Belgian primary school beginning teachers, find recognition by

school leaders (e.g., principal) plays a central role influencing beginning teachers' confidence. In contrast, the present study showed when a beginning teacher did not receive recognition, praise, or positive feedback, but instead criticism without constructive advice for improvement, from leaders, they tended to be self-guessing, feel undervalued, and consider leaving teaching or changing school. Similarly, in Gratch's (2001) qualitative study of three American beginning teachers, one of the participants failed to develop positive self-concept as a teacher and left teaching because of the school principal's harsh criticism and unwillingness to provide constructive feedback and guidance. These findings highlight the importance of recognition from school and team leaders to beginning teachers' validation of themselves as teachers and career intentions for teaching.

Some schools' leaders helped their beginning teachers manage workload, stress, and life balance by allowing beginning teachers time to settle in as classroom teachers, such as not assigning work beyond their classroom in their first 6 months of teaching. Similarly, the beginning teachers in Gaikhorst et al.'s (2014) Dutch qualitative study appreciated when their schools gave them time to gradually grow into the teaching profession by not assigning them extra work in addition to their regular teaching tasks. Also, in the present study, some schools provided their beginning teachers with better support (e.g., through induction and mentoring, integrated school culture) and resources (e.g., teaching and classroom resources, guidance on student discipline, resources to help teachers address special education needs) for them to tackle and manage challenges of beginning teaching (e.g., multiple demands, student-behaviour issues, diverse learning needs). As a result, beginning teachers in these schools were better able to meet work demands and tackle challenges, and reconstructed a more positive sense of self as teacher. Conversely, beginning teachers who were not adequately resourced by their school had to rely on personal resources (e.g., personal knowledge, time, energy, money). These beginning teachers tended to feel stressed and drained by work demands and challenges of beginning teaching. This aligns with the findings of Hong et al. (2018). In their longitudinal study of six American beginning teachers, Hong et al. find school resources crucially influenced whether beginning teachers managed or were still coping with challenges of beginning teaching and whether they were able to reconstruct a positive sense of self as a teacher. Not managing workloads, stress and life balance has the potential to lead to low job satisfaction and decreased commitment to teaching in the future.

The following section discusses the influence of induction and mentoring.

Influence of Induction and Mentoring

The study suggested that varied provisions of induction between schools had different influences on beginning teachers' reconstructions of themselves as teachers. It appeared that some schools provided more comprehensive induction support for their beginning teachers, involving a whole-school approach and professional development opportunities. In contrast, the induction practices in other schools appeared to be less comprehensive. Induction in these schools primarily related to interactions with mentor teachers. There was less involvement with other members of their school (e.g., colleagues and leaders) and few professional development opportunities.

The study showed that in schools where the induction and mentoring policy and practice were more comprehensive, involving a whole-school approach, the school culture tended to be welcoming and accepting. In these school cultures, colleagues were likely to care for beginning teachers and offer them support without being asked. Beginning teachers were more likely to feel welcomed to the school and found it easy to approach their colleagues. Further, they were more likely to be actively involved in their syndicate meetings and were respected as a member of staff. Because of positive relationships with colleagues, the beginning teachers did not feel alone but had frequent exchanges and collaborations with more experienced colleagues and subsequently experienced professional and emotional support. This type of school culture features what Kardos et al. (2001) have described as "integrated school culture," by which they mean school culture that features frequent exchanges between beginning and experienced teachers. In their interviews of 50 American first-year and second-year teachers, Kardos et al. identify that beginning teachers in an integrated school culture are likely to have their needs recognised and supported through sustained support from and frequent exchanges with experienced teachers. They highlight the importance of an integrated school culture to the establishment of strong, positive school communities of practice in which teachers work closely with their colleagues. It is within school communities of practice that beginning teachers are challenged, through induction and mentoring, to reconsider and reconstruct how they view themselves, as teachers, and their teaching practice.

The findings from the present study supported the importance of an integrated school culture and comprehensive induction and mentoring in order to sustain and support beginning teachers' positive reconstructions of themselves as teachers. As Langdon (2017) argues, a school community's interactions are nonlinear (between mentor teachers, beginning teachers, other teachers, etc.) and multilayered (interactions between the school system, individuals,

classrooms, the community, and the policy environment). It is the constellation of all these interactions that constitutes "induction," including mentoring, incorporating the complex range of influences and experiences to which new teachers are exposed and challenged to construct and reconstruct teaching practice (Langdon, 2017).

This study showed nonlinear positive interactions and relationships with colleagues provided beginning teachers with information and access to resources, such as teaching materials, knowledge, ideas, tips, and advice. Frequent exchanges of resources and collaboration with colleagues with multiple experiences and expertise helped beginning teachers address issues and challenges in their daily work and manage workload and stress, especially in the areas of student discipline and lesson planning. Similarly, in Gaikhorst et al.'s (2014) qualitative study, the Dutch primary school beginning teachers valued being able to easily approach their colleagues with their questions and issues in an integrated school culture and to collaborate with more experienced colleagues which significantly saved time and effort. Further, beginning teachers valued informal learning with and from colleagues in addition to formal learning through induction and mentoring. For instance, they valued observing colleagues, discussion, and joint work, especially with teachers of the same year level or in the same syndicate. The importance beginning teachers attach to informal learning with and from colleagues has been confirmed by other studies, such as learning through observing colleagues (e.g., Flores, 2001; Gaikhorst et al., 2014; Geeraerts et al., 2018; Kyndt et al., 2016). The beginning teachers in Flores' (2001) longitudinal Portuguese study, for example, believed they learned more through observing colleagues teaching. Thus, the beginning teachers, in the present study, engaged in more a comprehensive induction practice and a more integrated school culture felt well supported to transition into the teacher's role and were more satisfied with self-development as they reconstructed over time how they taught and who they were as a teacher.

In contrast, the beginning teachers in schools where the school culture was less supportive, and induction and mentoring practices were not comprehensive, experienced limited time to collaborate with colleagues. For example, a beginning teacher, who did not feel accepted or supported by colleagues, seemingly found it hard to be considered part of the teaching team and to approach colleagues. The beginning teacher in this situation appeared not to have a sense of connectedness with colleagues or belongingness in their school. The feeling of isolation and being left to survive on their own had the potential to undermine their job satisfaction and the positive sense of self as a teacher they had constructed upon completion of ITE.

