Feeling is Believing: Student Teachers' Expressions of Their Emotions

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ABSTRACT Because teaching is a social activity, student teachers' feelings/emotions during their practicum are expressed in a social context. The aim of this study was to determine the emotional experiences of student teachers when dealing with mentor teachers and learners, in order to support the emotional development of student teachers in the social context of teaching. Data was collected by means of questionnaires. Three theoretical frameworks were used to assess the emotional experiences in the school as a social environment. The emotional experiences of the student teachers were captured while they were doing their practicum at schools. The research revealed positive and negative emotional experiences by student teachers during their practicum at schools. The outcomes of this study may be noteworthy for providers of teacher training programmes. The findings suggest that more in-depth attention should be given to the emotional development of student teachers.

INTRODUCTION

Expressing and interpreting emotions can play a clarifying and formative role in the development of student teachers' pedagogical identities. Student teachers are continuously absorbed in emotional experiences and have to manage their emotions endlessly (Gallant 2013: 163). Previous investigation by Du Plessis et al. (2010: 328-329) indicated that student teachers have to deal with emotions that can be problematic when teaching in formal education. Emotions can be useful or harmful. They can add value and meaning to social beings. Emotions influence the way humans add significance to their life, or choose their way of life.

Teaching is an emotional exercise and entails emotional effort, which is associated with the expression of emotions in interpersonal relationships. Emotional practices are related to job satisfaction, health and the burnout syndrome, which sometimes results in teachers dropping out of the profession (Zembylas and Schutz 2009: 368-374). It is therefore important for lecturers to engage with the emotional development of student teachers.

Student teachers experience various emotions throughout their social interaction with mentor teachers and learners at a school. The way student teachers make sense of learning experiences are expressed through emotions (Titsworth et al. 2013: 191). Emotions can induce a positive or negative classroom atmosphere.

They can also promote positive, cooperative social relationships with learners and parents, or dissociate people. Therefore, emotions play an influential and vital function in the daily teaching events experienced by student teachers during their practicum at schools. Their emotions have an effect on their convictions, enlighten their judgment, and determine largely how they familiarise themselves with the social environment around them (Gratch 2010: 1). Monir (2012: 51) agrees that many student teachers experience negative emotions during their practicum at schools. Feelings of helplessness, frustration, confusion, embarrassment, defensiveness and even hostility have been observed by mentor teachers. Student teachers also have strong emotions of blame and anger for not experiencing success during the practicum. Feeling rejected and left out causes emotional overloaded (Wright 2010: 259-265). Furthermore, student teachers experience the practicum as stressful (Mapfumo et al. 2012: 2013).

Student teachers arrive in a social teaching milieu with a collection of individual and social constructs about the practicum experience yet to be. As with any other teaching activities, student teachers need to understand the challenges of emotional-social interaction in order to commit to the task of effective teaching. However, to date, not enough qualitative research has been done on the emotional challenges experienced by student teachers. If this gap is not addressed during the training years, support for

the emotional development of student teachers is neglected, and student teachers remain unaware of their responsibility to manage their emotions. On the other hand, if awareness of emotional development can be raised during the training years, lecturers and mentor teachers can encourage and support student teachers to take responsibility and be accountable for their emotional and social experiences. This research is an attempt to fill the gap in the knowledge of specific support for student teachers regarding their emotional conduct.

In the next section, the objectives of the research and relevant theory are given. Then the research design and data analysis are presented, followed by a discussion of the findings, conclusion and recommendations on emotional guidance during the practicum.

Objective of the Study

Students' practicum plays a significant role in preparing them for the teaching profession. The difficulties of balancing novices' emotional and professional identities arise because of the tensions between student teachers' field experiences in actual classrooms, and the reform-oriented pedagogies and curricula that they frequently learn about in their university courses (Fottland 2004: 631-632). Student teachers are involved in building relationships with the learners, the mentor teachers, the other staff members and the parents of the school – all of which are influenced by their emotions. Against this background the objective of this study were to determine the emotional experiences of student teachers when dealing with mentor teachers and learners, in order to support the emotional development of student teachers in the social context of teaching and to make recommendations in this regard. Moreover, the research was driven by the following question? *What are the emotional experiences of student teachers during their interaction with mentor teachers and learners?* To understand these experiences, the following theoretical frameworks were used.

