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# M ED RESEARCH REPORT

# THE IMPACT OF TEACH SOUTH AFRICA THROUGH EXPERIENCES OF TEACH ALUMNI: RECRUITMENT AND SUPPORT OF MOTIVATED TEACHER CANDIDATES

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## DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own work, supervised by the Faculty of Education, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Division. It is submitted for a Masters in Education Degree at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Lindiwe Delisile Ngwenya

……..... …….. day of …… 2019

## ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

**AIP –** Ambassador Induction Programme

**CSI -** Corporate Social Investment

**DBE –** Department of Basic Education

**DHET –** Department of Higher Education and Training

**DoE –** Department of Education

**EFA –** Education For All

**KIPP –** Knowledge is Power Programme

**ISPFTED –** Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development

**ITEP –** Initial Teacher Education Programmes

**ITERP –** Initial Teacher Education Research Project

**HoD –** Head of Department

**NAO –** National Audit Office

**NCES –** National Centre for Education Statistics

**NGO –** Non-governmental Organisation

**OECD –** Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

**OSD –** Occupation Specific Dispensation

**SACE –** South African Council of Educators

**SGB –** School Governing Body

**SMT –** School Management Team

**TA –** TEACH Ambassador

**TAL –** Teaching As Leadership

**TFA –** Teach for America

**TSA –** TEACH South Africa

**UIS –** UNESCO Institute for Statistics

**UK –** United Kingdom

**UNESCO –** United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

**US –** United States

## ABSTRACT

The teaching profession suffers from a low social status and public image, as South African teachers are generally considered to have low motivation and commitment. Consequently, the Department of Basic Education struggles to attract young, top achievers and retain quality, experienced teachers. The need for quality teachers is particularly felt in critical subjects and in disadvantaged schools. The NGO, TEACH South Africa (TSA), modelled after Teach for America, has positioned itself as a additional source of teachers and future leaders through its two-year induction and on-going support programme. By rigorously recruiting, selecting and inducting young, high-achieving graduates with particular characteristics to teach critical subjects in disadvantaged schools, TSA aims to produce future leaders both inside and outside the classroom, committed to improving educational outcomes in the long-term.

The study seeks to investigate the impact of the TSA programme on its recruits, called TEACH Ambassadors (TAs), now alumni, by exploring their experiences during the programme and subsequent career paths. It also aims to ascertain the extent to which the programme produces what it intends. This is done through a qualitative study, where semi-structured interviews of three TSA mentors and eleven alumni from the first three cohorts of the TSA programme (2009-2011) were used as a method of data collection.

The research reveals that TSA's strength is in its rigorous recruitment and selection process, which attracts top-tier candidates, who are intrinsically motivated to make a difference in education and who would not normally choose teaching. Furthermore, the career path trajectory of most TAs changed as a result of their experiences during the programme, as at least 60% of TAs decided to remain teachers and others remained in education, outside the classroom. However, the placement of TAs was subject to provincial departments' needs, which sometimes did not align with TSA and unconducive school environments compromised TAs work. Furthermore, weaknesses in the programme design, strategy and provision of some key services pose a real threat to the quality of the programme, its outcomes and its viability.

**KEY WORDS:** MOTIVATION, COMMITMENT, TEACHER RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Background

South African teachers are generally considered to have low motivation and commitment, which is evident in that 80% of South African public schools are considered underperforming and dysfunctional – an indicator being that only about 40% of class time is spent on instruction (Blank & Jansen, 2014, p. 12-13, Bernstein, 2011, p. 5, 27; OECD, p. 299). Learner achievement is low and the profession has a poor public image and social status. This, together with perceptions of low pay, difficult work conditions, limited career advancement and inadequate professional development makes teaching an unattractive career path, particularly to top, young achievers who have various labour market options. Therefore, the South African education system does not manage to recruit and retain enough young quality teachers, especially in Mathematics, Science and Languages (Bernstein, 2015; Pitsoe, 2013; Peltzer et al., 2005; SACE 2010). Initial teacher education programmes (ITEP) have relatively low entry requirements, with many learners seeing teaching as a last resort to gain entry into university (Bernstein, 2015, p. 6-7, 30-31). All these negative external factors go some way to explaining the low motivation and commitment of teachers who may not have wanted to be teachers in the first place. The problem is compounded because few teacher graduates, especially in the abovementioned critical subjects, want to work where the need is greatest, i.e., in rural and township schools (Pitsoe, 2013; Peltzer et al., 2005; SACE 2010; Bennell and Akyeampong, 2007, p.18).

In response to the aforementioned challenges, a Non-governmental Organisation (NGO), TEACH South Africa (TSA), was set up in 2009 to provide an additional route into teaching and produce future leaders, using recruitment, selection and preparation strategies that are different to the traditional paths by identifying and promoting positive internal factors through their programme aim and design. Successful recruits are called TEACH Ambassadors (TA) and undergo a two-year programme, at the end of which they become known as TEACH alumni (*About us*,

n.d.; *Alumni*, n.d.). The long-term vision for TSA alumni is listed as the following on the organisation's website:

> TEACH South Africa is building a force of leaders who have the perspective and commitment necessary to effect long-term, fundamental changes that will make South Africa a stronger, more successful nation. After their two years in the classroom, our TEACH Ambassadors will go on to work in a variety of fields. Many will continue to teach, while others will enter the private or public sectors.
> The TEACH South Africa experience will have a significant impact on their lives, both personally and professionally. Through this intense personal challenge, they will develop an advanced set of leadership, communication, and problem-solving skills. At the same time, they gain an understanding of educational inequity and its solutions that is foundational for a lifetime of advocacy and civic leadership. (*Alumni*, n.d.).

TSA is modelled after Teach for America (TFA). Both countries face similar challenges regarding low teacher motivation, which in turn negatively affects teacher recruitment and retention. TSA is only in its ninth year, and has placed 553 TAs in the period 2009-2017 (*Homepage*, n.d.). So, most of what has been written about it consists of media coverage with only one research report, which could be found, concerning the programme. Hence, this study draws from a more academic literature concerning TFA, which has started to be studied much more and become the subject of various publications given its 27-year history. It is argued here that TFA's strengths and achievements suggest that TSA could have a similarly positive impact on education. But there are also criticisms of TFA with implications for TSA, and this will be discussed in chapter two on literature review.

### 1.2. Purpose Statement

Top graduates are not generally attracted to teaching. Yet, TSA aims, and has successfully managed, to attract top quality intrinsically motivated candidates, willing to teach in poor areas, where many education graduates and teachers are reluctant to go and work. TSA places strong emphasis on identifying candidates with the right motivation and qualities to teach in under-resourced schools as well as focuses on honing their leadership skills. TSA uses a three-pronged strategy, which is to:

1. Identify top tier graduates of Maths, Science and English through rigorous and selective recruitment process lasting several months.
2. Provide induction and wide-ranging on-going support for TAs.
3. Promote personal and professional growth.

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) recognises the needs, which TSA seeks to address through its design, strategy and operations. In the 2007 National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development (DoE, 2007, p. 15), the DBE acknowledges the need to provide alternative routes into education and for teacher development programmes that are imaginative and flexible with a focus on "problem solving within authentic contexts".

Additionally, in both the Action Plan to 2014 and the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development (2011-2025), the DBE's priorities include expanding ITEPs and attracting more top-achieving school-leavers and young, motivated appropriately trained graduates into the profession (DBE, 2011, p. 9; DoE, 2011, p. 11, 15). Moreover, TSA is seen by the DBE as a potential source of future leaders in education if utilised well once in the system, especially since leadership has become an important factor of school effectiveness and school improvement in South Africa:

> …the DBE regards the internship graduates as constituting a corps of high-quality teachers who can be strategically used in the public school system as future heads of department (HoDs), teachers at resource centres or subject advisors. (Bernstein, 2015, p. 16)

In its report on the future of teacher supply and demand, the Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE) endorses a range of pathways into education at various career stages of people who are either unable or unwilling to take the traditional four-year, full-time teacher education route (Bernstein, 2015). Importantly, the report mentions TSA as a "noteworthy development", which responds to the need for more high quality initial teacher training, and from which the DBE can learn in terms of the strengths of the programme.

### 1.3. Aim of the Research

The purpose of this research is to explore the experiences of a few TAs during their two-year commitment and beyond in relation to TSA's longer term vision of producing motivated leaders with a strong sense of social justice in the classroom and beyond. It investigates how the aim, rationale and strategies of TSA impacted on these TAs from the 2009, 2010 and 2011 cohorts. More particularly, the study seeks to investigate the following:

1. What were the experiences of alumni during the programme with regard to the classroom, the school and on-going support provided by TSA?
2. To what extent do these alumni exercise leadership practices and agency during the programme?
3. What career pathways have these alumni taken after the programme and what factors influenced their decisions?

### 1.4. Rationale

Given the recognition of the TSA programme's potential for producing much-needed quality teachers and leaders, it is important that studies be conducted on TAs' effectiveness and medium-term impact in the classroom and beyond. Yet so far, not much has been studied and documented about the experience of TAs in South Africa: how they were utilised and operated in schools and how this informed and/or changed their career path. Better understanding of what motivated them to enter, stay or leave the teaching, where they went and why, will help to contribute to the knowledge of teacher recruitment, retention and training.

The researcher being a Teach alumna herself, found it was interesting to discover how other alumni operating in various contexts have experienced the programme and used their accumulated knowledge to navigate the education space and beyond. Perhaps something can be gleaned – in particular in the ways in which TSA recruitment, preparation and support take place. Alumni perspectives and experiences can also be useful in building on the programme's strengths and addressing its weaknesses.

Chapter 2 reviews literature on teacher recruitment, supply and retention locally and internationally as trends are highlighted in both contexts, which are linked to teacher motivation. Teacher motivation is defined including an overview of research studies on factors that influence candidates to join teaching and new and existing teachers to remain and leave the profession. The motivation theories of Maslow (1943), Herzberg (1987) and Locke et al. (1981) are then examined to understand and distinguish different types of needs that motivate people and explore the role of goals and values in motivation. From the literature reviewed, a conceptual framework is developed to

inform the research study. This encapsulates the factors that drive motivation and commitment, thereby influencing job satisfaction and performance.

Chapter 3 outlines how the research was approached and conducted. This is a qualitative research study using document analysis and semi-structured interviews of eleven TSA alumni and three TSA mentors to explore alumni experiences and career paths, this revealing motivation and the extent to which the programme produces what it intends. Then the data collected on the motivation, experiences and career paths of some TSA alumni will be presented in Chapter 4, starting with the presentation of the TFA and TFA models, particularly their recruitment, on-going support, strengths and weaknesses. Finally, Chapter 5 provides an analysis of the data presented as a response to the initial three research questions in Chapter 1. From this analysis problematic challenges from recruitment to providing on-going support are revealed, after which overall conclusions and recommendations are provided.

# CHAPTER 2

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1. Introduction

This section begins with an overview of the mismatch between teacher supply and demand in various contexts. There are some common influencing factors in the supply side, such as the low social status and public image of the teaching profession, which are associated with the low motivation of teachers, something not unique to South Africa. Then influencing factors on new and existing teachers and the significance of teacher induction on these choice to remain or stay will be discussed as it impacts motivation. The meaning of teacher motivation, different theories of motivation will then be explored. Out of the above-mentioned literature, a conceptual framework will be developed about the influences on effective recruitment and support of teachers.

## 2.2. Overview: Trends in Teacher Supply, Recruitment and Retention

According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2016), mismatches between teacher supply and demand are experienced across the world, especially given the rising demand for teachers. In 1990, the international community adopted the World Declaration on Education For All (EFA) and reasserted the pursuit of quality and universal access to education as part of the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030. Consequently, school enrolments have increased over the years and so has the demand for teachers – particularly in secondary schools and key subjects such as Mathematics, Science and Languages.

It is not just about the shortage of teachers experienced in many countries, but also about teacher quality, which was highlighted in the Dakar Framework for Action at the World Education Forum in 2000 (UIS, 2016; UNESCO, 2015b). This section outlines trends in teacher supply not only in South Africa but also other regions around the world after identifying this universal growing demand for good teachers.

Sub-Saharan Africa, followed by Southern Asia, experiences the biggest demand for new teachers given the international community's pursuit of Sustainable Development

Goal 4 (namely, quality universal access to education). Sub-Saharan Africa has the fastest demographic increase of learners with over 70% of countries in this region experiencing teacher shortages in primary schools and 90% experiencing teacher shortages in secondary schools (UIS, 2016, p. 1-2). Due to the fast demographic increase of learners and the high increase in the demand for teachers in Sub-Saharan Africa, many governments have responded by lowering entry requirements into teaching and/or hiring contract teachers who are insufficiently trained, but this does not bode well for teacher quality (UIS, 2016, p. 11; UNESCO, 2015b, p. 3-5). For example, in 2012 less than 75% of primary school teachers in this region were qualified according to national standards. Additionally, seven of these countries had less than 50% of adequately trained primary school teachers in the same year (UIS, 2014, p. 6). Even though school enrolment in Southern Asia is considered low at 65%, the problem of overcrowded classrooms, especially in secondary schools, highlights the need for more teachers (UIS, 2016, p. 4).

In the United States (US), there has not been much increase in student enrolment from 2007-2014, but from 2015/6, the National Centre for Education Statistics (NCES) estimates a continual growth of student enrolment because of population growth, which will lead to a rise in teacher demand (Sutcher et al., 2016, p. 18). From 2015 to 2016, 42 states faced teacher shortages in Mathematics, 40 states faced shortages in Science and 31 states in English as a second language (Sutcher et al., 2016, p. 11).

High needs areas are particularly affected adversely with severe shortages of Maths and Science teachers, high turnover of effective teachers as well as teachers who did not major in the subjects they teach (Auguste et al., 2010, p. 15). High needs areas are also affected by the poor quality of teacher supply. The US has over 1450 teacher training institutions and while some are held in high regard, over half the teachers are trained in ITEPs with low entry requirements. Close to half of the college graduates who enter the teaching force from the bottom third of their college classes. Many of these teachers end up teaching in poor neighbourhoods as only 14% of teachers in poor schools come from the top third of graduates (Auguste et al., 2010, p. 12-14).

Another contributory factor to teacher demand is the attrition rate, which in US public schools was almost 7.68% in 2012-2013, with high needs schools suffering an even

higher annual teacher turnover at 20% (Sutcher et al., 2016, p. 20; UNESCO, 2015b, p. 7). It is already difficult to attract young people to teaching and those who do join end up leaving soon after they start as the highest attrition rate in the US is amongst young teachers. Between 19% - 30% of these young teachers leave within five years of entering the profession (Sutcher et al., 2016, p. 42).

Factors, such as low entry requirements of ITEPs, poor pay and difficult demotivating workplace conditions, contribute to an unfavourable public image of the teaching profession, which in turn negatively affect teacher recruitment and retention (UIS, 2016, p.11; UNESCO, 2015b, p. 8). The profession looks less attractive to American novice teachers, particularly top achievers, as there are increasingly stark differences in pay over the years between entry-level teachers and other entry-level professionals (Auguste et al., 2010, p. 12). Similarly, in OECD countries when comparing salaries of primary school teachers and lower secondary school teachers to other full-time professionals aged 25-64 with tertiary education, these teachers earned 85% and 88% respectively of the average for the other professionals (UNESCO, 2015b, p. 8).

In the UK, between 2011-2014, student enrolment increased by 7% and secondary school student enrolment is projected to rise until 2027 (NAO, 2016, p. 19). However, the number of teachers who left in the same period increased by 11%. Additionally, there was an 11% increase of these teachers who left for reasons other than retirement, suggesting retention challenges (NAO, 2016, p. 14). Similar to the US, the UK faces teacher shortages in Mathematics and Science, as they are the most likely teachers to leave teaching. Novice teachers are also the most likely to leave teaching within the first five years given that 30% had quit by 2015 after starting their career in 2010 (Weale, 2016). Another issue is teachers instructing subjects for which they are not appropriately qualified (post A-level qualification). In fact, the amount of lessons taught by such teachers has grown.