Further, beginning teachers in unsupportive school conditions (e.g., isolated school culture, a lack of time resulting from the busyness of work, a lack of colleagues teaching the same year level in small schools) found a lack of opportunities to learn with and from colleagues. Similarly, Kyndt et al. (2016), in their analysis of 74 studies on teachers' informal learning from 1990 to 2012, suggest beginning teachers are highly motivated and eager to learn, but unsupportive school conditions (e.g., isolation, without teachers of the same year level, a lack of time) hinder their learning. Not surprisingly for the beginning teachers in the present study in schools where the induction and mentoring were less comprehensive, and the culture was less supportive, their transition into their school and the teacher's role was more difficult, as the insufficient induction support was unable to bridge their expectations and the reality of their school. They were also less satisfied with their teaching experience over time and with the negative bias of their reconstruction of themselves as teachers, they felt less effective as teachers than anticipated. The beginning teachers in these schools believed that if there had been better induction and mentoring support, they could have addressed many of the areas they identified as needing improvement and would therefore become more effective as a teacher. Milton et al. (2020) argue that it takes a school to grow a teacher. The findings of the present study suggest that multilayered comprehensive induction and mentoring and a whole-school approach are more likely to provide beginning teachers with quality professional learning and facilitate, over time, positive reconstructions of themselves as teachers. The important role colleagues play in supporting beginning teachers' learning and reconstructions of themselves as teachers (e.g., improve teaching and be an effective teacher in classroom) suggests the importance of comprehensive induction support that goes beyond mentor–mentee interaction to provide time and conditions to promote professional learning between teachers for beginning teachers' positive reconstructions of themselves as teachers in the school context.

The study suggests small schools may have difficulty providing their beginning teachers with adequate induction and mentoring support, which may negatively affect beginning teachers' reconstructions of themselves as teachers. In the present study, the beginning teacher working in a small school identified there was a lack of support and professional development opportunities for him to develop his teaching practice. For instance, with only one class for the year level he was teaching, he could not observe how other teachers teach the same year levels. This beginning teacher identified the need to develop his teaching by visiting other schools to observe classes of the year levels he was teaching. The difficulties that small schools have in providing their beginning teachers with adequate induction support have been identified by

previous studies (e.g., Buchanan et al., 2013; Langdon & Ward, 2014; A. Williams et al., 2001). For instance, in Langdon and Ward's (2014) case study of six New Zealand schools, school principals from smaller schools reported their lack of capability to provide induction and mentoring programmes. The present study identified this difficulty of small schools from beginning teachers' perspective, and found there was a negative influence on a beginning teacher's professional learning and reconstruction of self as a teacher over time. This suggests small schools may consider cooperation with other schools in surrounding communities to provide their beginning teachers with adequate induction support and facilitate their reconstructions of themselves as teachers by better meeting their needs for support and professional learning.

Beginning teachers in the present study identified mentor teachers as a crucial support in their reconstructing themselves as teachers in the school context. They appreciated always having someone who supported their learning over time. Mentors were also someone who responded to their concerns and questions quickly and provided them with feedback on their practice along with information, resources, tips, advice, and emotional support. This kind of mentor-teacher support helped beginning teachers' transition into their school and the teacher's role, enabling them to address issues in their daily work, and counter stress. The important role that mentor teachers play in assisting beginning teachers' smooth transition from preservice teacher to teacher is well recognised by other studies (e.g., Cameron, 2009; Grudnoff, 2007; Trevethan, 2018).

However, the study showed that some beginning teachers had more regular interactions with their mentor teachers than others (e.g., by teaching the same year level, sitting in the same office next to each other). Regular interactions, both formal and informal, developed a trusting relationship, and enabled a collaborative inquiry approach, which contributed to their enthusiasm for ongoing professional learning and positive reconstructions of themselves as teachers. Their mentor teachers helped them improve teaching and become effective in their classrooms by assisting them to establish clear professional learning and inquiry goals and engaging them in many professional learning and inquiry activities, such as co-planning, co-teaching, and co-reflection, as well as observing their mentor teachers and discussing the observations afterwards in addition to being observed and receiving constructive feedback from mentor teachers. In other words, there was more educative support for some beginning teachers, which enabled their professional learning and reconstruction of a positive sense of self as teacher. The importance of regular mentor–mentee interactions, trusting relationships, and

collaborative, reflective approaches to beginning teachers' learning and development has been recommended in numerous studies, such as Spooner-Lane's (2017) review of empirical studies on mentoring programmes for primary school beginning teachers between 2000 and 2012. Trevethan' s (2018) qualitative study of three first-year New Zealand primary school teachers also provides examples where regular mentor–mentee interactions and trusting relationships helped beginning teachers' transition from preservice teacher to teacher. A trusting inquiry-based relationship with mentors was important to beginning teachers' learning and their positive reconstruction of themselves as teachers.

The study showed that not all mentoring practice facilitated beginning teachers' positive reconstruction of themselves as teachers. For instance, not all beginning teachers had regular interactions with their mentor teachers or developed a trusting relationship between them. When there were no regular interactions with and support from their mentor teachers, a beginning teacher was likely to struggle on his/her own, which could negatively affect his/her reconstructions of self as teacher. The present study showed that not all beginning teachers had opportunities to work with their mentor teachers in a collaborative way. Some beginning teachers experienced mentoring practice in a supportive manner, with their mentor teachers observing them, providing them with feedback, and making sure they were not behind on meeting deadlines. Others were provided with less feedback from mentor teachers, and it was sometimes general in nature rather than focused on inquiry goals of professional learning. The variation in mentoring practices and a lack of sufficient educative mentoring support may have contributed to some beginning teachers having a negative reconstruction of teaching and self as a teacher. In Grudnoff's (2012) New Zealand study of 12 beginning teachers' transition from preservice teacher to teacher, not all beginning teachers could work with their mentor teachers in a collaborative approach or receive educative mentoring support. Grudnoff finds one quarter of the participants experienced minimal or no observations and received little specific feedback on their teaching. Some of Grudnoff's participants identified that a lack of feedback from mentor teachers that affirmed their progress, and identified areas for improvement, negatively affected their professional development as teachers. Mentoring practice has the potential to influence how beginning teachers transition into schools and reconstruct themselves as teachers.

Interplay Between Person and School

While school contexts seemed critical to beginning teachers' reconstructions of themselves as teachers and teaching, also important was the interplay between person and context. Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002) argue that the transition from preservice teacher to teacher is

more than a passive slide into an existing context. Rather, it involves an interactive process between beginning teachers and their school contexts. The major personal influences revealed from this interactive process in the present study are discussed below.