Theoretical Frameworks

The first theoretical framework used as an epistemological guide to account for the knowledge that is produced in this study is the social exchange theory. Social exchange theory assumes self-interested actors who transact with other self-interested actors to accomplish individual goals that they cannot achieve alone. Self-interest and interdependence are central properties of social exchange (Lawler and Thye 1999: 217). In related literature on justice and equity, emotional reactions are assumed to be more important, but even there, they are not theorized to any great extent (Molm and Cook 1995: 209-235; Hegtveldt and Markovsky 1995: 1-2). This is true of most sociological theories and traditions - in fact it is only in the last 10 to 15 years that emotions became a prominent research area in the discipline (Gordon 1981: 562-590; Scheff 1983: 5000-5005; Thoits 1989: 317-342). An assessment of numerous common exchange relations proposes that emotions both enter and pervade social exchange processes. Friendship relations are time and again driven by deep affection or feelings of happiness. Communal mergers may result from fear or anger. Economic partnerships may thrive because they produce positive feelings such as confidence or pleasure. The processes of exchange may cause individuals to feel good, satisfied, relieved, excited, and so forth (Lawler and Yoon 1996: 105.). Furthermore, the outcome of social exchange may generate pride or shame directed at one's self, or anger or gratitude directed toward the other. Sheff (1983: 5002) believes that emotional dynamics have a more central role in social exchange than typically assumed.

The second theoretical framework used as a sounding board for both the literature review and data analysis of this research project is the appreciative inquiry theory. This theory is based on the postmodern constructionist theory - that is, reality is socially constructed. Hammond (2002: 23) identifies a few basic assumptions of appreciative inquiry. These assumptions can be summarised as follows: Societies, organisations and groups (the school), belief that what we focus on, becomes our reality. This reality (emotions) is created in the moment, and there are multiple realities. Another assumption is that people have more confidence and comfort in their journey to the future when they carry forward positive parts of the past. Both positive and negative emotional experiences in the past are likely to be carried into the future. Two other assumptions are, firstly, that it is important to value different emotions and, secondly, the language we use (expressing our emotions) creates

our reality. Appreciative inquiry according to Cooperrider et al. (2003: 3) is a collaborative effort to … "search for the best in people (by encouraging and supporting their positive emotions), their organizations, and their world. It involves the discovery of what gives 'life' to a living system when it is most effective, alive, and constructively capable in economic, ecological, and human terms".

The third theory that is used in this study is the social learning theory. According to Schacter and Singer (1962: 379-399), emotions involve both cognitive (mental) factors and psychological stimulation. They claim that when people become aware of a situation, they have a need to interpret their feelings. Emotions arise when a meticulous label is applied, for example being called happy makes one feel joyful. According to this theory, individual behaviour is defined in terms of a three-way, active, mutual process in which (1) individual aspects, (2) environmental power, and (3) performance continually interact. An essential principle of the social learning theory is that people learn not only through their own individual experiences, but also by examining the conduct of others and the outcomes of their actions. This assertion can be applied to student teachers who are doing their practicum, since they observe the emotional experiences of their mentor teachers and observe the results of the specific emotional behaviour.

The fourth theory that is used in this study is the Lave and Wenger's theory of situated learning. Lave and Wenger (1991: 32, 50, 70) view learning as a social process in which identity, membership (a need to belong in order to learn) and interpersonal relationships are significant. Two important concepts are "masters" and "apprentices". During student teachers' practicum the mentor teachers act as "masters" and the student teachers are viewed as the "apprentices". In a practical learning situation, such as practicum periods at schools, the limelight is on mutual engagements between the "masters" and the "apprentices", and all the learning activities depend on these engagements. Lave and Wenger's (1991: 32, 50, 70) theory of situated learning emphasises two beliefs, namely (1) that learning takes place as a function of the situation, society and kind of activity in which it occurs, and (2) that learning is a procedure that takes place in a participatory social context. Student teachers acquire the knowledge, attitudes