It is also a struggle to recruit and retain good teachers in high needs schools in the UK. Out of 543 head teachers (with high numbers of disadvantaged students) surveyed by the NAO, about 54% stated that recruiting and retaining good teachers was a significant problem (NAO, 2016, p. 18).

It is estimated that South Africa needs 20000 to 30000 new teachers annually but there were only 15655 teacher graduates produced by higher education institutions in 2014. This is not taking into consideration that some of these teacher graduates already hold positions as teachers, some have no intention of entering the profession, some cannot find employment as teachers despite applying for posts and those who chose to teach outside the country (Van Broekhuizen, 2015, p. 31-32, 34).

Student enrolment in South Africa is expected to rise until 2025 given increasing birth rates and longer lifespan of women of childbearing age (Bernstein, 2015, p. 9). This has posed a significant challenge for the DBE given the abovementioned gap between teacher supply and demand. Shortages are particularly felt in rural schools as well as poor communities and with teachers of Mathematics, Science, Languages, Arts and Technology (DoE, 2007, p.11; DBE & DHET, 2011, p. 11-12; Van Broekhuizen, 2015, p. 46). The plight of rural schools and poor communities is revealed in a 2006 study of the career plans of 776 final year education learners from 11 higher education institutions. Most had secured posts in urban areas, with 65% in public schools and 35% in private schools. Three quarters of the public school posts secured were paid by the SGB, suggesting that most of the schools catered to middle class, fee-paying families and were not in high needs areas (Bertram et. al., 2006, p. 9-10).

An aspect of South Africa's teacher retention is the attrition rate, which is between 3.8 to 6%. This is relatively low by international standards as attrition rates can range between 5 to 30% in developed and developing countries (Bernstein, 2011, p. 20; Peltzer et al., 2005, p. 36; Pitsoe, 2013, p. 312). Despite this, certain aspects of teacher attrition in South Africa are still worrying. Like the UK, South Africa may be facing challenges with teacher retention, particularly in rural areas, as many teachers are known to leave through resignations, according to a study conducted over seven years, from 1997 to 2004 (SACE, 2010, p. 15, 17-18). According to the CDE, while most teachers improve their qualifications on the job, what is concerning is that there are more qualified teachers leaving than returning to the profession or sometimes even entering it. Between 2012 and 2013, there were nine % more teachers upgrading their qualifications on the job than newly qualified teachers entering the system (Bernstein, 2015, p. 19). In the year 2002/2003, there were two peaks in the attrition rate, starting with young teachers who left between the ages of 25-34. The next peak was at above

age 55, close to retirement (Peltzer et al., 2005, p. 38). Since then not much has changed in the age profile of teachers who stay versus those who leave, considering that, in 2013, there were four times more teachers aged 45-49 than teachers aged 30-34 and 45% of all teachers were aged 40-49 (Bernstein, 2015, p. 17). By CDE's projections, this means that, by 2025, the smallest amount of teachers will be aged 40-44 and the highest number will be above 50 years old (Bernstein, 2015, p. 18). This is especially concerning given that this pool of teachers aged 25-34 is seen as the most likely to enact the curriculum effectively given their experience over time and the fact that they are more likely to be better qualified. They are also key to mentoring and inducting new teachers as well as a future source of school management and leadership as suggested by the CDE (Bernstein, 2015, p. 17-18; SACE, 2010, p. 18).

The US, UK, Sub-Saharan Africa and South Africa all face challenges in recruitment and retention of young teachers of Maths and Science and teachers in high needs schools. The teachers who leave before retirement in at least two of the regions (Sub-Saharan Africa and South Africa in particular) above cite the following common negative extrinsic factors around difficult work environments: low pay; heavy workloads; big class sizes; lack of accountability; student misbehaviour; insufficient professional development; ineffective school leadership; constant policy changes; and poor teacher-education department relations (Bennell & Akyeampong. 2007, p. 10-16; Marsh, 2015; OECD, 2008, p. 299-300, 302; Peltzer et. al., 2005, p. 5-6, 51; SACE, 2010, p. 19).

While South African teachers' entry-level salaries are considered relatively good, they quickly plateau further along in the career. This goes a long way to explain the difficulty in retaining experienced teachers who may could find better prospects for their knowledge and skills elsewhere (Burger & Van Der Berg, 2010; OECD, 2008, p. 302; SACE, 2010, p. 8).

In response to widely reported teacher shortages over the years, the DBE has made the effort to improve teacher quantity and quality. The DBE has endeavoured to upgrade teacher qualifications through significant policy initiatives that also affect recruitment and retention, such as the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development (ISPFTED) and Occupation Specific

Dispensation (OSD) for Educators (Bernstein, 2015, p. 24; SACE, 2010, p. 8). Largely due to the DBE's efforts, South Africa will have enough teachers up until 2025 given the marked increase in enrolment and graduation at ITEPs (Bernstein, 2015, p. 24). However, the quality of teacher supply remains a concern given the relatively low entry requirements, which often result in teaching being a second or last resort for students to gain entry into university (Bernstein, 2015, p. 6-7, 30-31; OECD, 2008, p. 307). This is suggested in a 2006 South African tracer study done on the aspirations and destinations of 17642 learners who were in matric in 2005 (Cosser & Sehloha, 2009, p. 1, 35). It showed that, while only 3% of matric learners planned to study education in 2006, 4.7% ended up enrolling in an education course.

Given the aforementioned challenges with teacher supply and retention in South Africa, the CDE believes in promoting a variety of pathways into teaching, more rigorous selection of education students at ITEPs, targeted provision of leadership and management training and targeted role in private innovations by ITEPs (Bernstein, 2015, p. 20, 24-25, 27-30). Maringe et al. (2015, p. 15) agree to this, while also highlighting the need for these pathways to be appropriately designed and implemented to suit school contexts and circumstances, especially given the challenging environments in many South African schools. In this way, they envision teacher induction programmes emanating from such pathways, particularly to address the needs of new teachers, improve motivation and teacher retention.

Wong et al. (2005) define induction as:

> a highly organised and comprehensive form of staff development, involving many people and components that typically continues as a sustained process for the first two to five years of a teacher's career. Mentorship is often a component of the induction process.

Ingersoll and Smith (2004, p. 28-29) emphasise three aspects, which are "collectively known as induction": support, guidance and orientation programmes, which can comprise of classes, workshops, orientations, seminars and mentoring. The DBE has identified the induction as one of the four phases in a teacher's career that they are responsible for when it comes to teacher education and development; the others being recruitment, preparation and continuing professional learning and development (DoE, 2011, p. 1). Issues of South African teacher recruitment and inadequate professional development linked to low motivation and commitment have already been touched on

and will be elaborated further in this study. Regarding preparation of teachers, a survey was conducted by the Initial Teacher Education Research Project (ITERP) in 2014 of 776 first year teachers who had graduated from 21 tertiary institutions across South Africa in an effort to assess their preparedness. The results highlighted the areas that need more attention by initial teacher education programmes: improving subject knowledge; addressing students with special needs; and teaching in English (not the Home language of the majority of these first year teachers) (Deacon, 2015, p. 104-105). These results also strengthen the argument that the role of university education departments should be primarily developing content knowledge and pedagogical skills, while the role of teacher induction should be left to schools or relevant organisations, given on the ground, practical and contextual experience new teachers need to become competent professionals (Maringe et al., 2015, p. 2; Wong, 2002, p. 52).

Considering the previously mentioned reasons for leaving teaching in South Africa centred on difficult, often resource-constrained work environments and communities, teacher induction programmes' scope should go beyond simply improving subject knowledge and teaching skills. This is especially since literature points to poverty as the strongest influence on teacher turnover (Maringe et al. 2015, p. 8, 10, 12). In their review of a study of the best practices of five countries' induction programmes, Wong et al. (2005, p. 383-384) highlight three common features: well organised, demanding and closely monitored; part of a larger, wide-ranging process of life-long professional development; and collaboration is part of the teaching culture. This would go a long way in addressing issues of low motivation and commitment of teachers, which as previously mentioned, is linked to poor performance of teachers. In the words of Maringe et al. (2015, p. 8), "…newly qualified teachers need to be socialised adequately in how best to survive in schooling environments where these factors (destabilising phenomenon) are prevalent." By "socialised" they mean supporting new teachers in their personal, social and professional capacity as they acclimatise to a new school and surrounding community. This is confirmed by the results of the INTERP survey, which acknowledges, "that NQTs need more training or development across a range of knowledge and skill areas," (Deacon, 2015, p. 109).

In their examination of seven large-scale studies in the US, apart from improving teacher commitment and retention, Maringe et al. (2015, p. 10-11) extracted other positive effects of teacher induction, mainly improvement in teaching practice and reduction of teacher turnover. In fact, if new teachers experience a well designed and well supported induction programme then they can be as effective as more experienced teachers (New Teacher Center, 2007, p. 3; Strong, 2006).

The most significant factors in reducing teacher turnover and increasing job satisfaction were providing both mentorship and opportunities for collaboration with colleagues, especially the more experienced ones. This is evident in INTERP where 63.5% of new teachers were formally inducted into their new schools, mostly by members of the senior management and 96% found induction useful. Senior management and senior colleagues also played a significant and beneficial role in mentoring 73.7% of these new teachers, particularly in areas of curriculum content and learners' behaviour. Collaboration with colleagues was also a highlight for the new teachers as 96% of those who participated in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) found them beneficial (Deacon, 2015, p. 79-84). Wong (2002, p. 1) also highlights class visits to demonstrate effective teaching are a key part of the best induction programs. The ideal duration of induction programmes is two to three years (Maringe et al. 2015, p. 14; Wong, 2002, p. 52). However the INTERP survey suggests that formal induction in South African schools is insufficient as it lasted only six days on average for those who experienced it. Both Maringe et al. (2015, p. 14) and Deacon, (2015, p. 106) promote a stronger role played in teacher induction from district, provincial and national levels and by education bodies like SACE, especially given that teacher induction is a national policy priority (DoE, 2011, p. 1)

Thus, the literature on teacher supply, induction and retention highlights the importance of paying attention not only to teacher quantity but also quality. Teacher quality has to do with knowledge and competence (subject specific and pedagogical knowledge). But it has to do with motivation and commitment: why people choose to teach, why they stay or leave the profession and the desire and opportunities to continually develop their teaching knowledge and practice (Auguste et al., 2010, p. 9-10; Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007; Hernani-Limarino, 2005, p. 63; UNESCO, 2015a; UIS, 2016, p. 10-11). Furthermore, it is clear that teacher induction or lack thereof has

a significant impact on teacher quality and whether newly qualified teachers stay or leave the profession. It is therefore useful to turn to the literature on teacher motivation.

### 2.3. Teacher Motivation & Influencing Factors

This section starts with a definition of teacher motivation and common influencing factors internationally that motivate teachers to join, stay and/or leave the profession. It will review local and international research studies and identify the lessons from the literature around teacher motivation and influencing factors.

#### 2.3.1. Definition of motivation and influencing factors

According to Bennell & Akyeampong (2007, p.4), a well-motivated teacher strives to align personal goals to the school's official goals. Thus, a poorly motivated teacher is one who either exerts little effort or whose goals are not useful to the school. The Teacher Motivation Working Group and the International task Force on Teachers for EFA, teacher motivation is defined as "the internal and external factors that stimulate desire and energy in teaching to be continually interested and committed to making the best effort to help support student learning goals" (Richardson, 2014, p. 6). Bennell & Akyeampong (2007, p.4) hold that a series of both internal and external forces affects employees' job satisfaction, motivation and commitment i.e. employees' choices, their degree of effort and their persistence.

Intrinsic qualities such as competence, a genuine desire and passion to teach and make a difference in learners' lives are what Locke and Latham (2004, p. 388) call "factors that impel action". Guajardo (2011, p. 6) also emphasises, "job satisfaction, self-efficacy and personal achievement as dynamic components of teacher motivation that both drive and are driven by teacher motivation." Extrinsic factors, such as low pay and unsupportive work environments, affect teachers' job satisfaction and performance both positively and negatively. Negative extrinsic factors are often cited as reasons for leaving the profession. According to Locke and Latham (2004, p. 388), positive extrinsic factors, such as improved work conditions, "can act as inducements to action" depending on how organisations are managed and led.

### 2.3.2. Research studies on influencing factors on student and new teachers

In a survey conducted with 100 student teachers at Northwestern Oklahoma State University in the US, Hayes (1990) found that most trainees were driven primarily by intrinsic motivating factors, such as the love of children, the desire to make a positive difference and the chance to express their creativity. Similarly, in a Public Agenda survey of 664 public school teachers and 250 private school teachers in the United States, who had been teaching for five years or less, found that 86% believed teaching was a calling, 96% loved teaching even though only 68% felt were satisfied from teaching. Furthermore, of this sample, 52% always wanted to teach, 34% chose teaching in college and only 12% got into the profession by chance. Generally, this survey surmised that most of these new teachers were highly motivated and committed. (Wadsworth, 2001, p. 25-26). More recently, these intrinsic factors were again highlighted in a national survey and interviews of 1571 middle school and high school Mathematics teachers, which revealed that the top three reasons for becoming teachers were work with young people, love for the subject and the desire to make a difference (Curtis, 2012, p. 782, 786). Weiner (1993) noted different motivating factors between student teachers from different socio-economic backgrounds i.e. their experience of teaching motivated differently their choice to teach. In this study, student teachers from Harvard University and Urban College (small urban public college) were driven by similar positive intrinsic factors, which drive performance as shown in the Hayes (1990), Public Agenda (Wadsworth, 2001) and Curtis (2012) studies. However, the Urban College students placed a higher rating on positive extrinsic factors such as salary and job security (Weiner, 1993). Additionally, according to a MetLife survey conducted among 1000 American teachers in 2012, teacher satisfaction has been steadily declining to the lowest level it had been in 25 years (Lee et al., 2013, p. 4).

From the responses of 466 teacher trainees from four Northern Ireland higher education institutions in 1996/97, Abbott et al. (2001) found that the trainees were driven by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Intrinsic factors such as the need to be intellectually fulfilled and the desire to serve society dominated, while positive extrinsic motivators like financial security, shorter working days and longer holidays were less of a driving force (Abbott et al., 2001, p. 28). In a survey conducted by the

third largest teachers' union in the UK, the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, 73% of trainees and newly qualified teachers had considered leaving teaching and over half did not think they would teach past 10 years (Marsh, 2015). Initially, the survey participants chose teaching primarily positive intrinsic factors such as the love of working with young people and wanting to make a difference in their lives. Other positive reasons included the fun and variety of the job, inspired by previous teachers and their love of the subject (Brindley et al., 2004, p. 248-249; Marsh, 2015). However, they credited heavy workloads, high stakes assessment, constant changes in education, difficult learners and Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Child Services and Skills) as the main negative extrinsic reasons for wanting to quit (Marsh, 2015; Weale, 2016). Unfortunately, the intrinsic factors for initially choosing teaching were undermined by negative extrinsic factors such as highly demotivating workplace conditions and pushed these new teachers to want to leave.

For those entering the profession in Sub-Saharan Africa, low job satisfaction, low motivation and performance are mainly linked to negative extrinsic factors such as the declining social status of the teaching profession. Many countries report that most school leavers and university graduates consider teaching as "employment of last resort." Moreover, low recruitment standards into the profession means that those who leave secondary school with lower grades tend to be the ones who choose teaching. There are also limited opportunities to upgrade qualifications and irregular, poor quality in-service training (Bennell and Akyeampong, 2007, p. 32-45; UNESCO, 2015a; Richardson, 2014).

In the South African 2006 tracer study of the aspirations and destinations of matriculants, the two main intrinsic reasons for 3% of matric learners to study education were the desire to make a difference and to teach since they were young (Cosser & Sehloha, 2009, p. 57). Of the 4.7% who later enrolled in an education course, the main reasons were positive extrinsic factors revolving around job security and the mobility an education qualification can provide, out of the classroom or the profession (Cosser & Sehloha, 2009, p. 59-60). Thus, though the majority of the matriculants who did enrol in an education course were influenced by intrinsic factors, a significant portion with no long-term ambitions in education were primarily driven by extrinsic factors to stay or leave teaching. Similarly, in a study of the

motives for entering the teaching profession on 232 student teachers at a large South African university, positive extrinsic factors such as salary, extra income, job security, promotion prospects and holidays ranked higher than intrinsic motivators (Mwamwenda, 2010, p. 488). However, like the 3% of matric students in the 2006 trace study, another more recent study of 1683 student teachers at a South African university found that they were also more intrinsically motivated to join teaching. Results showed they were more driven by compassion, caring for others and service to others (Wolhuter et al. 2012, p. 183, 187).