The study suggests personal resources are important to how a beginning teacher makes meaning of teaching in their school context. Examples of these personal resources are a beginning teacher's aspirations, a commitment to learning, and a willingness to give time to teaching, along with more realistic expectations of teaching, a willingness to put in effort when preparing oneself for teaching, and a positive attitude. More specifically, those who positively reconstructed themselves as teachers over the first year of teaching were self-aware and reflective and were willing to approach colleagues for support, particularly when stressed. Such inner resources appeared to have influenced how a beginning teacher interpreted and interacted with their lived experiences with colleagues and the expectations of their school. Hong et al. (2018), in their longitudinal study of six American beginning teachers, and Trevethan (2018), in her investigation of three New Zealand beginning teachers, identify that beginning teachers' personal resources, such as individual characteristics and skills, shape their positive experiences. Like Hong et al. (2018) and Trevethan (2018), the present study found teachers' personal resources and personal investment influenced their experience of teaching and reconstructions of themselves as teachers.

The study suggests that beginning teachers who started their teaching career in schools in low-socioeconomic areas, which were in alignment with their personal desire to help disadvantaged children, reconstructed a positive sense of self as a teacher. Such positive reconstructions appeared to be associated with a close match between beginning teachers' high ideals and their schools' goal of promoting the learning and opportunities of "priority learners." A close match between personal beliefs and goals and those of the school also appeared to positively influence career intentions. In contrast, beginning teachers whose choice of school was based on pragmatic reasons such as location, seemed to have a less positive reconstruction of self as a teacher, which may also have influenced their intentions to not remain in teaching or teaching in a specific school long term. This finding has similarities with J. M. Miller and Youngs's (2021) large, longitudinal mixed-methods study that investigated how the "fit" between first-year beginning teachers and their schools influenced teacher retention. While they point out this is an underresearched area, their findings suggest that congruence between a beginning teacher's beliefs and goals with that of their school increases teacher retention. However, a lack of congruence or fit between a beginning teacher and their school's beliefs and goals negatively

impacts on their intentions to stay teaching. Given the apparent importance of fit between the beginning teacher and their school it may be helpful to ensure that all those graduating from ITE programmes receive advice and guidance about choosing their first teaching position. This could include ways to source information about potential schools and the kinds of questions they can ask when interviewed for a beginning-teacher position to test the fit between their ideals and goals and the school's.

Summary

This chapter has discussed the key findings revealed by the study. It appears that people come to teaching with idealistic constructions of teaching and being a teacher, such as their desire to positively influence children's learning and development. The longitudinal data of this study suggest seeing students learn and progress was a key motive for beginning teachers' commitment to teaching over time. However, this study revealed that people tended to enter teaching without a full understanding of what teachers' work involves. The longitudinal data show that their initial simplistic constructions of teaching and being a teacher were likely to be reconstructed during practicum experiences and further reconstructed when they had more teaching experience. The study also discussed the influence of school contexts on beginning teachers' reconstructions of themselves as teachers and their career intentions, especially the influence of school leadership and induction and mentoring support. The concluding chapter summarises the findings, discusses implications and limitations of the research, and makes recommendations for future research.

Chapter 7
Conclusion

Introduction

This study investigated how beginning teachers made meaning of teaching and themselves as teachers over time. The motivation for this study was a desire to gain greater insight into the prior beliefs about teachers and teaching that people bring to teaching and how their beliefs about teaching and themselves as teachers are reconstructed over time. Central to the investigation were the influences on such reconstructions and future career intentions.

Using narrative inquiry, this longitudinal qualitative study investigated five beginning teachers' first-year teaching experiences in an urban area, Auckland, New Zealand. Data were gathered primarily through five sets of semistructured individual interviews from June 2017 to June 2018. The interviews were conducted at five time points: 1) before the participants' graduation from their ITE programme in June 2017; 2) at the end of their first term of teaching in September 2017; 3) at the end of their second term of teaching in December 2017; 4) at the end of their third term of teaching in April 2018; and 5) at the end of their fourth term of teaching in June 2018. The interview data were supplemented by field notes and information collected via social media. Data were analysed thematically and presented in two ways: stories that illustrated individual participants' experience and a cross-case analysis of the participants' experiences. Key findings were discussed in relation to the literature in Chapter 6.

This chapter summarises the key findings of the study. It also discusses the implications for policy and practice. Limitations of the study are also identified, followed by suggestions for future research.

Summary of Key Findings

This study was guided by the overarching research question of how beginning teachers made meaning of teaching and themselves as teachers over time. It investigated what meaning beginning teachers brought with them into teaching, how meaning was reconstructed in their first year of teaching, and how meaning reconstructions influenced beginning teachers' career intentions. The following is a summary of the key findings:

- The participants came to teaching with idealistic constructions of teaching and being a teacher, although the degree of idealism varied. They wanted to positively influence

children's learning and development and to contribute to society. Their enjoyment of working with children and personal quest for meaningful and fulfilling work, along with inspirations from parents working as teachers, and former teachers, were the most important influences underpinning their idealistic constructions of teaching and being a teacher. In their first year of teaching, participants' personal aspirations for teaching and commitment to children and their learning were a key motive for their hard work, source of job satisfaction, and resilience to withstand stress.

- Simplistic constructions of teaching and being a teacher were primarily influenced by previous teaching-related work experiences and practical reasons for teaching. They underestimated what teachers' work fully involved.

- During extended practicum experiences, participants' simplistic understandings of teaching shifted to more complex reconstructions of being a teacher. They experienced the busyness of teaching and began to recognise the demanding nature of teachers' work. During their first year of teaching, participants' understandings of teaching and being a teacher were further reconstructed through their engagement in the full range of teacher's classroom responsibilities and taking on school-wide activities, particularly in their second 6 months of teaching. With greater experience of teaching, the participants also experienced and recognised school contextual influences on their reconstructions of themselves as teachers.

- As beginning teachers, all the participants encountered challenges. These included multiple demands on their time, stress, and work–life imbalance, student-behavioural issues and meeting the needs of diverse learners. School contexts played a critical role in participants' reconstructions of teaching and themselves as teachers. Some schools provided the conditions, including ongoing strong support, that helped their beginning teachers address and manage challenges and positively reconstruct themselves as teachers. In contrast, other schools did not provide adequate support or resources, which led to tensions (e.g., between how they wanted to teach and how they were required to work) in the beginning teachers' reconstructions of themselves as teachers.