and skills they need to carry out their duties in the classroom by connecting in the school situation as a social construct. Thus they relate and apply the abstract knowledge they have acquired through their studies to real-life situations. Two other concepts that are significant for the situated learning theory are "community of practice" and "legitimate peripheral participation". Student teachers recognise and develop practices that are appropriate for a specific community. Therefore, student teachers are legitimate peripheral participants in the practices of the teaching community during their practical teaching under the guidance of experienced teachers as mentors.

The four theoretical frameworks discussed in the section above influenced the understanding of the emotional experiences of student teachers and will provide a basis for the critical evaluation of the findings. The next section proceeds with a literature review.

Research on Positive and Negative Emotional Experiences of Student Teachers

Peters (2008: 5) investigated the positive emotional experiences of student teachers. This researcher identified three outstanding aspects of positive emotional experiences by student teachers, namely support from mentor teachers, positive interaction with the learners and the changing of perceptions. Feelings of doubt are replaced with feelings of excitement owing to support from the mentor teacher. Warm and welcoming mentor teachers help nervous student teachers to overcome feelings of uncertainty. Mentor support and guidance given in a constructive way contribute towards feelings of happiness (Peters 2008: 4-5).

Student teachers develop self-confidence when interacting with the learners in a positive way. This engagement results in feelings of affirmation of their decision to become a teacher. The feeling that they work well with the learners and support their learning confirms their positive experiences. Positive emotions are also experienced by student teachers when learners construct their own learning by being involved in learning activities and by discovering new facts (Peters 2008: 6-8).

Being a student teacher is significant in changing the student teacher's own perceptions. Student teachers focus on being pre-service

teachers rather than on being students. This transformation involves a process of self-discovery in which they discover a great deal about themselves and their teaching skills. Student teachers feel as if they are regarded as colleagues rather than student teachers (Peters 2008: 8-10).

On the other hand, researchers (Xemxija 2012: 3; Bhargava 2009: 1) acknowledge negative emotional experiences which might cause burdens on student teachers' school experiences. According to Xemxija (2012: 3), the anxiety and strain experienced by student teachers are primarily caused by a lack of help and support during their practicum at schools. More focused supervision, communication and trust would help to prevent feelings of anger, confusion, and fear. Xemxija (2012: 3) adds that the burdens on student teachers are sometimes so unendurable and time so limited that they become demotivated and discouraged.

According to Bhargava (2009: 1-2), lesson planning and lesson preparation does not always predict the realities of the classroom. Because learners are sometimes not surprised by the learning content presented, student teachers feel nervous as they then have to emotionally and mentally re-plan and restructure their written lesson plans immediately. If the lesson does not turn out as anticipated by the student teacher, feelings of confusion and fear may result.

For a student teacher managing and maintaining discipline is an enormous challenge. Disruptive behaviour often leads to a high level of anger, fear and confusion in student teachers. If learners lose interest in the learning activities, student teachers feel as if they have lost control, which raises feelings of anxiety. Panic attacks are common when student teachers feel that they cannot achieve the expected objectives due to an unruly class (Bhargava 2009: 1-2).

Beck and Kosnik (2002: 94) revealed that a number of students are disillusioned by the heavy workload they have to perform after hours. Duties such as marking, checking, assessing learners' work, managing discipline and being involved in extramural activities are only a few of their responsibilities. Doing all these activities during one day is exhausting and may lead to feelings of fear, confusion and anxiety. Student teachers, who are not able to take the mental stress, often think of giving up. Unfavourable remarks written in teaching practice workbooks also contribute towards negative emotional feelings.