### 2.3.3. Research studies on influencing factors on existing teachers

Using results from the 2007-2008 School and Staffing Survey in the US, Moore (2012, p. 10) suggested that a negative extrinsic factor – the difficult school environment - plays a negative role in teacher satisfaction. Therefore, teachers in high needs schools are more likely to be dissatisfied and report higher stress levels than other educators given the challenging work conditions (Lee et al., 2013, p. 4). Aspects of the school environment in particular that are linked to dissatisfaction and cited as reasons for leaving the profession are decreased time for professional development, insufficient collaboration with colleagues, student misbehaviour and the lack of autonomy – not having a say in decisions that affect their job (Moore, 2012, p. 10; Phillips, 2015).

Drawing from a study of eight countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, Bennell & Akyeampong (2007) found that existing teachers are generally considered poorly motivated, with primary school teachers experiencing lower job satisfaction. According to Bennell and Akyeampong (2007, p. 32-45), UNESCO (2015a) and Richardson (2014), low job satisfaction and low motivation and performance for existing teachers are mainly linked to negative extrinsic factors:

- Underpaid teachers with limited career progression opportunities. As a result, many teachers pursue secondary sources of income thereby keeping them from being fully committed to teaching.
- Teachers have to bear with late payment of salaries in several countries.
- Poor working and living conditions, particularly in rural areas.

- Ineffective school management that create an unsupportive and dysfunctional school environment.
- International policies such as universal primary education that lead to an increase in school enrolment, thereby increasing class sizes and workloads without paying enough attention to teachers' capacity and professional development needs to cope with these new issues.

Manifestations of low teacher motivation include uncommitted teachers (absenteeism, lateness, laziness, low teacher time-on-task) and generally led to low learner outcomes, as shown in international assessments (Bennell & Akyeampong. 2007, p. 25, 47, 51-53; UIS, 2014, p. 12).

In their study of educator supply and demand in South Africa, Peltzer, et al. (2005, p. 50) found that over half of the teachers surveyed indicated that they would quit if they could, because of their high dissatisfaction. The negative extrinsic factors often associated with job dissatisfaction and eventually with leaving were: salary that plateaus from mid to late career, limited opportunities for career progression, poor work environment, heavy workload, continual policy changes, insufficient support and student misbehaviour (Peltzer et al., 2005, p. 50-53; SACE, 2010, p. 19-21). Furthermore, there is little incentive for increased productivity given that teachers who perform badly are not distinguished from well-performing teachers in the country's pay system (Armstrong, 2014, p. 1). As a result, South African teachers are considered demotivated and uncommitted and this manifested in the high rates of absenteeism, late-coming, leaving early and substantial loss of contact time (Bernstein, 2011, p. 5; OECD, 2008, p. 299).

In contrast, in a study by Iwu et. al. (2013, p. 849) concerning teacher motivation and learner performance among 279 high school teachers from the Western Cape, reveals that highly motivated and well-performing teachers experienced job satisfaction linked to both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. While the studies of Mwamwenda (2010) and Cosser and Sehloha (2009) suggest that teachers' motivation was influenced more by extrinsic factors such as job security and working conditions than by intrinsic factors like perceived professional development opportunities.

South African teachers are generally considered to have insufficient subject knowledge and pedagogical knowledge to effectively enact the ambitious post-1994 curriculum. This negative intrinsic factor is another source of low teacher motivation (Bernstein, 2015, p. 3, 11; DoE, 2011, p. 11, Peltzer et al., 2005, p. 3). This is due to a primarily older workforce, educated under Apartheid inferior Bantu Education system. With all the post-1994 system restructuring and the introduction of ambitious and demanding curricula, many of those teachers felt overwhelmed and confused, leading to a loss of confidence (OECD, 2008, p. 294-297).

### 2.3.4. Lessons from literature & research studies on teacher demand & supply

It is evident from the literature reviewed that there is a universal demand for more and better teachers, especially in critical subjects, namely Maths and Science. Both the local and international literature highlight the need for more rigorous recruitment and selection processes of ITEPs to identify candidates with positive intrinsic factors such as the "right" motivation to teach and perform. These candidates, according to Locke and Latham (2004, p.388), are strongly intrinsically motivated to teach. Richardson (2014, p. 6) and Bennell & Akyeampong (2007, p.4) speak of other positive intrinsic factors such as continual interest and commitment to do one's best and strive towards personal goals that are aligned to the school's official goals. Other positive intrinsic factors of teacher motivation mentioned by Guajardo (2011, p. 6) include self-efficacy and personal achievement. Understandably, Guarjardo (2011) mentions these two characteristics, given the aforementioned challenges faced by teachers (particularly in high needs areas) and the demand to ensure student achievement regardless.

When it comes to finding the 'right' teacher candidates, screening teacher candidates for the qualities mentioned above, as well as selecting the top third of graduates is a critical first step of the world's top performing school systems – South Korea, Finland and Singapore (Auguste et al., 2010). In their report on attracting and retaining top graduates to teaching, Auguste et al. (2010) call these candidates the "top third+". After recruitment, the next steps of the world's top performing school systems are to focus on the rigorous, on-going training and retention of the "top third+". In focusing on minimising the external factors such as poor training and support that cause teacher dissatisfaction and teachers to leave the profession, they manage to have a low teacher turnover (Auguste et al., 2010, p. 24). Hence the need for well-designed

teacher induction programmes, and their significant influence on teacher satisfaction and retention (Maringe et al. 2015). Through rigorous and selective recruitment, focusing on-going training and support of teachers, the top performing education systems have shown that teaching can be an attractive profession to high achievers and yield sterling student results in a conducive environment.

A common reason for teacher dissatisfaction is inadequate professional development. This is especially felt in South Africa and Sub-Saharan countries, which are facing a major problem with low teacher competence, which is linked to poor student performance. Other negative external factors such as problems related to the poor school environment and low pay are commonly considered as demotivating and reasons for quitting (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007). According to Burger and Van der Berg (2010, p. 12), not only does pay significantly affect retention, but it also influences those who enter the profession as well as the performance of teachers in South Africa. When comparing the salary structure of South African teachers and non-teachers, Armstrong (2014, p. 29) found that teaching tends to attract people with lower levels of achievement. In fact, the higher a professional's level of education, performance and experience, the less attractive the teaching profession becomes.

To sum up, it is important to understand what factors influence who enters, leaves and stays in the profession, leaves or stays and why, as well as explore the kind of motivation needed to attract and retain the "right" candidate to the teaching profession. The literature has shown that, while teachers are driven by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors, in South Africa, teachers are more influenced by negative extrinsic motivators and there is therefore a need to maximise intrinsic factors. The next section delves deeper into two motivation theorists, Maslow (1943) and Herzberg (1987) as well as the goal-setting theory of Locke et al. (1981).

### 2.4. Motivation Theories

Maslow (1943) and Herzberg (1987) establish the importance of understanding, distinguishing and meeting employee needs on an on-going basis as these influence people's attitudes and behaviour.

Maslow (1943) is useful in distinguishing two sets of needs that motivate people, which assists in understanding choices to enter, stay or leave the profession. He proposes that only once basic needs (physiological, safety, love/belonging and esteem) have been addressed, can higher needs (self-actualisation) emerge. He places great emphasis on the influence of unmet needs on motivation because they "monopolise consciousness" and undermine people's satisfaction and motivation.

The lessons learned from the literature reviewed so far are useful because they point to teachers frequently citing unmet basic needs (e.g. unsupportive work environments, low pay) as reasons for dissatisfaction and quitting the profession (Bennell & Akyeampong. 2007, p. 10-16; Marsh, 2015; OECD, 2008, p. 299-300, 302; Peltzer et. al., 2005, p. 5-6, 51; SACE, 2010, p. 19). South African teachers are generally considered demotivated and uncommitted and not primarily concerned with higher needs such as self-actualisation (striving for the best). This contributes to low student performance and the large number of dysfunctional schools (Bernstein, 2011; Blank & Jansen, 2014; Christie et al., 2007; Spaull, 2015; Taylor, 2008).

Maslow (1943) also concedes that people can experience different levels of motivation and satisfaction simultaneously. So, just because a teacher may be dissatisfied and demotivated by work conditions, it does not necessarily mean they are not motivated to perform to the best of their ability and achieve good results. Still, he maintains that unmet needs dominate thoughts and if they are continually not addressed, they will lead to what he calls an "unhealthy man". So even if an employee is productive, but has unmet basic needs (poor working conditions, low pay), one wonders how long this employee will stay.

Herzberg (1987) makes an important distinction between two sets of factors linked to job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction. One set (called hygiene factors) are extrinsic factors, which cause dissatisfaction in the workplace (compensation, job security, status, policy, administration, supervision, interrelationships). The other separate set of motivators are intrinsic factors related to positive attitudes and behaviour, which include aspects of job content, recognition, achievement, possibility of growth, advancement and responsibility (Herzberg, 1987). Tietjen, et al. (1998, p. 4) believes that these motivators can lead to self-actualisation. However, addressing the hygiene

factors that cause dissatisfaction will not lead to satisfaction but rather to no dissatisfaction. Indeed the opposite of dissatisfaction is not satisfaction, but no dissatisfaction. In the same way that the opposite of satisfaction is not dissatisfaction, but no satisfaction. The two sets of factors are separate and independent. Thus, to improve job attitudes and productivity, it is important to address both sets of factors and not assume that an increase in satisfaction will lead to a decrease in dissatisfaction. Accordingly, negative hygiene factors must be eliminated first and then motivators must create conditions for satisfaction (Herzberg, 1987).

So, according to Herzberg (1987), improvements in or elimination of hygiene factors will cause short-term movement, but would then need to be reinforced by other factors to motivate employees to act in the desired manner. Meeting employee growth needs through strong intrinsic motivators will lead to motivate employees to want to act in line with organisational goals. Teachers need to show commitment to their schools' goals in pursuing student achievement. Such commitment speaks to values, hence the importance to look at the goal-setting theory of Locke et al. (1981) and the alignment of values between employee and employer.

Setting clear, achievable, attractive and ambitious goals is central to motivating employees in the desired manner. This highlights the influence of values, not just needs, on attitudes and behaviour. Values are revealed through organisational goals and can be shaped and instilled. According to Katzell & Thompson (1990, p. 146), if employers want employees to perform in line with their official goals and values, there is a need first to have a clear understanding of the goals and values, which are important to the job. Then employers need to selectively recruit according to certain criteria and ensure on-going development that is in line with those goals and values. Job previews are also useful as a form of self-selection as potential employees are given clear and realistic previews of what the job entails. In goal-setting theory, ensuring performance and commitment involves consistent feedback of progress towards goals and can include rewards for performance or taking part in goal setting (Katzell & Thompson, 1990, p. 145). This links back to the importance of organisations meeting employees' higher or esteem needs as Maslow (1943) calls them.

## 2.5. Conceptual Framework

From the literature reviewed above, a conceptual framework was developed to inform the research study. The literature on teacher supply, recruitment and retention as well as the ones on teacher motivation highlights that people's attitudes and actions on the job are determined by intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Extrinsic factors are distinguished as positive and negative given that the former can be factors or incentives, which are improved to increase job satisfaction and encourage teachers to remain in the profession. the latter are associated with reasons for dissatisfaction and why teachers leave the profession. To ensure employees are satisfied and perform at their best over the long-term, there is a need to do two separate things: (1) To minimise negative extrinsic factors that cause job dissatisfaction such as poor working conditions and environment. It is preferable, as Herzberg notes, to deal first with negative extrinsic factors before developing strong intrinsic factors. Unfortunately, TFA and TSA are not able to impact seriously on external factors outside of their control. Hence, there is a need to develop strong intrinsic factors that cannot be too easily undermined by negative extrinsic factors.
(2) To maximise the intrinsic factors such as enriching the experience of job content in line with organisational goals and values.

Auguste et al. (2010) confirms that teacher performance and commitment can start by selectively recruiting those with strong intrinsic motivators such as high competences and knowledge or "top third +" qualities so that they can perform despite the existing negative external factors. These are people whose attributes, attitudes and actions are not primarily driven by unfulfilled needs, but who are spurred to practice agency and seek or create opportunities for self-actualisation despite unfavourable environments.

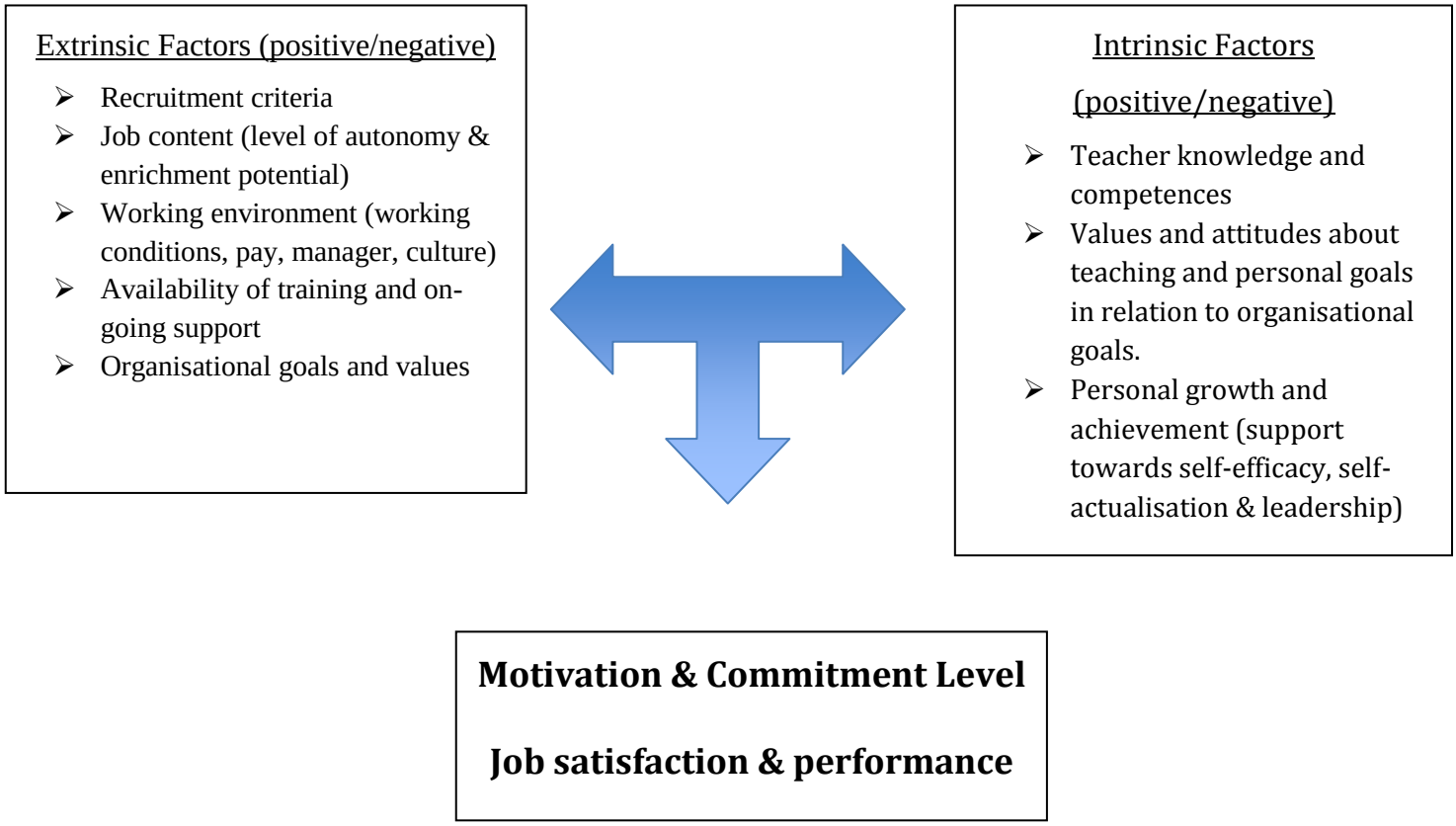


**Figure 1: A representation of the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that drive motivation and commitment, thereby influencing attitudes and actions.**

# CHAPTER 3

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 3.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on how the research was conducted by first discussing the appropriateness of a qualitative research design, after which the way in which participants were selected is described and justified in the sampling section. This is followed by a section on the data collection and data analysis processes employed. The validity and reliability of the data collected is explored. The chapter ends with a discussion on ethical considerations and the limitations of the study.