- There were differences between schools in terms of their attitude towards beginning teachers, which in turn influenced participants' reconstruction of themselves as teachers. The participants who felt trusted and valued as full members of their school and had their work and contribution recognised, tended to be more confident and actively participated in schools matters and activities. In contrast, two participants felt undervalued. One was

because his suggestions were not recognised by school leadership. The other felt undervalued because of the constant monitoring of her work by her team leader and because she never received positive or constructive feedback, only criticism. The friction with her team leader led to the participant's low confidence in herself as a teacher.

- Differences between schools' induction and mentoring practices influenced participants' reconstructions of themselves as teachers. Schools that had more comprehensive induction and mentoring practices involved a whole-school approach and provided professional development opportunities to support beginning teachers. Mentoring in these schools also tended to be educative and collaborative. Two participants noted they had opportunities to co-plan, co-teach, and co-reflect with their mentors and observe their mentor teachers and colleagues and team leaders teach. These participants had more regular interactions with their mentor teachers which supported the development of a trusting relationship. Participants who experienced a comprehensive approach to induction and mentoring were happy with the provision of professional learning opportunities, motivated to continually improve their teaching, and satisfied with their growth as a teacher by the end of their first year of teaching.

- In contrast, where induction policy and practice appeared to be less comprehensive, mentoring in these schools seemed to be less collaborative and not consistent. For example, two participants in their second 6 months of teaching had reduced mentoring sessions, and were not observed, or given constructive feedback. These participants appeared to be less satisfied with their growth as teachers compared to the other participants.

- Schools with collaborative cultures appeared to enable adequate professional and emotional support, which helped beginning teachers manage workload and stress. Three participants in such schools had a smoother transition into their school and teacher's role. Further, the relationships built with other members of their school not only helped with access to valuable resources (e.g., information, tips, and ideas) and informal learning, but also contributed to emotional connectedness and belongingness. A less collaborative and less supportive school culture hindered beginning teachers from learning with and from more experienced colleagues and affected their emotional wellbeing. There was a tendency to feel isolated in schools where there was a lack of collaboration with colleagues. In such culture, beginning teachers tended not to have a strong emotional connectedness and belonging to their school.

- Collaboration between beginning and more experienced teachers benefited not just beginning teachers, but both groups, as both had knowledge and strengths to offer. While experienced teachers helped first-year teachers to quickly get familiar with the school context and offered tips and ideas with some daily issues, beginning teachers used their personal strengths (e.g., teaching arts or maths) or up-to-date strategies they gained from ITE (e.g., teaching mixed-ability classes in mathematics).

- The participants who had aligned their personal desire to help disadvantaged children and to work in schools in low-socioeconomic communities tended to have more positive reconstructions of themselves as teachers compared to those who chose schools based primarily on pragmatic reasons.

- Beginning teachers who reconstructed a positive sense of self as teacher by managing the challenges encountered during their first year of teaching solidified their intention to make teaching their long-term career. The two participants who had more difficulty managing challenges indicated their intention was to become fully registered as a teacher and then to evaluate whether to continue teaching. They had reconstructed teaching as a very challenging occupation—an occupation that was stressful, time poor, and difficult to balance work and life.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The present study adds to the current understanding of how beginning teachers make meaning of teaching and themselves as teachers over time and suggests implications for teacher educators, school leaders, preservice teachers, beginning teachers, and policymakers.

As teaching becomes more complex and challenging, it is comforting to know that teachers still come into teaching with high ideals related to making a positive difference to children's learning and development. This raises questions about how to protect teachers' ideals while helping them address problems as early-career teachers. This study suggests there is a need for teacher educators to provide preservice teachers with opportunities to reflect on and analyse their personal constructions of teaching and the influences on those personal constructions.

The findings revealed that people tend to come to teaching without a realistic awareness of the demands and complexity of teaching. The study recommends strong partnerships between universities and schools to co-design and provide practicum experiences that facilitate preservice teachers to address simplistic views of teaching and reconstruct more realistic

understandings of being a teacher. Induction and mentoring could also include a specific focus on any unresolved unrealistic expectations during ITE to help beginning teachers reconstruct a more complex understanding of teaching and promote congruence between personal expectations and those of their school.

As beginning teaching is demanding on time and emotions, ITE may need to place more emphasis on providing preservice teachers with practical strategies regarding time management, how to prioritise different demands on their time, and how to manage emotions. Further, this study showed that beginning teachers can encounter tensions between their personal agency and school culture. Therefore, it may be helpful if ITE paid greater attention to developing preservice teachers' knowledge of the micropolitics of schools and safe ways to discuss or negotiate with school leadership to address tensions. Also, greater attention to improving preservice teachers' ability to build strong professional relationships and to collaborate and connect with colleagues may be helpful given the importance of social networks to being a teacher.

The study points to the importance of schools providing supportive conditions to support beginning teachers to reconstruct a positive sense of self as teacher. They thrive in schools with comprehensive induction and mentoring and collaborative culture. A whole-school approach to induction and support helps beginning teachers meet the demands and address challenges of teaching. This points to the importance of school leadership's key role in offering comprehensive induction and mentoring programmes and creating collaborative cultures.

The study suggests school leaders play a key role in promoting interactions between experienced and beginning teachers. Such interactions not only provide first-year teachers access to valuable resources and informal learning, but also promote emotional connectedness and a sense of belonging. Further, the study showed beginning teachers come to their workplace with their own knowledge and strengths, and exchanges between beginning and more experienced teachers are likely to benefit both groups. This suggests schools should encourage interactions and exchanges between teachers to nurture an environment where all teachers learn from and with each other and care for each other.

The study showed the importance of first-year teachers having their work recognised and feeling as though they were trusted and valued as members of their school. Trust and a sense of autonomy were related to making decisions about the teaching practice, which contributed to a positive reconstruction of self as a teacher. Beginning teachers who experienced a lack of

trust or sense of autonomy at work felt undervalued, which could indicate a possible misalignment between beginning teachers' beliefs and their school's expectations. This suggests that it is important for schools to promote a culture based on trust and valuing teachers' work.

Limitations of the Study

While sufficient data were collected in this qualitative, longitudinal study to obtain in-depth understandings of the influences on how beginning teachers make meaning of teaching and themselves as teachers, caution must be exercised in making generalisations. A limitation of this research relates to the small-scale nature of the study, which had five participants. Another limitation may relate to when data collection began (i.e., at the end of the ITE programme), so there was a reliance on the participants' reflections on what influenced their constructions of teaching at entry to the programme. The sampling strategies used for the study may be a further limitation. The participants were all drawn from one teacher education programme, so factors unique to the programme may have had some bearing on the results. The participants were also self-selected in that they volunteered to participate in the research, which means they may not be representative of the programme cohort or of preservice teachers in other programmes. In addition, the first-year teachers were all employed in schools in the Auckland urban area which may mean they are not representative of schools in other parts of New Zealand.