Accommodating student teachers in the timetable can be problematic. It is compulsory for student teachers to complete a certain number of lessons while doing their practicum. Some schools are not very willing to change their timetable or their own planned lessons to accommodate the needs of student teachers. Furthermore, student teachers sometimes have to stand in for other teachers or teach the same lesson in different classes, which means that, in spite of presenting more than one required lesson, the number of lessons presented remains only one (Bhargava 2009: 2). Feelings related to frustration and helplessness also contribute towards negative emotional experiences (Litmanen et al. 2012: 1085; Wright 2010: 259-265).

The reality of assessment causes anxiety brought on by being observed and criticised by a mentor teacher. The pressure of acting and teaching in a correct and proper way makes student teachers tense and causes fear and anxiety. In the aforementioned paragraphs, research done on positive and negative emotions has been discussed. The following section is a discussion of the research methodology.

METHODOLOGY

A mixed methods design was used. The descriptive part of the study involved a qualitative approach, with a view to gaining in-depth understanding of student teachers' emotional experiences. De Vos et al. (2011: 301) agree that researchers who use a qualitative approach want to gain knowledge about a certain worldview or about assumptions concerning "the nature of reality". Henning (2005: 3) claims that in educational research, the qualitative approach is a useful means to obtain an in-depth understanding of "an interactive and dynamic phenomenon" – in this case, student teachers' emotional experiences during their practicum at schools.

A quantitative research approach was also used by counting responses (frequencies). Frequency-count recording was viewed necessary because the researcher was interested only in the frequency with which the emotions occur. No other statistical method was deemed necessary.

Fourth-year students were used as participants, because they have already successfully completed three periods of practicum during their training years (Teaching Practice modules 1, 2 and 3). Their perceptions therefore contribute to greater validity and reliability of the data.

They had to complete a non-compulsory questionnaire and had to identify positive and negative emotional experiences during their practicum. They also had to indicate what response was elicited by the emotion. Out of a population of 616 fourth-year students who were enrolled for the practicum module of the BEd degree (Early Childhood Development and Foundation Phase) in 2012, only 139 participants returned completed questionnaires. However, only 96 questionnaires were used for the final sample, because several questionnaires contained hardly any useful data and were excluded from the final sample. The participants were from all parts of South Africa. Maximum variation sampling was used. Both genders and a wide age distribution (21 to 44 years) were involved. Moreover, students completed their practicum at varied locations, ranging from those that were well-resourced to those that were deficient in human and other resources. The participants also represented a variety of cultural groups. The data collected were fully documented and subjected to a qualitative analysis.

The analysis of the data was approached in three stages: Stage 1 focused on classifying the different emotions experienced by the student teachers into two main groups, namely positive and negative emotions. In stage 2 the various positive emotions were clustered into three main categories of emotions and the different negative emotions into three main negative categories of emotions. In stage 3, frequency counting was done.

Ethical measures were adhered to, because participant anonymity, as well as confidentiality, was maintained at all times and participation was not compulsory. Two strategies were used to guard against bias in the findings, namely peer reviewing and self-monitoring. Peer reviewing by three colleagues who are also involved in practicum for fourth-year students was conducted to reach consensus on the interpretation of the results. The researcher did her best to evade bias by resorting to continuous self-monitoring. Analysis of the data led to the following findings.

FINDINGS

The findings fall into two sections, namely positive emotional experiences (feelings related to happiness, satisfaction and self-validation and negative emotional experiences (feelings related to fear, anger and confusion).

Table1: Frequencies of positive and negative emotions

Positive emotions	Frequency	Negative emotions	Frequency
Happiness	86%	Fear	64%
Satisfaction	39%	Anger	43%
Self-validation	38%	Confusion	20%

N=96

Feelings Related to Happiness

The majority of participants (86%) indicated that they experienced feelings of happiness because the mentor teachers were friendly and supportive (Table 1). The participants agreed that they felt happy when the schools welcomed them, accommodated them and involved them in all the activities (meetings, extramural activities, fundraising events and tuition). The following views were expressed by the participants:

- *I had wonderful teachers – they were so helpful, friendly and welcoming.*
- *I felt happy when the teachers were very positive and always eager and willing to help me.*
- *I felt happy because the teachers were actively involved during my teaching practice.*
- *I felt happy when the children treated me as a qualified teacher.*
- *I felt happy when learners enjoyed lessons that I presented.*

The comments of the participants confirm the findings presented in the literature (Peters 2008: 4-10; Gallant 2013: 168-169), namely that student teachers who are guided by mentor teachers feel happy, cared for and thankful. This is also in line with one of the principles of the appreciative inquiry theory, namely that what we focus on becomes our reality. When student teachers focus on feelings of happiness owing to sound guidance from mentor teachers, a sound learning environment will become their reality.