## 3.2. Research Design

This is a qualitative research because it aims at the "description, analysis and understanding of human experiences", as well as at investigating human behaviour and perspectives (Holloway, 1997, p. 2 as cited in Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p.11; Marton, 1981, p.180). It is an in-depth exploration of a problem and seeks to understand a central phenomenon (Creswell, 2012, p. 16). Given the complexity of human behaviour, the research paradigm of this study is based on interpretivism, which assumes multiple views and experiences of the same situation. So an understanding of values and context is important in qualitative data collection and analysis (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 14). Consequently, interpretivism means research that is data-rich and participant-led as the researcher seeks an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and motives. This presupposes the use of non-scientific methods to gain this kind of insight, which also permits the researcher to have close interactions with participants. In this inductive approach, the focus is on meaning from the subjective perspective of individuals as it is assumed that individuals actively shape society (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 19-21).

This paradigmatic approach is in line with the purpose of this study which is to explore and describe the experiences and career paths of a few TSA alumni both during and after their two-year commitment to the programme. In this way a deeper understanding will be gained into the motivation of TAs to join, leave or stay in the

teaching profession as well as the extent to which TSA produced what it intended. This is done in light of a changing context as the organisation's work went through periods of growth and challenges over time. Therefore the qualitative approach is appropriate to address the study's main research questions:

1. What were the experiences of alumni during the programme regarding the classroom, the school and on-going support provided by TSA?
2. To what extent do alumni exercise leadership practices during the programme?
3. What career pathways have these alumni taken and what factors influenced their decisions?
4. Why have alumni stayed or left teaching?

Therefore positivism would not be an appropriate approach for this research given that it focuses on facts outside of the individuals, which shape them, and it "ignores or presumes its subjects interpretations of situations" (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 20). The underlying assumptions are that phenomena can be explained by natural laws, social norms and structures; by empirical evidence; in the simplest possible way; and through generalising. This presupposes a scientific method of data collection to gain simple, objective explanations of phenomena as opposed to in-depth understanding. (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 9-11). So, given that the focus of this study is on understanding the motivation of teachers to gain a deeper understanding of recruitment and on-going support practices and their impact with specific reference to TSA, a positivist approach would not yield the in-depth and rich data required.

Furthermore, this research is a descriptive case study, or an in-depth investigation of a "bounded system" over time from multiple data sources that exist in the case (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 32). Descriptions of the context and the case are rich, detailed and often guided by a theoretical framework (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 155).

Case studies are bounded in that they are focused, intensive and narrow in subject matter covered (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 154). They can be bounded by time, place, activity, definition and context (Creswell, 2003 & Stake, 1978 as cited in Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 153). This study was bounded by focusing on

experiences during the programme and tracing the career paths of a few TSA alumni from only the 2009-2011 cohorts.

One of the advantages of case studies is to assist in understanding the complexity in the cases as multiple perspectives, sources and techniques form part of data collection. Case studies can also point to a source of solutions to various audiences, as processes of change and accounts of best practice are noticed, described and documented, using a narrative reporting style, which can have wide appeal (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p.163-164). Through the case study approach, the extent to which TSA alumni experiences and career paths are aligned to TSA's vision and goals can be revealed. Furthermore, this approach can shed light on teacher recruitment, selection and in-service training practices that may either be learnt from or avoided given the outcome. There is however a possibility of harming the image of the entity being studied as practices evolve over time and the world view presented may be simplified or incorrect given the boundaries and narrow focus of a case study (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 164).

This discussion highlights the importance of including the following aspects of a case study to mitigate the challenges stated above and better interpret data collected and presented: multiple perspectives and techniques in data collection; the description of context and background; and the description of similar cases through which the case being studied may be identified (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 153).

To this end, it will be important to explore how and why TSA was established and how it evolved over time. Since it is modelled after TFA, which is a much older and established organisation, the TFA journey can provide useful insights to analyse TSA and how it can move forward.

## 3.3. Sampling

### 3.3.1 Population Selection

Since 2011, TSA alumni work in various public and private schools, NGOs and corporates all over the country. TSA has recruited and trained nine cohorts thus far, which means that the first three cohorts have at least seven to nine years teaching experience and five to seven years post-TSA.

According to teacher supply, recruitment and retention literature, one of the peaks in attrition among TFA teachers is within five years of graduating the programme whereas in South Africa it is high among young teachers up to age 34 (Bernstein, 2015, p. 17; Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Donaldson & Johnson, 2011, p. 49; Peltzer et al., 2005, p. 38). To constitute our purposeful qualitative sampling I looked for information-rich participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 349) and decided to select these out of the earliest cohorts of the TSA programme (2009-2011), when 108 TAs were recruited and trained.

Another reason for the choice of the first three cohorts and their mentors is to understand the motivation of TSA alumni. It is important to study those who remained teachers with at least five years teaching experience as they fall into the one of the peak attrition rate categories. But it is also crucial to include TSA alumni who left their school positions.

### 3.3.2. The Sample and site selection

A sample of the population which is a smaller group representative of the 2009-2011 population cohort, needed to be selected for data collection. The sample in a case study is usually purposefully selected in order to gain in-depth understanding of the central phenomennon being studied from individuals or sites that are a rich source of information (Creswell, 2012, p. 206).

The factors taken into consideration in the selection include access, size, sampling strategy used, representativeness and parameters of the sample (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 100). With regards to sample access, initially only alumni based in Gauteng were considered for selection. This is partly because the TSA offices and the majority of mentors employed by TSA are based in Gauteng. It is also due to the researcher's intention to conduct interviews in person. However, since several alumni were either unreachable, unable or unwilling to participate, it was decided to include one alumnus currently residing in Cape Town. The sample also had to include alumni who taught in Maths, Science and English.

Regarding sample size, in order to ensure that the sample was representative of the 2009-2011 cohorts (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 102), a stratified sample of eleven of the 108 TSA alumni were selected. Using maximum variation sampling involves selecting individuals with different characteristics to ensure a diversity of perspectives (Creswell, 2012, p. 207). I looked at these 108 alumni who were placed in schools but excluded those who dropped out during the programme. This left 98 alumni to choose from. The stratified sample of 11 alumni was made up of the following subgroups:

a) alumni who started with the programme (2009, 2010 or 2011 cohort)
b) alumni from data collected by TSA in 2015 and 2016 who were in different workplaces post-TSA (Teaching, NGO, Corporate, Government, Full-time study)
c) alumni of different gender
d) alumni recruited to teach different gateway subjects (Maths, Science, English)

26 alumni from such a stratified sample were contacted via phone and email with requests for interviews but only 11 alumni could be interviewed (or 11% of the cohorts). The following tables show the representativeness of the sample according to cohort, gender, subject taught, initial placement and place of work post TSA.

Table 1: Cohort

| **TEACH Ambassadors** | **2009** | **2010** | **2011** | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total 2009-2011 Cohorts** | 24 | 32 | 42 | 98 |
| **Sample** | 3 | 3 | 5 | 11 |

Table 2: Gender

| **TEACH Ambassadors** | **Male** | **Female** | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Total 2009-2011 Cohorts** | 47 | 51 | 98 |
| **Sample** | 5 | 6 | 11 |

Table 3: Subject

| **TEACH Ambassadors** | **Maths** | **Science** | **English** | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total** | 26 | 33 | 39 | 98 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2009-2011 Cohorts** | | | | |
| **Sample** | 2 | 4 | 5 | 11 |

Table 4: Placement

| **Province** | **Gauteng** | **Limpopo** | **Western Cape** | **Eastern Cape** | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total 2009-2011 Cohorts** | 70 | 15 | 12 | 1 | 98 |
| **Sample** | 9 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 11 |

Table 5: Place of work

| **TEACH Alumni** | **Teacher** | **NGO** | **Corporate** | **Government** | **Study** | **Update unavailable** | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Population** | 58 | 9 | 8 | 1 | 4 | 18 | 98 |
| **Sample** | 6 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 11 |

Given the complexity of human behaviour, multiple perspectives need to be examined in exploring and understanding it (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 348). It is for this reason that it is important to go beyond the experiences of TSA alumni and include the perspectives and experiences of mentors from the program because they would have developed a close working relationship with the alumni, which sometimes continues after the programme. So they could provide useful insight into alumni growth and experiences during the programme, the transition out of it and experiences since then. Therefore, three TSA mentors were selected according to their availability, accessibility, length and breadth of experience with TSA and the different subjects (Maths, Science and English) they supervised of the 2009-2011 cohorts.

### 3.4. Data Collection Methods

The two sources of data used were: document analysis and interviews with two kinds of TSA stakeholders – the mentors and alumni. Two different data collection methods were chosen because they would elicit different types of information (as will be shown below) necessary to gaining in-depth knowledge of the phenomenon being studied. Additionally, using more than one method of data collection assists with the validity of the process (Freebody, 2003, p. 77). This triangulation is the process of

checking the accuracy of "data sources, data collection strategies, time periods and theoretical schemes" in order to see what patterns emerge and recur (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 407).

### 3.4.1. Document Analysis

Documents can be in written, photograpic, electronic or audio-visual forms, communicating certain information for certain audiences and purposes, which may result in intended and unintended consequences. Documents are an especially valuable resource in providing information about institutional operations, culture, historical context and background (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 404-405). They also assisst the understanding of the actions and values of people or organisations. However, documents can portray only what the people or organisation want the audience to know, particularly with visual materials. Documents may also be viewed as less verifiable through observation, experience and expermient as other data collection methods may be (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 410).

There were no problems experienced in accessing documents as the Ongoing Support Manager of TSA was assigned to assist with any clarity seeking questions and provide all information or documents requested. The documents included: information on TA profiles, subjects taught, placements, some progress reports, post-TSA career paths and contact information. I was lucky that complete information on TA profiles was only available for the cohorts from 2009-2012, as there were gaps afterwards. Hence the importance of combining this data collection method with another.

### 3.4.2 Semi-structured Interviews

After reading the document and receiving TSA permission to select and interview alumni and mentors, one-on-one semi-structured interviews with 11 alumni and 3 mentors were conducted to ensure rich, narrative descriptions and perspectives of individual TSA experiences and their choice of career paths. With semi-structured interviews, they are open-ended questions to explore further to get a richer and more detailed understanding of the alumni experiences. Furthermore, there is flexibility with the order and wording of the questions in light of interviewee responses (Freebody, 2003, p. 133). Another strength of interviewing different people is that data from different interviewees can be compared and contrasted (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 359).

However, interviewees may still understand questions differently to what the interviewer intended and this type of interview may also leave little room for distinctive viewpoints of interviewees (Opie & Sikes, 2004, p. 118; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 359). Another weakness is that conducting interviews can require a lot of resources and time, particularly when it comes to transcribing them. Interviewees may also not feel free to be completely honest if they are being recorded. This highlights the importance of ensuring interviewees understand the purpose of the research, how the information will be used and assuring them of confidentiality (Gall et al., 2007, p. 257; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 371).

The standardised close and open-ended questions were informed by the conceptual framework and focused broadly on: the intrinsic and extrinsic factors of motivation; existing and acquired competencies; how alumni experienced TSA and their career paths post-TSA. These interviews allowed for responses to be compared among the 11 alumni and between alumni and three mentors. Two interview schedules were developed: one for alumni (Appendices F and G) and the other for mentors (Appendices H and I). The themes in both types of schedules are similar.

Interview schedules were emailed before the interviews to allow participants to look through the questions and recall experiences especially if they occurred several years ago. This was also done with mentors to give them enough time to consult their records on the 2009-2011 cohorts and their performance.

Audio-recordings save time and facilitate the flow of conversation with minimal interruptions (Gall et al., 2007, p. 256). They also maximised the impartiality of the findings as it was in the interviewee's own language. They lessen the chances of missing important details as they can be analysed later (Opie & Sikes, 2004, p. 121). The notes taken during interviews were primarily for observations unobtainable through audio recordings and to note follow-up or clarity seeking questions that would come up. All the participants were interviewed for one to two hours. Interviews with alumni and mentors were conducted at negotiated times and locations, convenient to them. All the mentor interviews were in person. Eight alumni interviews were in person, two were telephonic and one was via Skype. One

telephonic interview was conducted with the alumnus who was placed in the Western Cape and still resides there. The other telephonic interview and the Skype interview were with two alumni based Gauteng who both had limited availability in person. The Skype interview was with the alumnus who had been placed in Eastern Cape, but moved to Gauteng post-TSA.

According to Savin-Baden & Major (2013, p. 370), "…ongoing question development is part of the flexible and iterative process of data collection, ongoing analysis and feedback". After the first two interviews, the alumni and mentor interview schedules were refined to elicit clearer responses regarding alumni motivation and experiences during and after the programme. Both original and refined interview schedules for alumni and mentors are included in Appendices F – I.

Interviews with alumni happened before mentor interviews to allow the latter's interview schedule to verify aspects of the alumni views and responses.

### 3.5. Reliability and Validity

Reliability concerns the appropriateness of data collection techniques in providing genuine information from the participants. In other words: (1) are the data and interpretations trustworthy (2) would different researchers discover similar results using the same methods and conditions (Flick, 2006, p. 369; Opie & Sikes, 2004, p. 65-66). In this way, according to Opie and Sikes (2004, p. 66), "…reliability is used to judge the process of data gathering, not the product". Reliability can be enhanced through the use of multiple methods of data collection (Freebody, 2003, p. 77). Audio recordings were also used to enhance reliability as they provide more accurate records of the content of the interviews (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 386).

Qualitative research involves disciplined subjectivity and reflexivity in data collection and analysis for enhanced reliability. Reflexivity involves the researcher carefully scrutinising their own behaviour and motivations and minimising their subjectivity in the process of conceptualising, conducting and writing the research (Erickson, 1973 and Mason, 1996 in McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 20, 356). This is so that there is transparency between participants' responses and the researcher's interpretation (Flick, 2006, p. 370). Furthermore, disciplined subjectivity "requires

self-conscious and rigorous examination for bias in each decision of the research process, each question asked, each relationship and every interaction" (Borman et al., 1986, p. 43-44).

It is rather pertinent to this study that the researcher should be aware of her status as an alumna on research participants but also for the researcher to reflect on her professional judgements and views in the analysis and interpretation of data. This required a recognition of the effects of the researcher's own history with TSA, as an alumna and the conscious putting aside of her own opinions as the data of other alumni's experiences was collected and analysed.

Validity concerns the extent to which research questions accurately reflect what the researcher intended to investigate (Kvale, 1996, p. 237-238; Opie and Sikes, 2004, p. 68). This also highlights the need to ensure appropriate questions were asked from participants (Kvale, 1996, p. 243). To this end, Opie and Sikes (2004) emphasise "…the validity of the relationship between a claim and the result of a data-gathering process..." In this study, various sub-questions asked in the data collection come from the main research questions and the literature reviewed, with some question refinement after the first two alumni interviews were piloted.

In this research, validity was enhanced through triangulation, member checking of participants and inclusion of negative or discrepant data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 354). Triangulation in the study was achieved through the analysis of different sources of data collection, namely documents, alumni interviews and mentor interviews. All three sources served to provide an opportunity for deeper insight and interpretation of alumni experiences. They helped understand the context and background of TSA and its development over the years as well as the effects of those changes on TAs and mentors. Responses of several participants were verified informally through member checking by seeking clarification and probing further during the interview (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 354-356). Negative data are conflicting findings and discrepant data are inconsistencies to patterns discovered in the data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 354-355). To this end, a conscious effort was made to explore and include criticisms of the TFA approach after which

TSA is modelled. These criticisms also informed some questions in the interview schedule. This was in order to see if TSA experiences similar challenges or unintended consequences, if these issues are addressed and how.