Suggestions for Future Research

The limitations identified above also suggest avenues for future research. As noted previously, the present qualitative study used a convenience, and purposive, sample drawn from one ITE programme. Further research using different samples would add to our knowledge in this area. For example, would participants drawn from other types of ITE programmes or from programmes offered in other parts of New Zealand have different experiences? This question has particular relevance given the participants' ITE programme was at master's level and had distinct aims and design features.

This study focused on first-year teachers. However, teachers' meaning making of teaching and themselves as teachers is dynamic. Thus, future research over a longer time period would add further insights into teachers' reconstructions of teaching and themselves as teachers, including influences on career intentions. Future research could also focus on particular populations of beginning teachers. For example, a focus on those who choose teaching as a second career may be productive given the current study indicated the influence of previous work on career

changers' meaning making of teaching. Future research employing quantitative methods, such as a cross-sectional, random sample nationally, would test the findings from the present study and provide statistical data that would allow greater generalisability of findings.

The study showed intrinsic rewards (e.g., meaningfulness and fulfilment from seeing students enjoy learning and make progress) alone may not be sufficient to sustain teachers' long-term career intentions for teaching. How to balance intrinsic rewards with external incentives (e.g., salary) in relation to teacher retention is a question worthy of further research and policy makers' consideration.

The study also showed beginning teachers whose high ideals (e.g., to help disadvantaged children) aligned with their school's goal (e.g., to serve students from low-socioeconomic communities) were more likely to have positive reconstructions of themselves as teachers and a commitment to teaching as a career. Further research may shed more light on how the "fit" between beginning teachers and their school influences reconstructions of teaching and themselves as teachers, and could potentially benefit ITE, schools employing beginning teachers, and the beginning teachers themselves.

Conclusions

Using narrative inquiry, this longitudinal research explored how beginning teachers made meaning of teaching and themselves as teachers over time. The findings revealed that the beginning teachers' initial constructions of teaching and being a teacher were shaped by prior experience associated mainly with family, schooling, and work. The study showed that participants' initial simplistic constructions of teaching were reconstructed during their ITE programme. Extended practicum experiences were key to prompting such reconstructions as participants were exposed to the realities of teaching, revealing an underestimation of what teachers' work really involved.

Increasingly complex reconstructions of teaching and being a teacher took place over the first year of teaching. This study illuminated the role school contexts play in such reconstructions. Schools that fostered a collaborative culture and took a comprehensive approach to induction and mentoring helped first-year teachers manage challenges and feel as though they were valued and trusted members of the school. First-year teachers in such schools were more likely to have a positive reconstruction of self as a teacher and view teaching as a long-term career. In contrast, those who experienced less collaborative school cultures and who did not feel trusted or valued tended to develop more negative views of self as teacher. This influenced

those participants' career intentions. Hence, this study contributes to the literature by providing insights into the conditions that assist, or don't assist, beginning teachers to manage the challenges of beginning teaching and reconstruct a positive sense of self as teacher. Furthermore, the study illuminates a link between school contexts, beginning teachers' reconstructions of teaching and self as teacher, and career intentions.

Overall, this thesis highlights the interplay between personal factors, ITE, and school contexts on shaping beginning teachers' construction and reconstruction of teaching over time. The five stories presented in this thesis are more than just narratives of five beginning teachers. They are windows into the reality of first-year teachers' lived experiences. Therefore, the findings from this study make an original contribution to the body of knowledge about beginning teachers, particularly in New Zealand.

Given the study also indicates how beginning teachers can be better supported to help them to thrive in the profession, the findings are of interest to all those involved in the preparation and education of beginning teachers. They have relevance to teacher educators, school leaders, preservice teachers, beginning teachers, and policymakers. The study particularly highlights the need for a shared understanding between ITE programmes and schools regarding the multiple, complex factors that influence preservice and beginning teachers' construction and reconstruction of teaching and being a teacher.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 The Invitation to Participate in Research

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK

SCHOOL OF LEARNING, DEVELOPMENT AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE
Epsom Campus
Gate 3, 74 Epsom Ave
Auckland, 1023, New Zealand
T +64 9 373 7999
W www.education.auckland.ac.nz
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92601
Symonds Street
Auckland 1135
New Zealand

Invitation to Participate in Research on Beginning Teachers' Meaning-Making of their Work as a Teacher and the Subsequent Influence on Career Aspirations

My name is Fang Li, and I am a doctoral student of Education from the School of Learning, Development and Professional Practice, the Faculty of Education and Social Work, the University of Auckland. My PhD research project focuses on the meaning that first-year beginning teachers give to their work as a teacher. The first year of teaching significantly influences teachers' ongoing development and retention. While much attention has been paid to induction and mentoring programmes, there appears to be little research into the personal meaning that beginning teachers attribute to their job experiences over time. This research aims to bridge the gap by addressing the following three questions:

1. What meaning do beginning teachers give to their work as a teacher?

2. How is meaning constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed by beginning teachers over their first year of teaching?

3. How and in what ways do the construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction of meaning influence beginning teachers' aspirations as a teacher?

This study will be conducted in the Auckland region, New Zealand. The criteria for participation is that you will be a preservice teacher education graduate in 2017 and that you have been appointed to a teaching position in the Auckland region. I would like to invite you to participate in this research project. Your participation would provide valuable insight and understanding on how first-year beginning teachers make meaning of their work as a teacher.

If you agree to participate, your participation would involve the following time commitments:

- Five approximately 60-minute semistructured interviews
- A maximum of four hours on social media from June 2017 to June 2018

The interviews will be conducted every three months from June 2017 to June 2018 at a time and place convenient to you. The interviews will be audio-recorded, but during the interviews you can request to have the audio-recorder stopped at any time and refuse to answer any question without having to give a reason. Participants will be encouraged to bring artifacts such as images, drawings, or poems relevant to the research questions to the interviews. Additionally, you will be given a social media account (e.g., an account from Wechat, Twitter, or other types of social media, depending on your preference) to record information such as critical incidents that you consider relevant to the research questions, and to share with me such information on a regular basis (e.g., every two weeks). The information recorded on the social media will be kept private between you and me, and will be used to prepare for the subsequent interviews.

The attached *Participant Information Sheet* provides more information about the research. If you are interested in participating in this study, please sign the attached *Consent Form* and email it to me at fli935@aucklanduni.ac.nz.

I will then email you to organize the first interview which will take place at a time and place convenient to you.