The participants also testified that they learned a lot from the examples set by the mentor teachers. They viewed the mentor teachers as excellent role models who have the ability to handle difficult situations. The participants described their experiences as follows:

- *My teacher was well organised and I would like to be like that.*
- *I felt happy watching and learning from experienced teachers.*
- *It made me happy to work with the school principal. I learnt and experienced how a primary school is run.*

These experiences of the participants are supported by the social learning theory, which emphasises that people (student teachers) learn not only through their own individual experiences, but also by probing the behaviour of others (mentor teachers) and the outcomes of their actions. As explained earlier on, two important concepts of the social learning theory are those of "masters" and "apprentices"**.** During student teachers' practicums the mentors act as "masters" and the student teachers are viewed as the "apprentices" (Lave and Wenger 1991: 32, 50, 70).

Bonding with the learners and the teaching staff and feeling part of the school also led to feelings of happiness, according to some of the participants. Relevant comments were:

- *The teachers felt like my friends. They were extremely supportive.*
- *I felt happy because I was totally involved in the school. Just like part of the school.*
- *The learners loved and hugged me.*
- *What I appreciate most was that learners were cooperative; they listen and did everything that I told them to do. They felt like my own.*

The aspect of bonding can be connected to the situated learning theory of Lave and Wenger (1991: 32, 50, 70), namely that in a practical learning circumstance, (such as practicum periods at schools), the emphasis is on mutual engagements and all learning activities rely on these engagements. Zembylas and Schutz (2009: 14) add that emotional practices embedded in social and emotional ties to others, such as bonding, are related to job satisfaction. These feelings of happiness are also in line with the social exchange theory, with special reference to the importance of interdependence as a central property of social exchange (Lawler and Thye 1999: 217). For example: the mentor teacher is dependent on the student teacher to use the guidance and advise when presenting lessons for the benefit of all learners, and the mentor teacher is dependent on the learners to adhere to his/her instructions to obey and respect the student teach-er. In turn, the student teacher is dependent on the mentor teacher for support and guidance, and dependent on the learners' respect. The learners on the other hand are dependent on the student teacher and class teacher for effective teaching and instruction. This links with Gallant's (2013: 169-171) suggestion that being dependent on each other indeed challenges social relationships. According to the social exchange theory, a close examination of many common exchange relations suggests that emotions both enter and pervade social exchange processes. The importance of bonding with the teaching staff and the learners is also emphasised by Zembylas and Schutz (2009: 14), who states that being able to bond leads to changed perceptions on the part of student teachers. If student teachers experience that they are being regarded as colleagues, they start focusing on being preservice teachers, rather than on being students.

Feelings Related to Satisfaction

The participants (39%) indicated that they felt satisfied when they were able to achieve what they needed to achieve in planning, preparing and, most of all, presenting lessons. Other teaching aspects that, according to the participants, resulted in feelings of satisfaction are communication and interaction with other staff members and with learners, especially when helping them to master new knowledge and to apply it in new situations. They also admitted that knowing exactly what was expected of them contributed to a feeling of satisfaction. Their views were:

- *I know I have the ability to be kind, loving and helpful.*
- *Interacting with the children, enjoying the funny things they say and getting to know them satisfy me.*
- *Meeting and interacting with the children was great.*
- *Interacting with children taught me a lot about the responsibilities of a good teacher and that makes me feel good about myself.*

The remarks of the participants verified the findings of Xemxija (2012: 3), namely that successful interaction with learners causes a feeling of satisfaction. The student teachers developed self-confidence when interacting with the learners. This engagement generated feelings

of affirmation about their decision to become a teacher. These findings are in accordance with the findings of Gallant (2013: 169-171) and the situated learning theory. Learning is a procedure that takes place in a participatory social context. Student teachers acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills they need to carry out their duties in the classroom by connecting in the school situation as a social construct. They relate and apply the theoretical knowledge they have acquired through their studies to real-life situations during their practicum.