### 3.6. Data Analysis

Cohen et al. (2007, p. 461) describe data analysis as:

> ..organizing, accounting for and explaining the data; in short, making sense of data in terms of the participants' definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities.

Cohen et al. (2007, p. 467-468) further state that data analysis can be organised and presented using different methods: by issue, research questions, individuals, groups and instrument. Following the interviews, the data collected from alumni and mentors was transcribed and written up. Alumni data was analysed first to inform the collection of mentor data. The initial approach was organising data analysis by individuals, which involved classifying alumni data according to cohort, gender, subject, work sector and placement. Then codes were assigned and categorised to eventually discover themes and patterns that spoke to alumni motivation, competences acquired, how alumni experienced TSA and career paths post-TSA. A code is the title given to a segment, which can be a word, sentence, paragraph or page that "is comprehensible by itself and contains one idea, episode, or piece of relevant information (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 413). Main ideas are represented through categories, which are codes that are grouped together. Patterns then emerge when analysing links among categories (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 404-405).

Categories for both alumni and mentor data collection were informed by the research questions, which in turn informed the presentation of the research findings. The categories included the following: internal and external factors influencing motivation; understanding of TSA mandate; response to TSA mandate; positive and negative experiences of the programme; knowledge and skills gained; other impact of TSA; career paths post-TSA (teaching/not teaching); and reflections on TSA programme and recommendations.

The same process was used in the analysis of the data provided by mentors. This was

compared with themes and patterns revealed from alumni responses. Categories included the following: internal and external factors influencing motivation; recruitment and selection process; induction and on-going support (mentorship and workshops); positive and negative experiences of the programme; knowledge and skills gained by alumni; alumni career paths post-TSA (teaching/not teaching); and reflections on TSA programme and recommendations

### 3.7. Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance was sought and granted from the Ethics Committee at the University of the Witwatersrand (ethics protocol number: 2015ECE040M). Permission was first sought from and granted by the Chairman of TSA (Appendix B) to access documents and approach alumni and mentors for interviews. The Chairman was informed of the topic and the intent to interview alumni from the 2009-2011 cohorts. It was communicated that the documents requested included alumni contacts, profiles, subjects taught, placement, progress reports and career paths post-TSA. The Chairman was assured of the anonymity and confidentiality of participants involved and the safe storage of the data collected.

After initial phone calls, which led to alumni agreeing to participate, emails were sent with the interview schedules and a information sheet explaining the purpose and duration of the research, its content and how the information collected was to be used (Appendices C and D). It was made clear that interviews were on a voluntary basis, with the option to pull out at any stage without penalty. Audio recordings and documents will be kept, stored safely in my possession and eventually destroyed between three to five years after completion was also explained to the participants.

Consent forms (Appendix E) were attached to the information sheet and signed by all participants. The consent form included permission to use of audio-recording, assurances of confidentiality and anonimity of participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 363). The three mentors were also made aware of the risk of identification among alumni and TSA staff and were ensured of the maintenance of anonymity of participants through the use of pseudonyms.

### 3.8. Limitations of the Study

Finally, there were some limitations given that the programme is in its early years and the study is bound by a specific time period, which may not be reflective of the status of affairs since then. Complete profiles of TAs from the documents provided by TSA only covered the first four cohorts (2009-2012), where the statistics on TSA career paths, especially teacher drop-out, retention and attrition, are derived from. After 2012, there were gaps in the documents accessed, thus limiting more recent statistics on TSA teacher career paths.

There were some problems in finding a stratified sample with a sufficient number of alumni and I didn't select alumni from outside Gauteng because TSA has expanded into more provinces only since 2011. This explains why only alumni who are Gauteng residents were first considered. It also reflected the time and financial constraints, as the researcher is a full-time high school teacher. While the placements of participants were generally a fair representation of the population of the placements of the first three cohorts, most of the participants secured for the study were originally placed in Gauteng. The programme had a presence in three other provinces from 2009-2011, especially in the Western Cape and Limpopo, which could have uncovered different aspects of participants' experiences during and after the programme had there been more representation in the sample.

Additionally, securing the participation of Gauteng-based alumni from 2009-2011 cohorts proved challenging and time-consuming. Although 26 alumni were contacted, 11 only agreed to participate. Several alumni had changed their contacts details, were unresponsive and were not available. This led to having to find the Western Cape alumnus as he taught the subject needed to meet the goal of a representative sample. This alumnus was placed in the Western Cape and continues to stay there.

While there were slightly more English recruits in the 2009-2011 cohort, it is worth noting that recently the intake of Maths and Science TAs has risen sharply to meet rising demand for such teachers. This is especially the case with the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which was signed between the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and TSA in 2016 (*DBE partners with TSA,* 2016). Therefore, future research of recent cohorts is likely to yield different results given the evolving and growing cohorts.

Apart from the one other study on TSA's on-going support provision, there is a research scarcity on this topic, and this calls for more extensive representative data gathering in the following areas: sufficiency, impact and effectiveness of TSA training and on-going support; effectiveness and impact of TAs in schools; alumni still teaching, where and why; as well as alumni no longer teaching and why. This could go some way to contribute to the body of knowledge on alternative ways to recruit and train teachers who are more effective and motivated.

# CHAPTER 4
# DATA PRESENTATION

## 4.1. Introduction

Before presenting the interview data from alumni and mentors, there will be a presentation of the document analysis of the TFA and TSA models as additional routes into the teaching profession. It starts with the TFA selection, preparation and on-going support and then examines its strengths and weaknesses. The lessons learnt from this analysis will assist to understand from TSA documents, the origin, evolution and strategies of the TSA model as well as the way it tried to tap, reinforce and maintain TA/Alumni motivation and commitment to education. Given the paucity of literature on TSA and that it is modelled after Teach for America (TFA), this chapter will draw from the wealth of literature available on the American programme concerning its strengths, achievements and criticisms as a guide to inform my analysis of the potential and limitations of TSA. The presentation of the interview data from alumni and mentors is presented according to the following sections: profiles of TSA alumni and mentors; intrinsic and extrinsic motivators; alumni interpretation of TSA short and long-term vision; alumni experience of the TSA programme; alumni career paths post-TSA; and alumni recommendations for improvement.

## 4.2. TFA model

There will first be a presentation of the TFA selection, training and on-going support strategies. This will be followed by the strengths and positive outcomes and then the weaknesses and criticisms of TFA.

### 4.2.1. Selection, training and on-going support

*Selection*

Of the thousands who apply from around the US for the TFA programme only 12% get accepted (Clark et al., 2013, p. xxiii). Once TFA teachers have applied, the selection process takes up to three months. This process involves an online

application and an in-person or virtual interview. This includes a five-minute sample teaching lesson, group discussions and a one-on-one interview. Successful applicants know within a month where they will be placed and what subject they will teach. While the programme responds to the subject needs felt in many regions (TFA Maths, Science, Spanish and Special Education), TFA teachers are not limited to teaching these subjects (*What and where*, n.d.). TFA teachers can be placed elementary, middle or high school. They then decide whether to accept or decline the offer from TFA (*How to Apply*, n.d.).

*Training*

Training begins with a regional induction lasting a week followed by five to seven weeks at a regional or national Summer Training Institute, ending with one to two weeks of regional orientation. The five main parts of training are:

1. Two or more hours of teaching summer school per day while observed by an experienced teacher.
2. Lesson observation and feedback several times a week.
3. Group-work: reflections with fellow corps members.
4. Lesson planning workshops.
5. Curriculum sessions.

(*Summer Training*, n.d.)

After observing and interviewing effective TFA teachers in low-income communities over the years, the following traits have been identified in teacher leaders, and this developed into the Teaching as Leadership (TAL) framework which informs TFA training: setting big goals; invest in learners and their families; planning purposefully; execute effectively; continuously improve effectiveness; and work relentlessly (Farr, 2010).

*On-going support*

During or after the Summer Training Institute, the recruits go through a hiring process, which may involve interviews and subject knowledge tests. Alumni assist in preparation for the hiring process and the TFA teachers are also exposed to alumni throughout the two years in formal and informal events. Another source of support

throughout the programme is the coaches who are assigned to teachers. The teachers have the opportunity to take courses to gain certification or a Masters degree during the two years (*What and where*, n.d.). After the programme, TFA facilitates alumni interaction and collaboration on online platforms and at regional and national events (*After the corps*, n.d.).

### 4.2.2. Strengths and positive outcomes

TFA's strengths and achievements – particularly in drawing top talent to education, facilitating networks and producing alumni that have become civic and educational leaders and innovators in the system – is discussed as a potential template for TSA and the latter's impact on South African education.

Those TFA teachers who chose to stay in education injected new life and innovation in a variety of ways into the education sector since the programme's inception (Higgins et al., 2011; Tatet, 1999, p. 43). Those that do remain teachers and gain certification and experience are shown to be at least as good as traditionally trained teachers or even better (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Kopp, 2008).

Other alumni have gone into leadership positions in government, corporate and NGOs, or they have become entrepreneurs, both in and outside of the education sector (Higgins et al., 2011; Mitchell, 2009, p. 17-18; St. John, 2010). For example, Mike Feinberg and Dave Levin from the 1992 cohort founded the Knowledge is Power Programme (KIPP), a network of 99 public charter schools serving learners from mainly low-income backgrounds in preparation for college. Then, there is Nicholas Bernstein from the 1995 cohort who, after the programme gained a PhD in aerospace engineering, now makes surgical simulators for medical schools and residency programs. There is also Michael Johnston from the 1997 cohort. He authored a memoir of his TFA experiences, has advised President Barack Obama on education in the 2008 campaign, was principal of two schools for children in state custody, cofounded a principal-training NGO and now works as a state senator (St. John, 2010). Additionally, in both 2015 and 2016, eight TFA alumni in each year were selected for Forbes' 30 Under 30 (Howard, n.d.; TFA Editorial Team, 2016). The members of this list are characterised as "founders and funders, brand builders and do-gooders who aren't waiting for a proper bump up the career ladder" (Howard,

n.d.). Refer to Appendix A for a snapshot of what TFA alumni have been up to after their two-year commitment since the programmes inception. It highlights TFA alumni's continued commitment to education and civic engagement as well as their leadership roles in these fields (*Alumni Survey & Snapshot*, n.d.).

According to Mitchell (2009, p. 24-29), for those who have remained connected to education whether in or out of the classroom, much of their motivation and commitment can be attributed to their alumni network, largely facilitated by TFA. Numerous collaborations, exchanges and much needed support are provided through this network of like-minded TFA alumni.

These strategies, mirrored by those of TSA, suggest the potential impact of TSA in producing alumni as motivated and committed teachers and potential civic leaders. As suggested in the 2015 CDE report on future teacher supply and demand, these teachers could in the future be "strategically used in the public school system as future heads of department, teachers at resource centres or subject advisors" (Berstein, 2015, p. 16).

#### 4.2.3. Weaknesses and critiques

Criticism of TFA is centred on the sufficiency of programme training and support, the effectiveness of TFA teachers and the retention of TFA teachers after the two-year commitment.

Critics such as Darling-Hammond (1994) have long questioned the sufficiency of TFA training, claiming that recruits are ill-prepared, which is evident from teaching and discipline strategies employed. Subsequently, many exit the profession feeling frustrated and discouraged (Blumenreich & Rogers, 2016, p. 25; Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Heilig and Jez, 2014). Within a few years of its inception, Darling-Hammond (1994) characterised TFA as a quick fix involving "a very old approach to recruiting teachers during times of shortage." She questioned whether the programme was ultimately about serving students in under-resourced schools or serving as a stepping-stone for TFA recruits on their way to their original career paths. Thus, poor initial training undermines TFA aims to improve quality of education. In response to this criticism concerning teacher preparation, TFA has sought to make improvements

in its Summer Training Institute and the support provided throughout the programme (Schneider, 2014, p. 426). To strengthen its training, TFA has partnered with several formal institutions around the US, such as the Teachers' College at Arizona State University. Most of the recruits also pursue certification through local colleges once they have been placed at a school (Heilig and Jez, 2014, p. 1-2).

There are conflicting reports about the effectiveness of TFA teachers. In a study linking high school student exam data to teacher data in North Carolina, Xu et al. (2011) the results suggested that TFA teachers were more effective teaching disadvantaged students than certified teachers, experienced teachers and teachers with varied training backgrounds – particularly in the sciences. In this study student data from 23 local education agencies where TFA teachers were placed was analysed from 2000-2001 through 2006-2007 school years. Similarly, in a 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 study of 4573 middle and high students, Clark et al., (2013) found that students taught maths by TFA teachers achieved better exam results than teachers trained traditionally or in alternative programmes. Another study by Mathematica Policy Research comparing TFA teachers to non-TFA teachers in 17 schools across six districts from 2001-2003, found that while TFA teachers produced better results in Maths, while their results in reading were no different to those of non-TFA teachers. TFA teachers were more prone to report challenges with student misbehaviour (Decker et al., 2004, p. xiv-xv).

In contrast, Laczko-Kerr and Berliner (2002), Darling-Hammond et al. (2005) found that certified teachers produced considerably better results than TFA and uncertified teachers. According to Darling-Hammond et al, (2005, p. 22) and Boyd et al. (2006) TFA teachers only started showing improvements once they became certified in their second or third year, although many start leaving the profession after three years.

Another criticism concerns the gap between the intentions of TFA and their teachers and the high attrition rate of TFA teachers after their two-year commitment. Firstly, 10-15% of each TFA cohort drop out without completing the programme (Boyd et al., 2006). According to Darling-Hammond (1994, p. 2) and Blumenreich and Rogers (2016, p. 25), TFA's approach undermined both the minority communities where TFA recruits were placed and the teaching profession, given that less than half of the

original 1990 cohort remained as teachers after two years. Moreover, results from a study examining teacher characteristics from 1995-2002 by Darling-Hammond et al. (2005), showed that over three quarters of TFA teachers had left teaching after three years. By the fifth year, only 27,8% were still teaching according to a 2007 survey of three cohorts with a 62 % response rate (Donaldson & Johnson, 2011, p. 49). Of those who stayed in the profession but changed schools, work conditions were found to be the most significant motivating factor, highlighting the importance of creating a conducive environment for teachers and learners to succeed (Donaldson & Johnson, 2011, p. 51). Heilig and Jez (2014) also take issue with the high costs incurred from recruiting and training replacements for the many TFA teachers that leave soon after their two years. There is the risk of attracting people who simply see the programme as a stint with little genuine interest in education but solely reaping the benefits of the programme.

### 4.3. TSA model

Let us turn to the evolution of the South African programme, followed by the three strategies used by TSA to produce motivated and committed teacher leaders with a strong sense of social justice. Then the lessons learnt about motivation and the TSA model will be discussed.

#### 4.3.1. Origin and evolution of TSA

The programme grew in recognition and the size of the cohorts expanded. As a result, the organisation evolved and impacted the way in which alumni from different cohorts viewed, experienced and have been influenced by TSA. Initially, the first cohort of 24 TAs was placed in Gauteng with nine TAs already possessing teaching qualifications and teaching experience. They were generally older than more recent cohorts. As the programme expanded, so has the profile of TAs changed, with the majority of TAs now being fresh out of university, mostly without teaching qualifications and teaching experience. Over the years with the increasing demand of Science and Maths teachers, the majority of TAs selected held BSc degrees, followed by BA and BCom degrees. The changing profile of TAs came from clearer messaging during recruitment and selection seasons. This involved targeting recent university graduates and excluding education majors given the key shortages of young teachers in Maths, Science and English (*Selection*, n.d.).

As the organisation's reputation and relationship with the DBE grew, strong buy-in from the DBE is evident with the slow rising demand for TAs around the country. By 2016, there were 113 TAs placed in eight provinces with support provided to all the TAs. Furthermore, the DBE signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with TSA in 2016 to place TAs specialising in Maths in rural areas where it is hard to attract Maths teachers (*DBE partners with TSA*, 18 April 2016). TSA has also received recognition in the civic space as it was awarded the Graduate Employer of Choice Award in the Charity or Voluntary sector by the South African Graduate Recruiters Association (SAGRA).