Thank you!

Yours sincerely,

Fang Li

Appendix 2 Participant Information Sheet

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK

SCHOOL OF LEARNING, DEVELOPMENT AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE
Epsom Campus
Gate 3, 74 Epsom Ave
Auckland, 1023, New Zealand
T +64 9 373 7999
W www.education.auckland.ac.nz
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92601
Symonds Street
Auckland 1135
New Zealand

Participant Information Sheet – for Teachers

Research Title: A narrative inquiry of beginning teachers' meaning-making of their work as a teacher and the subsequent influence on career aspirations

Supervisors: Associate Professor Lexie Grudnoff, Dr Frances Langdon

Researcher: Fang Li

My name is Fang Li, and I am a doctoral student of Education from the School of Learning, Development and Professional Practice, the Faculty of Education and Social Work, the University of Auckland. My PhD research project focuses on the meaning that first-year beginning teachers give to their work as a teacher. The first year of teaching significantly influences teachers' ongoing development and retention. While much attention has been paid to induction and mentoring programmes, there appears to be little research into the personal meaning that beginning teachers attribute to their job experiences over time. This research aims to bridge the gap by addressing the following three questions:

1. What meaning do beginning teachers give to their work as a teacher?

2. How is meaning constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed by beginning teachers over their first year of teaching?

3. How and in what ways do the construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction of meaning influence beginning teachers' aspirations as a teacher?

This study will be conducted in the Auckland region, New Zealand. The criteria for participation is that you will be a preservice teacher education graduate in 2017 and that you have been appointed to a teaching position in the Auckland region. I would like to invite you to participate in this research project. Your participation would provide valuable insight and understanding on how first-year beginning teachers make meaning of their work as a teacher.

If you agree to participate, your participation would involve the following time commitments:

- Five approximately 60-minute semistructured interviews
- A maximum of four hours on social media from June 2017 to June 2018

The interviews will be conducted every three months from June 2017 to June 2018 at a time and place convenient to you. The interviews will be audio-recorded, but during the interviews you can request to have the audio-recorder stopped at any time and refuse to answer any question without having to give a reason. Participants will be encouraged to bring artifacts such as images, drawings, or poems relevant to the research questions to the interviews. A hired transcriber will transcribe the audio-recordings who will sign a confidentiality agreement to preserve the confidentiality of the data. The interview transcripts will be sent to you by email for you to check their accuracy. After receiving the transcripts, you will have two weeks to add, change, or delete any data you have provided, and return the transcripts to me by email. After that time, it will be assumed that you are satisfied that the transcripts are accurate. Additionally, you will be given a social media account (e.g., an account from Wechat, Twitter, or other types of social media, depending on your preference) to record information such as critical incidents that you consider relevant to the research questions, and to share with me such information on a regular basis (e.g., every two weeks). The information recorded on the social media will be kept private between you and me, and will be used to prepare for the subsequent interviews.

Participation in this study is voluntary and you will be asked to sign a consent form. You are free to cease your participation at any time without having to give a reason and to withdraw any data up to three weeks after the data is collected. Your name and other identifying materials will not be used in any report of the research findings because pseudonyms will be used to protect participants' confidentiality. You will be asked to create your own pseudonym at the first interview. However, while every effort will be made to protect confidentiality, it may still be possible for a participant's comments to be recognised by others. The findings will only be

used for the purpose of my PhD thesis and associated publications and conference presentations. Consent forms will be kept separately from data by the Principal Investigator in a locked cabinet on the University of Auckland premises for six years. Electronic data will be securely stored on a password protected University of Auckland computer, backed up by a server. All data will be kept safely for a period of six years, after which time any data will be securely destroyed.

You may choose to be sent a summary of the findings at the conclusion of this research project.

Should you have any question about the research and your possible participation in it, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisors via the following contact details:

Principal Supervisor: Associate Professor Lexie Grudnoff
Faculty of Education and Social Work
The University of Auckland
Tel: + 64 9 373 7599 ext. 48890
Email: l.grudnoff@auckland.ac.nz

Co-Supervisor: Dr Frances Langdon
Faculty of Education and Social Work
The University of Auckland
Tel: + 64 9 6238899 ext. 48769
Email: f.langdon@auckland.ac.nz

Researcher: Fang Li
PhD of Education Doctoral Student
Faculty of Education and Social Work
The University of Auckland
Email: fli935@aucklanduni.ac.nz

Head of School: Dr Richard Hamilton
School of Learning, Development and Professional Practice
Faculty of Education and Social Work
The University of Auckland
Email: rj.hamilton@auckland.ac.nz

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact:

The Chair,
The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee
The University of Auckland
Research Office
Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142
Tel: + 64 9 373 7599 ext. 83711
Email: ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 31st of March 2017 for three years. Reference number 018792

Appendix 3 Consent Form

EDUCATION AND
SOCIAL WORK

SCHOOL OF LEARNING, DEVELOPMENT
AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE
Epsom Campus
Gate 3, 74 Epsom Ave
Auckland, 1023, New Zealand
T +64 9 373 7999
W www.education.auckland.ac.nz
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92601
Symonds Street
Auckland 1135
New Zealand

Consent Form – for Teachers

(This form will be held for a period of six years)

Research Title: A narrative inquiry of beginning teachers' meaning-making of their work as a teacher and the subsequent influence on career aspirations

Supervisors: Associate Professor Lexie Grudnoff, Dr Frances Langdon

Researcher: Fang Li

☐ I have read the Participant Information Sheet and have understood the nature of the research. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction.

☐ I agree to take part in this study and I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary.

☐ I agree to take part in the semistructured interviews. I understand that the researcher will interview me five times (every three months from June 2017 to June 2018) at a time and place convenient to me.

☐ I understand that each interview will last a maximum of 60 minutes and will be audio-recorded.

☐ I understand that during the interview I can have the audio-recorder stopped at any time and refuse to answer any question without having to provide a reason.

☐ I understand that I am encouraged to bring artifacts relevant to the research questions such as images, drawings or poems to the interviews.

☐ I understand that a hired transcriber will have access to the audio recordings of the interviews. I understand that the transcriber will sign a confidentiality agreement to preserve the confidentiality of the data.

☐ I understand that I will receive the interview transcripts by email to check their accuracy, and that I will have two weeks to return the transcripts to the researcher by email and after that time, it will be assumed that I am satisfied that the transcripts are accurate.

☐ I understand that I will be given a social media account (e.g., an account from Wechat, Twitter, or other types of social media, depending on my preference) to record information such as critical incidents that I consider relevant to the research questions, and to share with the researcher such information on a regular basis (e.g., every two weeks).