Feelings Related to Self-validation

Feeling validated was indicated by a quite a number of the participants (38%). They felt proud when the learners achieved what they wanted them to achieve and when they could help learners to eventually understand something they did not understand initially. They also felt validated when experiencing the professional conduct of the school principal towards them. Student teachers are responsible for achieving specific objectives when presenting lessons. When they succeed in achieving these objectives, they felt proud and important. They also experienced feelings of validation when the mentor teachers praised them and admired their teaching. The following were statements by the participants in this regard:

- *I felt pride when the mentor teacher said that I would be an excellent teacher one day.*
- *After every activity the art was put up on the walls, it's not forgotten and it makes me proud to think I was part of it.*
- *I felt proud when my teachers gave me positive comments on my lessons.*
- *It is so rewarding and exciting to see how far I have come from my first teaching practice. I feel proud about myself.*

From the responses of the participants, one can see that they felt proud when they could help the learners to accomplish understanding, when they gained learners' trust, and when mentor teachers acknowledged their development. These findings are supported by Xemxija (2012: 3), who explains the changing role of student teachers while in the presence of mentor teachers. They start to change their perceptions of themselves. This also relates to another social theoretical framework, namely appreciative in-

quiry. People (student teachers) have more confidence about the future when they carry forward positive parts of the past (their positive memories of their practicum under the guidance and with the support of the mentor teachers). This means that student teachers are more self-assured after their practicum, as the outcome of social exchange (the guidance of the mentor teachers) generates pride and self-validation. This is also in line with self-awareness as identified by Gallant (2013: 176-178).

Apart from the positive emotional experiences, negative emotional experiences were also indicated by the participants. Three main negative emotions are discussed, namely feelings related to fear, anger and confusion.

Feelings Related to Fear

Participants indicated that they experienced feelings related to fear (64%). The reasons for feeling scared included: feeling unsure of what the practicum would be like, and feeling of doubt about whether they would be good teachers. Some indicated that they were scared to present lessons. The following are some of the examples given of feelings related to fear:

- *I was scared that I would make mistakes when I present lessons.*
- *I was scared to present different lessons, as different lessons require different teaching strategies and different teaching media.*
- *I was scared the first day - didn't know what to expect.*
- *I was scared because I cannot control a disruptive class on my own.*
- *I was afraid I would not achieve the lesson goal and that I would not be an excellent teacher one day.*
- *I was afraid that I would not be able to manage the heavy workload.*

That student teachers would have concerns about lesson planning and preparation, disruptive behaviour of learners and heavy workload is confirmed by Bhargava (2009: 1-2). Moreover, experiences of doubt about their own abilities and skills to become an excellent teacher are in accordance with the social exchange theory. Self-interested actors (mentor teachers) transact with other self-interested actors (student teachers) to accomplish individual goals that they cannot achieve alone, but rather in social context. This

also draws one's attention to another theoretical framework namely, the appreciative inquiry theory, which is linked to the idea of a collaborative and mutual social interaction to search for the best in people (Cooperrider et al. 2003: 3).