### 4.3.2. Strategy 1: Recruitment process and criteria

Unlike TFA, TSA specifies only three subjects that applicants should have studied as a major to be eligible to apply. Additionally, only non-teaching graduates may apply whereas TFA accepts applicants with teaching certification. The goal of TSA recruitment is selecting top, recent graduates of Maths and Science and English who have leadership potential. The organisational team consists of full time Recruitment Officers, Interns and Volunteers as well as Brand Ambassadors (fulltime students on various university campuses). Members of this team travel to university campuses all over the country, introducing TSA to final year students during career fairs. Other recruitment tools include articles and adverts placed in University, local and national print media, radio and TV interviews with TEACH staff and former TAs, the TEACH website and social media. Apart from academic achievement, applicants are rigorously selected over a three-stage interview process. The first stage is an online application after which shortlisted candidates are invited to a daylong interview involving a sample lesson, group activities, literacy test and a one-on-one interview. The third stage is a subject knowledge test after which successful candidates are invited to the training academy at the end of the year. This process lasts several months where candidates are also given a clear idea of what the job entails. Selection criteria include the following personal and professional qualities, many of which are related to an applicant's intrinsic motivation to teach and serve in challenging circumstances: ability to influence and motivate others; perseverance; strong critical thinking and problem-solving skills; demonstrated record of past

achievement; organisational ability; and understanding of and belief in TSA's vision; respect for low-income communities (*Selection*, n.d.).

Many of these selection criteria are highlighted as necessary qualities to develop resilience strategies by young teachers in various high needs areas in America. These resilience strategies include help-seeking, problem-solving, managing difficult relationships, pursuing rejuvenation and renewal. Use of these strategies required high self-efficacy (Castro, 2010). Furthermore, teachers who displayed high self-efficacy were linked to having more satisfaction with the job environment than others in a study on teacher motivation and job satisfaction in Kwa-Zulu Natal (Dehaloo, 2011, p. 164).

The world's top performing education systems also consider many of the criteria above as "predictors of teaching success", so they use these criteria to find the "top third+" graduates who will enter into ITEPs (Auguste et al., 2010, p. 9). Successful applicants of TSA then commit to teaching in under-resourced schools for at least two years.

#### 4.3.3. Strategy 2: Teacher preparation, placement and on-going support

Over the years, as a result of mentor reflection of previous cohorts, experiences and changes in the education field, the training and on-going support of TAs underwent significant changes. For the first cohort, training of TAs before placements lasted six weeks in what was known as the Training Academy, but this training was too little, partly because funding remained a substantial challenge. According to one of the mentors interviewed, through consultations with a professor in education, it was suggested that TAs should be given enough to take into class and then the on-going support would kick in. This is especially given the NGO's funding constraints and high costs associated with training and supporting TAs for two years.

Training before placement changed in 2011 from Training Academy to the Ambassador Induction Programme (AIP). The AIP became the last stage of selection because provincial departments confirmed placements during or after the AIP or at worst right into the first term of the school calendar, something that often left TAs disappointed and anxious. Several TAs left for jobs elsewhere during this waiting

period. This put the organisation in a difficult position as they had to recruit enough TAs to meet the DBE's demand, but often without timeous guarantee of their placements.

As on-going support was affected by the expansion of the programme given the challenges and financial implications of travelling regularly to township and rural schools all over the country. As a result, TSA sought to develop local on-going support structures closer to TAs schools. The idea was to provide additional mentors around the country by asking HoDs and subject advisers who had shown keen interest in TAs by developing them and making use of their strong subject qualifications. TSA also sought to connect TAs with TSA alumni who worked in the same area as sources of on-going support, especially with regards to finding accommodation, transport and transitioning into the community.

So because of the small size of the first cohort, the organisation was able to assist TAs in transitioning out of the programme by linking many TAs to mentors and other job opportunities whether inside or outside the classroom. However, as the cohorts grew, the organisation's capacity could no longer cope and play an active role in this transition.

In the first years of the programme, there were a number of bursaries available from funders for TAs to do a PGCE. Unfortunately, only some of these bursaries were taken up initially and several dropped out of the course. With subsequent cohorts, there has been a greater demand for bursaries to study for a PGCE. Unfortunately, funding for bursaries is now hard to come by. Nonetheless, many TAs have completed their PGCEs and as a result, remained teachers after the programme. According to the TSA website, over 60% of TAs have remained teachers to date (*Homepage*, n.d). When TAs express a desire to drop out, TSA staff meet with them to assess the situation and provide options to facilitate their stay e.g. moving schools if possible, mediation with school management if TAs feel exploited.

*Preparation*

The two-weeks of preparation the TAs receive before being placed in a school is called the Ambassador Induction Programme (AIP). Apart from learning teaching

strategies and doing class simulations, the AIP also emphasises an awareness of mindsets in schools, how to approach that as well as instilling values in TAs about the kind of teachers they will have to be, no matter what may be happening at the school. TSA's approach is also informed by the Teaching as Leadership (TAL) framework.

In the two weeks of AIP, TAs have to work in syndicates which are carefully selected and purposefully diverse in gender, race, language, university and subject. In this way they are tested and observed as they work with others to achieve specified goals. During the course of training, TAs are expected to reflect on content as well as the experience of working in groups – where and when it is a good or bad idea.

*Placement*

During the AIP, TAs are told in which schools they have been placed. TSA staff works in collaboration with provincial departments of education in deciding placements of TAs. During these deliberations, recommendations are made by TSA trainers and mentors about what grades TAs can teach. TAs are mostly placed in high schools but are sometimes placed in primary school, depending on the need. Unique and specific challenges faced by TAs are also taken into consideration, but placements are ultimately determined by the needs of schools.

Before TAs arrive, a partnership agreement is signed with the principal so he/she and the school management team (SMT) have clear guidelines on engagement with TAs regarding issues with subject and class allocation and moving with classes from one grade to another.

*On-going support*

There is a handover meeting between TSA staff and the principal before TAs arrive at the school. Principals are asked to assist TAs with finding accommodation in the area. To keep TAs motivated, each is assigned a TSA mentor, regular meetings and workshops are scheduled on selected weekends and school holidays. TAs are regularly held accountable for their progress both inside and outside the classroom by their mentors. This is done through on site classroom visits, one-on-one/email/telephonic consultations and quarterly review of mark sheets. Mentors are required to conduct at least 18 hours of school visits per TA per year (six hours per

term, three hours of class observation and three hours of personal discussion). Furthermore, mentors provide pastoral care to TAs and give guidance on professional matters. Pastoral care includes TA's personal wellbeing, accommodation and salary issues. Professional matters include teaching strategies, professional conduct, work relations and improving learner achievement. Mentors are required to write a quarterly report concerning TAs' progress and the kind of support needed. This form of teacher development is in line with the ISPFTED (DoE, 2011, p. 18), which recognises learning-in-practice through coaching and mentoring as the form teacher development should take. This kind of on-going support minimises feelings of isolation and discouragement that teachers may feel.

According to one study the provision of on-going support to TAs for the duration of the programme is key. Sekete (2011, p. 32) surveyed 40 TAs from the 2010 – 2011 cohorts and three mentors to assess the provision and experience of on-going support of the programme. TAs were generally positive about the support they received from TSA and expressed confidence in their capacity to impact students and the profession (Sekete, 2011, p. 72-73). However, Sekete (2011, p. 62) also found that the support services were implemented inconsistently as there were not enough mentors, which limited the attention TAs could receive. TAs were also not making full use of the support services available as workshops were not well attended. Moreover, TAs at the time were uncertain about staying in the teaching profession.

Networking is another form of support encouraged among TAs, alumni and programme partners in support of life during and after the programme (*Ongoing Support*, n.d). TSA facilitates networking through various platforms such as social media, workshops and the annual AIP and TA graduation event. Putnam (2001) proposes that, with positive social capital, there is value in networks given potential internal and external benefits as shown in the experience of TFA alumni. This addresses the use and benefits of the alumni network in meeting development needs and maintaining motivation and commitment post-TSA.

#### 4.3.4. Strategy 3: Personal and professional growth through leadership

During the two-year training, the notion of teacher as leader is emphasised, especially to respond to challenges faced at the schools and needs TAs become aware of in

schools. Consequently, they are required to identify and address a need by initiating a project in their school community. Given that TAs are placed in under resourced schools which often do not have extracurricular activities, TAs' projects tend to focus on this area. Past projects have included clubs started for debate, chess and sports, establishing a library or computer centre, learner media team, career guidance, participation in Maths and Science Olympiads and extra lessons and more. Initiating these projects requires fundraising, seeking sponsorship, building and maintaining good working relationships with various stakeholders, both inside and outside the school. As a result, if TAs immerse themselves in the experience and seize the opportunities they are exposed to during the two-year programme, they can hone their leadership, communication, problem-solving and organisational skills.

During the AIP especially, TAs are mobilised by facilitators and testimonies from alumni to maintain focus despite the chaos that may ensue at their schools. While there is an encouragement to be respectful and get involved in school life, leadership is also emphasised in maintaining commitment to their duties despite unprofessional behaviour they may witness at schools. TAs are also expected to behave as role models to learners.

Given the large number of dysfunctional schools across South Africa, there is a need to address school level practices that should support effective instruction at the class level (Blank & Jansen, 2014; Christie, 2001). To this end, school leadership is a significant factor according to the literature on school effectiveness and school improvement in creating a professional and learning school culture (Bush et al. 2010, p. 162-163; Christie, 2001; Edmonds, 1979, p.22-23; Horng & Loeb, 2010; Lezotte, 1991; Mulford, 2013, p. 25; Taylor, N et al., 2012, p. 8-9). Christie (2010, p. 696) emphasises that leadership "is not the preserve of any position, and can be found and built throughout the school." Additionally, one of the effective practices of schools that work according to Blank and Jansen (2014) is that not only can school heads show leadership and initiative, but also teachers and learners. This speaks to a sense of responsibility in behaviour and in school activities – a much-needed trait in South Africa's ailing schools where teacher motivation and commitment remain an issue (Christie, 2001, p. 8).

According to the 2016-2017 alumni snapshot (See Appendix A), 69% TFA alumni remain committed to education and 55% of those who remained teachers work in public schools. Furthermore, alumni occupy leadership positions at various levels of education and in the civic space. Therefore the TFA experience appears to instil an interest in teaching, particularly in public schools, but also hones leadership skills (*Alumni Survey & Snapshot*, n.d.). Since TSA is modelled after TFA, perhaps the question remains as to whether similar effects will impact TSA alumni in the future. It is clear that the TSA experience appeals to intrinsic growth needs by combining TAs' interest in service by teaching in poorly resourced schools as well as opportunities for leadership development. But what will it produce on the ground?

#### 4.3.5. Lessons learnt about motivation and the TSA model

TSA's approach to producing motivated and committed teachers relies on strategies found in the literature: (1) rigorous and highly selective recruitment (2) setting ambitious goals (3) provision of an enriching experience despite challenging extrinsic factors associated with the school environment.

The selective recruitment process identifies candidates who commit to the programme, knowing full well the difficult living and working conditions they will face for two years. They are also aware that they may forgo more lucrative opportunities available to them because of their academic achievement and skills.

To offset the challenging living and working conditions of TAs, TSA promises to have their TAs on a clear, supported mission and strategy over two years, which helps drive motivation, as Locke et al. (1981) propose with their goal-setting theory. Moreover, the gains accessible through the TSA programme include: personal and professional growth (self-actualisation); recognition for achievements; increased career prospects given knowledge and skills gained; and access to a growing and influential network of alumni and TSA partners in the pursuit of quality education for all (*Alumni community*, n.d.). Through these enriching experiences, TSA aims to have made enough of an impact on the mindset of TAs in that they would continue to be motivated and committed to improving education, whether inside or outside the classroom, after the programme. However, the challenge remains as to what happens after two years when TAs no longer enjoy close supervision, accountability and

support, once the opportunities to fulfil self-actualisation needs diminish and once TAs are no longer obliged to demonstrate leadership and regularly held accountable for producing results. How do TAs, now TSA Alumni, respond? Is there evidence of continued motivation, commitment and leadership as envisioned by TSA? This is one of the issues that this research seeks to address.

The experience of TFA has shown that, after the programme, many alumni have responded by seeking or creating opportunities for themselves and others to continue growing, whether inside or outside the classroom. Also, many have continued to display leadership practices at various levels, both in and out of the classroom by identifying and responding to educational needs in various communities (*Alumni Survey & Snapshot*, n.d.; *Forbes recognises Teach*, 2015; Higgins et al., 2011; Lipka, 2007, p. 6). The use and expansion of the alumni network is considered an integral part of maintaining motivation and commitment after the programme (Lipka, 2007, p. 6).

### 4.4. Profiles of TSA alumni & mentors

In depth interviews were conducted with 11 alumni and three mentors who were interviewed for up to two hours in person, or on the phone and on Skype. Eight interviews were in person, two were telephonic and one via Skype. In this chapter, the alumni are referred to as participants and are given pseudonyms (see Table 6). The mentors are referred to as M1, M2 and M3.

Table 6: Participant (Alumni) Profile

| PARTICIPANTS: ALUMNI PROFILE | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **COHORT** | **2009** | | | **2010** | | | **2011** | | | | |
| **PARTICIPANTS** | **P1** | **P2** | **P3** | **P4** | **P5** | **P6** | **P7** | **P8** | **P9** | **P10** | **P11** |
| **PSEUDONYMS** | **John** | **Thandi** | **Lisa** | **Mark** | **Sizwe** | **Kelly** | **Sam** | **Fiona** | **Joy** | **Pam** | **Tim** |
| **GENDER** | M | F | F | M | M | F | M | F | F | F | M |
| **SUBJECT** | ENG | ENG | SCI | ENG | SCI | SCI | SCI | M | ENG | ENG | M |
| **PLACEMENT** | GP | GP | GP | EC | GP | GP | GP | GP | GP | GP | WC |
| **PGCE/Education Diploma** | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |

Table 7: Participant career paths post-TEACH South Africa

| POST-TEACH SOUTH AFRICA | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **COHORT** | **2009** | | | **2010** | | | **2011** | | | | | | |
| **PARTICIPANTS** | **John** | **Thandi** | **Lisa** | **Mark** | **Sizwe** | **Kelly** | **Sam** | **Fiona** | **Joy** | **Pam** | **Tim** | **TOTAL** | **%** |
| **TEACHER** | | X | | X | | | | X | X | X | X | 6 | 55 |
| **CORPORATE** | | | X | | | | X | | | | | 2 | 18 |
| **NGO** | X | | | | X | | | | | | | 2 | 18 |
| **GOVERNMENT** | | | | | | X | | | | | | 1 | 9 |

As shown in Table 6, three alumni from the 2009 cohort participated, three from the 2010 cohort and five from the 2011 cohort. Five participants taught English, four taught Science and two taught Maths. There were six female participants (three English, two Science and one Maths) and five male participants (two English, two Science and one Maths). Nine of the participants taught in Gauteng, one in Eastern Cape and one in Western Cape. Five participants have Bachelor of Science degrees, one has a Bachelor in Social Sciences, another has a Bachelor of Engineering and four have Bachelor of Arts degrees. Furthermore, two of the participants have postgraduate diplomas, three have Honours degrees and two have Masters degrees with specialisations in Languages, Project Management, Rural Resource Management, Media Studies, Psychology and Education. Lastly, one participant entered the programme with a Diploma in Education and seven of the participants obtained a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) either during or after the programme. Table 7 shows that, at the time of the interviews, of the 11 participants, six remained teachers (55%). Four participants are teaching in the public sector, two in private schools. Two work in corporate, two work for NGOs in education and one in government.

Regarding the mentors, M1 specialises in Maths, M2 in English and M3 in Science. The mentors have overseen TAs since 2010. M2 has overseen TAs in Gauteng only, whereas M1 and M3 have overseen TAs in seven and six provinces respectively. Generally speaking, mentors are involved from the selection of the TAs to their preparation at the AIP and with on-going support throughout TAs' two-year commitment.