☐ I understand that the social media will take me a maximum of four hours from June 2017 to June 2018, and the information recorded on the social media will be kept private between the researcher and me which will be used to prepare for the subsequent interviews.

☐ I understand that I am free to withdraw participation at any time without giving a reason, and to withdraw any data up to three weeks after the data is collected.

☐ I understand that my participation in this study is confidential, and my name and other identifying materials will not be used in any report of the research findings.

☐ I understand that I will provide a pseudonym to the researcher at the first interview.

☐ While every effort will be made to protect confidentiality, I understand that it could still be possible for my comments to be recognized by others. I understand that for the purpose of confidentiality, I am advised not to tell other people I am participating in this research.

☐ I understand that all information or data provided will only be used for the purpose of the researcher's PhD thesis and associated publications and conference presentations.

☐ I understand that consent forms will be kept separately from data by the Principal Investigator in a locked cabinet on the University of Auckland premises for six years. Electronic data will be securely stored on a password protected University of Auckland computer, backed up by a server. I understand that all data are the property of the researcher, and will be kept safely for a period of six years, after which time any data will be securely destroyed.

☐ I understand that I will be given the opportunity to receive a summary of the research findings at the end of the research project.

Name of the research participant: ______________________________

Signature ___________________________ Date _________________

Please provide your email address below if you wish to be sent a summary of the research findings.

Email:____

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 31 March, 2017 for three years. Reference number 018792.

Appendix 4 The Interview Question Guide

The Interview Question Guide for the 1st Interview:

What led you into teaching?

What was your experience of school like?

Could you tell me about the teachers you had in your school days?

How would you describe the MTchg (Primary) programme?

Could you describe the kind of teacher you want to be?

What is your teaching metaphor?

Why did you choose to start teaching in this school?

What are your expectations and concerns for teaching?

What meaning does teaching have for you?

The Interview Question Guide for the 2nd Interview:

Can you tell me about your class? your school? your syndicate?

What is a typical day of your work like?

What was the transition like from preservice teacher to teacher?

What resources and support are available to you? How are they provided?

Could you share with me some highs and lows you have experienced in your work?

In what ways do you feel your teacher education has (not) prepared you for teaching?

What is your job satisfaction this term, and why?

Has there been any change in your perception of being a teacher?

The Interview Question Guide for the 3nd Interview:

How do you feel about going to work when waking up in the mornings? Why?

Has there been any change to your class? your school? your duties and responsibilities?

Can you tell me about your mentor teacher? your experience of the induction and mentoring programme?

How has your teaching beliefs influenced your classroom practice? Has there been any change to your prior beliefs, and why?

What have been your main areas of learning or development as a teacher?

What is your job satisfaction this term, and why?

Could you share with me some highs and lows this term?

How has your experience of teaching so far influenced your perception of teaching?

The Interview Question Guide for the 4th Interview:

How are your class and duties different from previous terms?

How is your school/syndicate different from previous terms?

What is a typical day of your work like?

What support and resources are available? How do they (or fail to) meet your needs?

Could you share with me the moments that you felt professionally/emotionally supported? challenged?

What has kept you going despite the challenges?

What is your job satisfaction this term, and why?

Has there been any change in your perception of being a teacher?

The Interview Question Guide for the 5th Interview:

Could you share with me some highs and lows this term?

What was different from last term regarding your class? duties and responsibilities?

What was different from last term regarding your school? your syndicate? resources and support to you?

Could you say something about your experience of the induction and mentoring programme?

How has the school helped or hindered you in becoming the teacher you had wanted to be?

How has the MTchg (Primary) programme prepared you for your first year of teaching, and what aspects of the programme you wish could have been different?

What is your overall job satisfaction for your first year of teaching?

Has there been any change in your perception of being a teacher?

How has your experience of teaching so far influenced your intention towards teaching as a career?

Appendix 5 Examples of Artefacts from Participants

My professional goal Teaching as Inquiry (from Stella):

Goal	Action / Evaluation
Goal 1 Develop knowledge and understanding of teaching an effective phonics program.	**Action:** Observe another teacher taking level 4 phonics. To establish phonics groups and routines to support this. To incorporate phonemic awareness activities into my reading program. Read through the phonics manual and establish an understanding of stage 2–4. Establish a range of independent phonemic activities to support the phonics programme. **Evaluation:** Observed another teacher taking level 4 phonics. Assessed students beginning levels of phonemic awareness and targeted the stage 2 programme to meet the needs of the students (covered letter sounds that were commonly missing). Through collecting this data, I established which students needed additional support for phonics. Re-assessed students' phonemic awareness after 1 cycle to determine what their needs were. Smaller group of stage 2 students allowed even more targeting to the particular letter sounds that were missing). Developed a range of phonics activities for students to undertake independently (roll and read, beginning sounds/blend cards, rhyming words, syllables). Read through Yolanda Soryl phonics book to understand lesson sequencing and how to assess students current phonemic awareness (particularly level 4). Conducted end of year assessments to measure students progress through the phonics programme.
Goal 2 Develop an engaging writing program and improve guided writing time.	**Action:** Conduct writing observation of another teacher Develop independent writing activities for early finishers Be observed and receive feedback from tutor teacher Build a collection of resources to support writing

	Evaluation: Observed another NE teacher taking writing and a Year 1–2 teacher's writing lesson. Reflected on highlights of these lessons and key takeaways, such as keeping the motivation simple and using everyday experiences in our writing, and also the importance of modelling the thinking process that takes place during writing, and discussing how to turn an experience into a descriptive piece of text. Developed a range of resources for early finishers in writing, to motivate students to complete their writing at an appropriate pace. Established independent self-checking of writing by using editing hands. Designed a silly sentences activity to encourage easy participation in the act of writing, aiming to increase writing fluency through increased mileage. Developed a publishing wall for students to share their work, and gain ideas from each other's work with the intention of increasing the students motivation to complete work to a high standard.

My Teaching Metaphor (from Zoe)

The type of teacher I'd like to be: A "Marigold" Teacher

A **Marigold** is a 'companion' plant.
Companion planting is used where gardeners plant certain vegetables or plants near each other to improve growth for one or both of the plants. From all of the 'companion' plants. The **Marigold** is one of the best companion plants that protect a range of plants from pests and harmful weeds. Using a **Marigold** plant next to mostly all vegetables and plants would allow the garden to grow big and strong.