Feelings Related to Anger

A number of participants (43%) indicated that they felt angry when learners acted disrespectfully towards them, deliberately ignored them and misbehaved by fighting, swearing, or disrupting teaching and learning. It appears that poor discipline in schools might be a reason for student teachers feeling angry. Student teachers felt annoyed at being held accountable for learners' misconduct in classrooms, and some felt abused when acting as substitute teachers for other teaching staff. The following statements were made by the participants in this regard:

- *I felt angry being blamed by the mentor teacher for serious misbehaviour incidents in the class.*
- *I feel angry when learners do not do their homework – I see it as disrespect.*
- *Badly behaved learners caused me quite a bit of stress and that made me angry.*
- *I feel that the school abuses the fact that they have student teachers. I was taken out of class to do admin tasks for other teachers, like cut out and laminate documents for them.*
- *Feeling overwhelmed and frustrated by having to beg for periods to present required lessons made me feel angry. The teacher expected of me to help her out on days that she was not feeling well.*

Aspects such as disrespect, disruptive behaviour, misconduct and being substitute teachers tie into one of the basic assumptions of the appreciative inquiry theory namely, that reality is created in the moment, and there are multiple realities (as mentioned above). For a student teacher, the school is the reality at this point in time and disciplinary problems are part of the reality, as confirmed by Bhargava (2009: 1). When learners do not pay attention in the learning activities, student teachers feel as if they have lost control and that the learners do not respect them. Two other aspects which are confirmed by the literature is the problem of accommodating student teachers in the timetable and having to stand in for other teachers (Bhargava 2009: 2).

Feelings Related to Confusion

Some of the participants (20%) indicated that they experienced feelings of confusion during their practicum. Different examples of confusion can be identified namely: confusion caused by the conduct of mentor teachers and confusion caused by change. Other sources of confusion are due to not knowing what is expected of them and being unfamiliar with other teachers. The relationship between theory and practice, inconsistency, and different information and guidelines were also reasons given for confusion. Being unsure and being unfamiliar with various school related matters and teaching strategies lead to self-doubt and nervousness. The following remarks of participants are relevant to this emotion:

- *My first day at the school was very confusing. I did not understand what the teachers wanted me to do.*
- *I was confused when the dress code was discussed in a meeting and not all of the teachers followed it.*
- *Parts of the daily time table made me a bit confused. It changed every other week.*
- *I was confused about the curriculum changes.*
- *The theory of education and reality of instruction differs a lot.*
- *Some of the practices don't link up with . . . my textbook.*
- *Different approaches to discipline by the class teacher are confusing.*
- *The lesson plan used by my teacher differs from lesson plans set out in my textbook.*

From the above comments of the participants, it is clear that their feelings of confusion coincide with principles of the appreciative inquiry theory namely, that reality is created in the moment and that there exists multiple realities. Confusion is an instant reality and different incidents of confusion emphasise multiple realities. The findings also correspond with feelings related to frustration according to Litmanen et al. (2012: 1085) and Wright (2010: 259-265).

CONCLUSION

It was stated at the beginning of this article that this research was undertaken to determine the emotional experiences of student teachers

when engaging with mentor teachers and learners, in order to support the emotional development of student teachers in a social context such as teaching. The main findings revealed that student teachers do experience positive feelings (happiness, satisfaction and self-validation) and negative emotional feelings (fear, anger and confusion) that influence their professional development. This is confirmed by literature (Mafumo et al. 2012; Litmanen et al. 2012; Gallant 2013). The author of this study believes that teaching is an emotional exercise and entails emotional effort, which is associated with the expression of emotions in interpersonal relationships. The findings emphasise the importance of emotional support from teacher training institution as well as the school during their practicum. For this reason it is imperative to understand and address the various emotions experienced by student teachers.

This article only touched on some emotions experienced during practicum. Therefore, it seems justifiable to conclude that further research is needed to explore what effect emotions have on the practicum component of teacher training programmes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Teaching in the Foundation Phase is characterised by physical and professional closeness, which creates greater emotional intensity. Rich social interactions are required so that student teachers can express a range of emotions that might influence and shape both their individual and professional development and their thoughts and reflections on their ability to deal with their emotional experiences.

Moreover, a detailed experiential database may be created by visiting student teachers during their practicum. Mentor teachers should support student teachers in terms of both their emotional and cognitive development. More emotional guidance from the mentor teacher should be considered and student teachers could use guidelines to enable them to use their emotions productively in classes.

Student teachers must not only be aware of their emotions, but also need to understand the importance of managing their emotions. They should be given opportunities to report not only on their academic development, but also on their emotional development.

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