The next sections present both alumni and mentor responses to interview questions centred on the following themes:

a) Alumni motivation to join and complete the programme
b) Interpretation of TSA mandate
c) How alumni experienced the TSA programme
d) Alumni career paths post-TSA
e) Alumni recommendations for programme improvement.

These themes speak to the main purpose of this research, which is to investigate how TSA has impacted the first three cohorts and explore intended and unintended consequences. To what extent is the programme mobilising these recent graduates to get actively involved in improving education whether inside or outside the classroom?

### 4.5. Alumni Motivation to join and complete the programme

This section examines the major intrinsic and extrinsic factors that motivated the alumni to join and complete the programme.

#### 4.5.1. Intrinsic motivators

The following section presents first the alumni's intrinsic motivation to apply and complete the programme as well as the intrinsic factors influencing their decision to stay or leave the profession after the programme. This is followed by mentors' views on each of these issues.

John and Thandi were the only participants who had formal teaching experience. Thandi considered it "a calling". The other nine participants never considered teaching as a profession before TSA, but three of them, Sizwe, Joy and Pam already had several years of working experience.

Table 8 presents the most common responses of the 11 participants regarding what motivated them to go into teaching through TSA in descending order of frequencies: nine participants expressed a desire to make a difference; seven participants expressed a desire to impart knowledge or teach; four participants enjoy working with the youth; and three participants mentioned a passion for the subject they majored in during university.

Table 8: Alumni intrinsic motivators to join TSA.

| Cohort | 2009 | | | 2010 | | | 2011 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Participants** | **John** | **Thandi** | **Lisa** | **Mark** | **Sizwe** | **Kelly** | **Sam** | **Fiona** | **Joy** | **Pam** | **Tim** |
| **Make a difference** | X | X | X | X | X | | | X | X | X | X |
| **Teach/Impart knowledge** | X | X | | | X | | X | X | X | X | |
| **Enjoy youth work** | | | | X | | X | X | | X | | |
| **Passion for subject** | | | | | X | | X | | | X | |

The most common motivators for completing the two-year programme shown in Table 9 in descending order of frequencies were: nine participants mentioned fulfilment from assisting with part of learner development; six participants enjoyed being part of a programme driven by targets to deliver results; six participants highlighted good learner-teacher rapport and a strong sense of responsibility to learners; six participants emphasised love for the job despite challenges faced; five participants felt it was important to honour the two-year commitment; and five saw themselves as role models who could help shape learners positively. While three participants seriously considered leaving and voiced their concerns to TSA, the other eight did not consider leaving despite the challenges faced.

Table 9: Alumni intrinsic motivators to complete the TSA programme

| Cohort | 2009 | | | 2010 | | | 2011 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Participants** | **John** | **Thandi** | **Lisa** | **Mark** | **Sizwe** | **Kelly** | **Sam** | **Fiona** | **Joy** | **Pam** | **Tim** |
| **Learner development** | | | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X |
| **Goal-driven movement** | X | | | X | X | | X | | X | | X |
| **Student-teacher rapport** | | X | X | X | | | | X | X | X | |
| **Love for the job** | | X | | X | | X | X | | X | | X |
| **Fulfil commitment** | X | | | X | | X | | X | X | | |
| **Role model** | | | X | X | X | | | | X | X | |
| **Considered leaving (No)** | X | X | | X | X | | | X | X | X | X |
| **Considered leaving (Yes)** | | | X | | | X | X | | | | |

Of the six participants who stayed in teaching, all except Fiona, were driven by a fulfilment from seeing learners develop. Thandi, Mark, Joy and Pam felt a strong

sense of responsibility towards the learners**.** Thandi, Mark, Joy and Tim mentioned their passion for teaching. Thandi, Mark, Pam and Tim emphasised their desire to stay in teaching for three years or more.

Of the five participants who left teaching, Lisa, Sizwe and Sam knew from the onset of the programme that they would not continue teaching. John, Sizwe and Kelly expressed a commitment to continue work in the future on projects in education but not from the classroom. Sam and Lisa wanted to continue involvement in community service, but not necessarily in education.

As far as the mentors were concerned, they agreed about the intrinsic motivators to join and complete the programme: TAs' desire to give back, be part of change, work with the youth and with a passion for their subject. Because of the rigorous recruitment process, the TAs need to have demonstrated examples of these motivators. M1 and M3 added that TAs are often driven by a sense of gratitude for their privileges and a sense of social justice regarding less advantaged young people. Though they acknowledged that there is always self-interest in those who apply, the aim is for TAs who are either equally or more driven by a genuine love for children and a desire to teach, rather than just desperation for a job.

All mentors stated that those who completed the two-year commitment displayed greater confidence and energy. They were determined to succeed and even more so, when they started to understand the needs of these schools and their learners. According to M1 and M2, there was a sense of pride about completing the programme. However, M1 recognised that some alumni were unsure about their future career path but they knew that they did not want to work in an office straight away.

### 4.5.2. Extrinsic motivators

This section presents the extrinsic factors that affected alumni decision to join and complete the programme and how these impact job performance and job satisfaction. It then deals with the extrinsic factors that influence alumni decision to stay or leave the profession. This is followed by the mentors' views on each of these issues.

Sizwe, Kelly and Thandi mentioned the need for a job and stability as one main extrinsic reason to apply to TSA while Sam applied because he was uncertain of the path he wanted to pursue. John and Lisa mentioned student gaps in knowledge and unpreparedness for tertiary education as part of the motivation to apply to TSA. In fact, tutoring or teaching experience turned out to be a significant motivator for seven of the 11 participants: Thandi and John already had several years of teaching experience while Sizwe, Sam, Fiona, Lisa and Tim had all been university tutors. Only John and Thandi had considered teaching professionally given their experience. The four other participants, who never considered teaching as an option until applying to TSA, were attracted to the TSA's mandate. Up until that point Sizwe and John mentioned having a low view of the teaching profession beforehand. Mark, Sam, Fiona, Pam and Tim's families felt supportive while Mark, Lisa, Sizwe, Sam and Fiona regarded low salary as not a significant external factor in their decision to join teaching. Mark, Sizwe and Kelly, however, faced strong objections from their friends about their choice to teach because of the better job options available given their levels of education.

Table 10: Extrinsic factors affecting job performance and job satisfaction

| **Cohort** | **2009** | | | **2010** | | | **2011** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Participants** | **John** | **Thandi** | **Lisa** | **Mark** | **Sizwe** | **Kelly** | **Sam** | **Fiona** | **Joy** | **Pam** | **Tim** |
| **Support** | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| **Recognition/Appreciation** | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| **Conducive environment** | | | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| **Insufficient resources** | | | X | | | X | X | X | X | | X |
| **Better compensation** | | | | | X | X | | X | X | X | |
| **Career development** | | | X | | X | X | X | | X | | |

Participants also cited the significance of external factors impacting their level of job performance and job satisfaction (represented in Table 10 in descending order of frequencies). The experience of strong support for teachers was the most commonly cited factor influencing their level of job satisfaction and performance. This support came in various forms: from mentors, HODs, colleagues or fellow TAs.

Recognition or appreciation for their performance from TSA, the school or the district was mentioned by 10 alumni. Recognition or appreciation came in the form of: certificates; encouraging words at an assembly, function or in person; presentation of

legacy projects or achievements at functions, on the website and on social media pages.

A conducive environment to teaching and learning was identified by eight participants, especially infrastructure, professional conduct, relations with the district, few disruptions and good teacher and student morale. Insufficient resources, especially textbooks, were a significant challenge for six participants.

Better compensation for teachers was an issue for five participants and limited career development opportunities was also an issue for five participants, with four of them (Lisa, Sizwe, Kelly and Sam) leaving the profession because of this issue. Joy complained, "Unless someone dies, I'll never be an HOD." Three other participants were not affected by limited career opportunities, which they just accepted. Mark was aware from the onset that, "teaching is a profession where you don't often advance that quickly. So it's something whereby very often the normal trajectory is that you do your time in the trenches and as you mature you get promoted." Similarly, Tim appeared reconciled, "The career is very slow so I just said to myself as time goes on I'll keep reviewing my situation and see what can I do next." Pam also agreed, "After the two years, I saw how hard it is to progress in terms of a career within teaching…I was just happy being a teacher."

Mark, Fiona, Thandi, Joy and Pam valued job security when they were made permanent and argued that poor salary was of low significance in the decision to leave teaching after the programme. John wanted to stay in teaching but was headhunted by an NGO.

All mentors argued that TAs are driven positively by the problems they are exposed to once they start training and get into the system. M1 and M3 noted that the more difficult the circumstances at the schools and the further away from comfort zones TAs are, the more fired up the TAs become. They also found that TAs who are placed in rural areas tend to have more of a sense of urgency and determination to overcome difficult living and working conditions. M2 argued that the shortage of jobs and that the programme attractive as it was a way to be employed and acquire skills. M1 and M3 said that placement outside of their area of preference does not generally affect

TAs' performance. M3 stressed that TAs are more likely to complete the programme and continue teaching if they had a positive experience with on-going support. M1 saw some TAs stay in their schools after the programme despite opportunities beckoning at home, although M3 highlighted the need to go back home during holidays as a way to recharge. All mentors saw TAs become motivated when they get results and positive feedback. These were often the ones who stay in teaching because they saw they could make a difference. M2 and M3 also mentioned that TAs value being part of a select group of alumni.

Mentors identified the negative extrinsic factors influencing TA for dropping out during the programme as follows: illness, others jobs, unconducive school environments, family matters, overloaded with part-time study, stress, realisation teaching is not for them and lack of performance with students. All the mentors confirmed that those who leave teaching often know from the onset that they will not stay in the profession. Another common reason is better offers, especially through headhunting and recruitment by TSA corporate partners, NGOs and independent schools.

Overall, teaching or tutoring experience as well as TSA's mandate were significant influencing motivators to join TSA. Similar to the trends in teacher motivation literature reviewed earlier, support, recognition and a conducive work environment were major factors influencing the level of job satisfaction and performance during the programme. At the end of the programme, limited career development opportunities was the most commonly cited push factor out of the profession, even though three of them (Lisa, Sam and Sam) also knew from the onset that they would not remain teachers. So, as echoed by mentors, many of those who stayed in the profession after programme were undeterred, sometimes spurred on by difficult work conditions. Furthermore they most likely had a positive experience with the on-going support network and experienced some kind of positive feedback for their hard work. So they were encouraged to believe that they could continue making a difference – one of the main reasons they joined the programme as revealed in the previous section.

### 4.6. Alumni interpretation of TSA short and long-term vision

On its website, TSA describes its short-term vision and mission as: "TSA recruits, trains, places and supports young excellent graduates to improve quality in education for every child in South Africa irrespective of their socio-economic background" (*About us*, n.d.). The other aspects of TSA's short-term mission are good student academic results, initiating a legacy project and demonstrating professional conduct whether inside or outside the classroom as communicated to TAs at the beginning.

According to the TSA website to "improve quality", one of the main messages in the recruitment, selection and mobilisation of TAs is the idea of being a "change agent". Change agents should demonstrate leadership, creativity, be a role model, achieve unlikely student results in difficult circumstances and motivate colleagues and peers with an inspirational vision (*Recruitment*, n.d.). When asked about their understanding of their role as a change agent, the alumni gave a variety of broad responses (not included in Table 11). This suggests the need for a clearer understanding of the meaning of "change agent". The most common responses by participants about the meaning of change agents are represented in Table 11 in descending order of frequencies. Six participants understood being a "change agent" as making a difference in the school community. Five participants felt they had to motivate both teachers and learners. Four participants felt they should contribute to bringing positivity and energy to the school. Four participants believed they were supposed to be role models for learners. Four participants believed they should have a long-term impact on learners. Three participants believed they should contribute to cultivating a culture of learning.

Table 11: Participants' understanding of "change agent"

| Cohort | 2009 | | | 2010 | | | 2011 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Participants** | **John** | **Thandi** | **Lisa** | **Mark** | **Sizwe** | **Kelly** | **Sam** | **Fiona** | **Joy** | **Pam** | **Tim** |
| **Make a difference** | | | X | | X | X | | | X | X | X |
| **Motivate teachers & learners** | | X | | X | X | | | X | X | | |
| **Bring positive energy** | | X | X | | | | | X | X | | |
| **Be a role model** | | X | | X | | | X | X | | | |
| **Impact learners longterm** | X | | | X | X | | | | X | | |
| **Cultivate learning culture** | X | | | | | | X | X | | | |

TSA's goals and short-term vision was perceived by four participants (John, Joy, Fiona and Kelly) as "farfetched" and "unrealistic" given the harsh realities on the ground and the limited timeframe they had to produce better results at the schools.

The long-term vision of TSA is to produce professional alumni (whether in or outside schools) committed to the pursuit of quality education for all. John, Thandi and Lisa mentioned that the long-term alumni vision was not communicated to the 2009 cohort. Thandi and Lisa were dissatisfied with the post-TSA support and contact with alumni. Kelly stated that she was unclear what TSA's long-term vision was for alumni, but mentioned the TSA hopes that they remain in the teaching profession. Similarly, the participants from the 2010 and 2011 cohort (except Joy) thought that it was about TSA's hope that they continue teaching.

Mark, Sizwe, Sam and Pam were the only ones who understood TSA's long-term vision for a network of alumni committed to improving quality of education, whether in or out of school. The fulfilling of this long-term vision met considerable challenges for several reasons. Mark and Pam mentioned the difficulty to formally connect and collaborate among alumni given the demands of their current jobs and/or further study. Mark pointed out that more informal exchanges existed with other alumni. He stated:

> One thing I've appreciated is that if I look back on this year there's so many opportunities that my school has benefitted from that other people that I know have benefitted from just from my network of TEACH alumni. Very often if there's an opportunity someone from TEACH

> will send me the email… just last week we received books from an organisation… and there've been other things like workshops we've been invited to.

In contrast, Joy, Lisa and Kelly were disappointed at how TSA managed their transition from TAs to alumni. Lisa stated:

> I felt that TEACH was going to be there throughout and after… I got the impression that we were going to be assisted getting jobs when we finished.

But she then felt betrayed when they did not facilitate the transition to the next post after the programme. Similarly, Joy and Kelly felt abandoned after the programme. Joy complained that TSA expects "undying loyalty to them but then they were not loyal to you." Joy continued that two years were not enough to make the kind of long-lasting impact that was desired. Similarly, Kelly, Fiona and Mark especially expressed a desire for TSA to strive to keep TAs teaching, preferably in the same schools after the programme.

All mentors stated that, as the organisation's messaging, preparation and on-going support has become more refined, the characteristics and actions displayed by TAs are more closely aligned with the TSA short and long-term vision. They highlighted that TAs generally buy into TSA vision and view the experience as a unique opportunity to give back. As far as the mentors' views were concerned about TSA alumni, M1 noted TSA needs to do a better job at creating advocacy and awareness around what is happening in education and how the public can assist. M3 believed it was difficult to get alumni collaboration and activities off the ground due to limited funding. There should be someone dedicated to running the programme and ensuring TSA keeps in touch with alumni who tend to be all over the country. According to M1, alumni engagement from 2009-2011 cohorts is stronger because they were placed and most have remained in Gauteng.

While mentors thought that TAs generally bought into the TSA vision, participant responses suggest a need for clearer understanding of TSA's short-term and long-term goals as well as key concepts of the programme such as "change agent". Moreover, it is concerning that four of the 11 participants considered TSA's goals and short-term vision as unrealistic, as this perspective could influence their motivation and commitment – more specifically, their alignment to organisational goals and values.

Similarly, mentors and participants saw the difficulties linked to funding and organisational capacity in sustaining an alumni network.

### 4.7. Alumni experience of the TSA programme

This section reveals how the participants experienced the TSA programme. First, how TAs were placed will be discussed followed by how the programme did not prepare or train them well to understand the class and school based challenges they encountered once they arrived at schools. It will then deal with participants' experience of various forms of support received during the programme as well as details legacy projects and overall competencies acquired. Lastly it shows how participants were recognised for achievements, if at all. Each section will end with the mentors' views and experience of that particular issue experienced by the alumni.