I believe that for one to grow and become strong and healthy (as a teacher/educator), they need to be surrounded by good people too. In this, I aspire to be like a **Marigold** flower; a companion plant. That when put around other plants/flowers in the garden (teachers/students) I continue to grow, give support, encourage and help other things grow.

To be the best **Marigold** I can be, I try to create and collaborate resources to share with members of my team. I try my best to encourage others to try new things, or try them together to benefit the children. I try to protect the other plants (my classroom children) from harmful weeds etc and nurture them through engaging and relevant learning experiences, that will allow them to grow into active, lifelong learners.

As teachers, we are all in some way **Marigold** flowers. Trying to protect, inform, educate the ones we teach and allow them to grow into good human beings. And as a teacher, my everyday goal is to be the best **Marigold** I can be, for the children I teach, and also in terms of supporting other staff and learning from more experienced teachers.

Not only are the flowers bright and beautiful, but they are also SO fragrant, and smell amazing!

– Bonus ☺

An Example of Lesson Plans (from John)

Gone Fishing

- Writing programme over the course of a week with links to maths.

Our core writing programme ran over three days during the week. During my time in class we were covering instructional writing, focusing on one topic every week.

I chose fishing as a topic for a number of reasons. Primarily this was based on building effective relationships with my learners. Using information from the "all about me" worksheets I noticed that many students had listed the beach/sea as their favourite vacation place. Many were also from a Pacific background who I knew valued and had a strong tradition with the ocean, albeit a connection that might have been stronger with older generations. Finally through direct conversation with kids before class and other informal moments I learned that many students enjoyed traditional seafood dishes and had families who took them fishing at local spots like the Mangere Bridge. In finding these connections to the students lives I was intending to use appropriate and relevant content that would help raise engagement, and through this achievement.

Appendix 6 An Overview of the University of Auckland's Master of Teaching (Primary)

The traditional route into primary teaching in New Zealand is either through an undergraduate teacher education degree or, for those holding an existing degree, through a one-year Graduate Diploma in Teaching. However, in 2013 a new route into teaching was introduced through the New Zealand Ministry of Educations' (2013) competitive tendering process for 'exemplary postgraduate initial teacher education (EPITE) programmes' that were more 'practice focused' and grounded in rich partnerships with schools. Primary and secondary programmes from New Zealand's six main universities were selected to trial innovative approaches to ITE which aimed to lift the quality of graduating teachers practice and contribute to raising student achievement, particularly that of "priority learners" (Māori and Pasifika learners, those from low-socioeconomic backgrounds, and students with special education needs). The Ministry also required EPITE programmes to be more intellectually demanding than traditional programmes (a higher entrance criteria and postgraduate status), with a greater focus on practice (robust partnerships with schools and more time on practicum). The University of Auckland's Master of Teaching (Primary) (MTchg), from which the participants for this study were recruited, was one of the first EPITE programmes selected by the Ministry of Education.

MTchg Programme Overview

The MTchg was taught over three semesters in collaboration with 12 Auckland primary schools with very diverse populations in terms of student ethnicity, culture, language, and socio-economic status[1]. The MTchg students worked intensively in two different schools over the duration of the programme. In their first 6 months, a group of four to six MTchg students worked in a high decile[2] and very culturally diverse school for 2 days a week and undertook a 3-week full-time practicum in the same school. In the final 6 months of the programme, a different mix of four to six student teachers were deliberately placed in a low-decile school with a high proportion of priority learners. In addition to being in the second school for 2 days a week, the MTchg students did a 9-week full-time practicum in that school, 3 weeks at the beginning of the school year and 6 weeks towards the end of their programme. In the

[1] Auckland is the largest Polynesian city in the world and New Zealand's most diverse city with, according to the 2018 Census, (50.7 %) of the population born overseas. Auckland also has significant areas of disadvantage made worse by severe housing shortages.

[2] Based on the socioeconomic status of parents, all New Zealand schools are assigned a decile rating: 1 is the lowest rating and 10 the highest.

summative 6-week practicum they took full responsibility for the class for 3 weeks, as mandated by policy.

The MTchg was intentionally designed to be equity-centred. In line with the Ministry's contractual requirements, the overarching goal of the programme was to prepare teachers who practice in ways that promote equitable outcomes for priority learners. Thus, the *Facets of Practice for Equity* (Facets) framework formed the centre-piece of the MTchg and provided programme coherence. The six Facets were derived from a systematic review of international programmes of empirical research that identified teaching practices that had a positive influence on the learning (broadly defined) of disadvantaged and other students (Grudnoff et al., 2017). The Facets addressed the importance of teachers *creating learning-focused, respectful and supportive learning environments* (Facet 3). Key to developing such environments was the *selection of worthwhile content and designing and implementing learning opportunities aligned to valued learning outcomes* (Facet 1), which were *connected to students' lives and experiences* (Facet 2). Also important was the need for teachers to *use evidence to scaffold learning and improve teaching* (Facet 4) and to *adopt an inquiry stance and to take responsibility for further professional engagement and learning* (Facet 5). It was also vital that teachers of diverse learners to *recognise and challenge classroom, school and societal practices that reproduce inequity* (Facet 6) through questioning their own and other people's practices and assumptions that perpetuate the marginalisation of particular groups of students.

The MTchg is also framed by inquiry. The New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007) identifies 'teaching as inquiry' as being a critical part of how teachers ensure success for all their learners. The purpose of teaching as inquiry is for teachers to improve their practice by using a cyclical inquiry process to examine the impact of their teaching on their students. However, the MTchg also views inquiry "as stance" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009), or a habit of mind, whereby teachers continually question how their practice impacts on students' learning and also ask broader questions about how inequitable educational resources, processes, and practices influence students' outcomes. Thus Facet 5, *Adopting an inquiry stance and taking responsibility for professional learning* is explicitly threaded through the whole programme. Inquiry as stance in the MTchg also means collaborating with others, and drawing on the collective knowledge and expertise of colleagues in the university and schools to address classroom and school inequities.

Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. L. (2009). *Inquiry as stance: Practitioner research for the next generation*. Teachers College Press.

Grudnoff, L., Haigh, M., Hill, M. F., Cochran-Smith, M., Ell, F., & Ludlow, L. (2017). Teaching for equity: Insights from international evidence. *The Curriculum Journal, 28*(3), 305–326. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585176.2017.1292934

Ministry of Education. (2007). *The New Zealand Curriculum*. https://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/

Ministry of Education. (2013). *Provision of exemplary post graduate initial teacher education*. www.mindedu.govt.nz/theMinistry/EducationInitiatives/QualityOfITEProvision.aspx