#### 4.7.1. Placements

As members of the 2009 cohort, John, Thandi and Lisa had no choice in their placements since they were all placed in Gauteng. Only Sam and Joy were not flexible with placements given study and family commitments respectively, which they communicated to TSA and got their first choice of placement. Of the participants from the 2010 and 2011 cohorts, Pam was the only one who did not get her first choice of placement and had to move from KZN to Gauteng. John and Mark also had to move provinces for the duration of the programme.

#### 4.7.2. Classroom and school based issues

Five participants felt prepared once they started working at the schools, but acknowledged the limitations of the AIP, which focused on academics and not enough on daily classroom and school challenges such as administration, filing learner disruptions and how to manage with these. Yet as Joy put it, "No one can really prepare you" for what happens at schools. Seven participants felt dropped into the deep end without much help in settling in once they arrived at the school. They were just expected to know what goes on in the life of a school. John, Pam and Joy felt they had underestimated the challenges and wished they had been better prepared for what they would face. This is well encapsulated by Pam who thought all she had to do was walk in and deliver content and that learners would be ready and keen to learn. She said:

> You don't really have a clue as to the challenges that can occur inside the school. Cause you're going in there thinking the challenges can only be academic… there's other factors that impact on their classroom experience.

Only three participants said they were helped to settle in by other staff members.

The common classroom and school challenges faced by participants are represented in Table 12 in descending order.

Table 12: Common classroom and school based challenges

| **Cohort** | **2009** | | | **2010** | | | **2011** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Participants** | **John** | **Thandi** | **Lisa** | **Mark** | **Sizwe** | **Kelly** | **Sam** | **Fiona** | **Joy** | **Pam** | **Tim** |
| **Unaccountability** | | | X | X | X | | X | X | X | X | X |
| **Overcrowded classes** | X | | X | | X | | X | X | X | X | X |
| **Insufficient resources** | | | X | | | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| **Little/no help settling in** | | | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | |
| **Heavy workloads** | | | | X | X | X | | X | X | X | |
| **Felt prepared** | | | X | | | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| **Help settling in** | X | | X | | | | | | | | X |
| **Student misbehaviour** | | | | X | | | | | X | X | |
| **Classroom management** | | | | X | | | X | | | X | |

Eight participants dealt with overcrowded classes: 40-60 learners generally (up to 90-110 learners in rural areas according one of the mentors, Zoe). Large class size was particularly an issue for participants who taught English. Eight participants complained about lack of accountability of both teachers and learners on issues such as late coming, absenteeism and bunking to waste and/or theft of school resources. Pam's school was so dysfunctional, it was shut down a few years after she left, with teachers and students transferred to surrounding schools. Seven participants said that there were insufficient resources such as exercise books and textbooks. Six participants were affected by heavy workloads. This included too much administration, being overworked and trying to balance responsibilities and long hours of running a legacy project. Classroom management with learner misbehaviours was difficult for three participants, who believed that it was hard to gain authority in class because of the small age gap between them and learners. Three participants mentioned that learners could be disrespectful, confrontational, unappreciative and sometimes uncontrollable because they were not made accountable at schools.

Salary payment was another challenge for four participants (Tim, Fiona, Sam and Joy) who went through three months without pay as their documents were being processed at the district. They were grateful for the stipend TSA provided during these periods. Pam continued to be irregularly paid even after the programme. She had to take time off to sort it out at the district office and this affected her school performance.

Five participants (Fiona, Pam, Kelly, Joy and Mark) mentioned how these challenges put them under great pressure and made them feel frustrated, unhappy, lonely and exploited. In dealing with these challenges, Sizwe, Fiona, Pam and Lisa believed in the need to be professional, follow proper channels in raising concerns and focusing on the purpose of their placement.

On the positive side, ten participants (excluding Kelly) spoke about having developed a sense of achievement, pride and confidence in their own abilities in coping with these difficult school challenges. Furthermore, Lisa, Mark, Sizwe, Joy, Pam and Kelly all acknowledged that despite these challenges, they developed a passion for education, they were made more aware of needs outside of their own as well as experiencing both personal and professional growth.

As far as mentors' views on these issues, they highlighted the need for the AIP to mobilise TAs to have a missional mindset for what they are about to experience at schools. This means the development of strong professional values and conduct to know how to approach teaching and learners in different ways such as encouraging leadership and developing agency to act as a catalyst for change. Yet, M3 noted that, while many TAs do become leaders and/or change agents at a micro or macro level, it seems pompous to give them fancy titles so early because they are still young, new teachers – a sentiment echoed earlier by four participants who felt TSA's vision was far-fetched given harsh realities on the ground and time constraints.

All the mentors confirmed the various hurdles that could affect TAs' ability to perform well at the beginning, especially when faced with teacher and COSAS student protests, lack of classroom furniture, limited textbooks, school randomly closing early, endless time off during exams, delayed salaries etc. M3 highlighted that

having a successful TA starts with a good selection of recruits who are already driven. TSA cannot improve the environment. According to M3, those who are successful do more for the school and TSA than the school and organisation do for them. Therefore in his opinion, TSA rides on the achievements of TAs as much as it is a catalyst for them.

While the mentors generally felt confident of the preparation of TAs at the AIP, participants' responses reveal the limitations of the AIP in adequately addressing the day-to-day challenges TAs faced once at school. However, both mentor and participant responses noted growth in confidence and abilities over time.

### 4.7.3. Experience of on-going support and development

Formal on-going support provided by TSA included being assigned a mentor and attending workshops. Most of the participants were placed in pairs and within close proximity to each other if in different schools to facilitate support and collaboration among their peers. All the mentors and alumni spoke of other forms of support from school and district personnel. Therefore, this section highlights participants' experiences regarding formal and informal on-going support from TSA, the districts and schools. Under each sub-heading there were varying responses unique to individual experiences that were not mentioned as they did not point to a trend.

*Mentoring*

Common views about the different support of mentors are represented on the Table 13 in descending order of frequencies. Nine participants described relationships with their mentors as good/great and helpful. Seven participants were satisfied with mentor visits and/or communication via email or text. Six participants highlighted the useful feedback provided by mentors, especially after class observations. Three participants appreciated the resources provided by mentors.

Table 13: Participants' views about mentors' support

| Cohort | 2009 | | | 2010 | | | 2011 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Participants** | **John** | **Thandi** | **Lisa** | **Mark** | **Sizwe** | **Kelly** | **Sam** | **Fiona** | **Joy** | **Pam** | **Tim** |
| **Good & helpful overall** | | X | X | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| **Sufficient visits & communication** | | X | X | | X | | X | | X | X | X |
| **Useful feedback** | | | X | | X | | X | X | | X | X |
| **Provision of resources** | | | X | | | | | | | X | X |
| | | | | | | | | | | | |

When it came to criticisms of support provided by mentors, there were varying responses unique to individual experiences from at least two participants. John, Mark, Kelly and Fiona complained that visits and communication with their mentors were insufficient, while Kelly and Sam complained that they shared their mentor with too many other TAs at the time and did not have sufficient access.

As far as mentors' views on this issue are concerned, M1 and M3 highlighted the complexities of supporting expanding cohorts in different provinces and particularly in rural areas where schools were in isolated areas. Given they were not able to visit often in rural areas, the mentors kept in regular contact through email and phones while encouraging them to speak up if they were in trouble. M1 and M2 acknowledged though that access to Internet, laptops, airtime and network were often a barrier to regular communication. Hence, timeous submission of marksheets by TAs every term was an uphill battle. As a result according to M1, some TAs struggled with self-esteem and suffered in silence.

Priorities for all the mentors were to support TAs with lesson preparation and delivery, pastoral care (personal and at school) as well as staff relations. Yet, as M3 stated, he would have liked to play a better supporting role but could not due to financial constraints. M1 and M3 thought that these financial constraints and the associated challenges could be mitigated by TSA's visibility, reputation and momentum with the DBE. According to M1 and M3, provincial departments ultimately have the final say about placements (they may request one TA in one school and another TA somewhere else) despite TSA request that two TAs should be in the same school or in nearby schools.

While M1 and M3 spoke of notable academic improvements they had witnessed in learners taught by TAs, it was also acknowledged by them that success is relative to the environment and that the learners are generally more responsive to the prevailing environment in severely dysfunctional schools. In M3's words, "In terms of turning things around in a really spectacular way, that's not the norm." Mentors all spoke of how TAs mainly make a positive difference in their own sphere of influence whether inside or outside the class with academics and/or through legacy projects.

All mentors witnessed how much TAs grow both personally and in their teaching as they encounter problems for which they were encouraged to find solutions. They felt only a few TAs were either lazy or behaved badly.

Participants' responses reveal an appreciation of relationship with mentors. However, the placement of TAs in isolated areas and funding constraints could affect the quality and frequency of mentorship.

*TSA Workshops*

Common positive aspects about TSA workshops are listed in the table below in Table 14 in descending order of frequencies. Nine participants found the TSA workshops empowering even though they also had some criticisms mentioned below. Five participants mentioned it was a place to share good practice and struggles with other TAs. Three participants highlighted learning various teaching strategies that were beneficial in the classroom.

Table 14: Positive aspects of TSA workshops

| **Cohort** | **2009** | | | **2010** | | | **2011** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Participants** | **John** | **Thandi** | **Lisa** | **Mark** | **Sizwe** | **Kelly** | **Sam** | **Fiona** | **Joy** | **Pam** | **Tim** |
| **Empowering** | X | X | X | X | | | X | X | X | X | X |
| **Share experiences** | | | X | X | | | | X | X | X | |
| **Teaching strategies** | | | | | | | X | | | X | X |

Common criticisms are listed in Table 15 in descending order of frequencies. Four participants stated that TSA workshops were sometimes not useful, particularly due to repetition of content. Four participants complained that sometimes facilitators did not understand the school contexts they were dealing with. Three participants complained

about topics that were either irrelevant or not sufficiently covered. Two participants spoke of TAs struggling or opting not to attend due to transport constraints.

Table 15: Criticisms of TSA workshops

| **Cohort** | **2009** | | | **2010** | | | **2011** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Participants** | **John** | **Thandi** | **Lisa** | **Mark** | **Sizwe** | **Kelly** | **Sam** | **Fiona** | **Joy** | **Pam** | **Tim** |
| **Repetition of content** | | | | X | X | X | | | X | | |
| **Out of touch** | | | | | X | X | | X | | X | |
| **Irrelevant content** | | | | | X | X | | | | X | |
| **Transport constraints** | | | | X | | | | | X | | |

As far as mentors' views on this issue are concerned M2 and M3 noted that TAs' attendance at workshops is a challenge because they are either busy, tired or want to go home as soon as possible. The turnout is generally good but according to M3 those TAs who really need them tend not to show up. They defended the workshops as being tailor-made to suit the environment, circumstances and numbers of TAs in a particular area.

Mentor and participant responses revealed different perceptions of TSA workshops. This highlighted a need to address barriers to attendance and for better communication between mentor and TAs regarding the content and structure of workshops.

*TA Networks*

Alumni with other TAs is an integral part of TAs' experience. Nine participants (except Sizwe and Kelly) emphasised the importance of support and collaboration among TAs. This included collaboration on legacy projects and sharing information and resources related to school and accommodation. It also helped to have another TA in the same school or in the same area who they could regularly communicate with and easily access. John and Lisa from the first cohort were felt that their cohort had a closer bond because there were two to four TAs per school and the whole cohort was based in Gauteng, which facilitated interaction amongst TAs.

However, Sizwe and Kelly found it difficult to connect to other TAs during the programme. Sizwe felt other TAs were jealous and thought it was pompous to share

achievements with his legacy projects. Kelly did not get along with the TA she had been paired with as she felt that he received all TSA's attention and praise and decide to connect with a TA from another school.

All the mentors confirmed that TAs experienced the biggest gains when put together with other TAs to share frustrations and experiences, for example at TSA workshops. Therefore, over the years the mentors have increasingly sought to create a variety of platforms to facilitate interaction and exchange e.g. Whatsapp and Facebook groups.

*School Personnel*

Seven participants mentioned there were pockets of support that developed overtime within the school. Some staff members at school were initially curious about the TAs but eventually considered them part of the team and helped them transition into teaching. At Sizwe's school additional support came from sponsors who organised workshops, with strategies that were useful for their context. Four participants, when they first arrived at school felt some staff members were unaware, confused or suspicious of them.

Joy felt that too much was expected of TAs because a lot of responsibility was given to them too soon. For example, Joy taught English to all the grade 10s (about 400 students). She explained, "They treat you like a miracle worker who will part the seas and lead them to the promised land." Sam and Mark were allocated matric classes in their first year. Six participants were asked to teach additional subjects that they had not been inducted and recruited for. In five of the cases, TSA was aware of the situation but nothing could be done given the needs of the school. Three eventually managed to get out of teaching those additional subjects while one did not mind the additional subject.

Table 16: TA/Alumni experiences with school personnel

| **Cohort** | **2009** | | | **2010** | | | **2011** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Participants** | **John** | **Thandi** | **Lisa** | **Mark** | **Sizwe** | **Kelly** | **Sam** | **Fiona** | **Joy** | **Pam** | **Tim** |
| **Pockets of support** | X | | X | X | X | | | X | | X | X |
| **Teach more subjects** | | X | | | X | X | X | X | | X | |
| **Unaware/Confused/ Suspicious** | X | | X | X | | | | | | | X |

As far as mentors are concerned with this, they also confirmed that there were pockets of support by management and staff who were very helpful in taking some TAs under their wing. Schools and HoDs are not dismissive and do not view TAs as a threat, but as a welcome relief to alleviate workload. M1 mentioned;

> as an HoD, you have so many responsibilities and if somebody comes into your team that just works together with you and complies and they become such a relief for you and they make work easier. They can even impact the other members who are not so helpful. It becomes difficult to let go of somebody like that.

M1 acknowledged that Principals and SMTs did not always understand the partnership agreement and it did not work out as planned, especially in the case of delayed placements. M1emphasised the need to introduce the TAs and hand them over properly to the school to minimise the threats and misunderstandings. She mentioned that TSA is considering various options to ensure SMTs understand the partnership agreement by using, for example, a video message. M1 and M3 agreed that the school environment is either enabling or disenabling and M3 argued that TAs should not be placed in severely dysfunctional schools as it hampers what they are able to do. In these type environments TAs are simply seen as an extra person to fill empty posts. Conversely, schools which understood why the TAs were there adhered to the partnership agreement and enjoyed the benefits of additional teachers and resources that TSA provided.

*District Personnel and Workshops*

Tim, Lisa, Mark, Pam and Thandi found district workshops and visits helpful, particularly with regards to networking and information sharing. Fiona, Joy, Lisa mentioned being appraised by subject facilitators for their content knowledge, ICT skills and energy to the point of being asked to share resources with other schools, help facilitate district workshops or enter learners in competitions.

There were also negative experiences. John, Sizwe, Kelly, Sam, Joy and Fiona stated that workshops were often irrelevant and repetitive. According to Kelly and Sizwe facilitators at district workshops were often unprepared and read directly from their notes. John and Joy believed that visits to schools by subject facilitators were like witch hunting exercises, using teacher files as a barometer of good teaching.

According to Joy and Fiona, not enough professional development was provided by schools or districts despite various challenges and areas of growth being identified annually through the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS).

M2 and M3 spoke about hearing praise from district officials regarding TAs performance and professionalism, being interested to keep them at the schools where possible. For example, in one cohort the Free State Education Department gave their TAs permanent posts as long as they completed a PGCE.

### 4.7.4. Legacy projects

TAs/Alumni initiated and/or managed one or more legacy projects, often in environments where there were few or no extra-curricular activities. Legacy projects usually were influenced by the need they encountered at the school or the interest expressed by learners in certain activities. John, Thandi, Lisa, Pam and Joy collaborated closely with other TAs in their projects while also tapping into various networks. John and Joy tapped into their professional networks from previous work experience. John arranged field trips and onsite visits while Joy raised R11000 for an awards ceremony.

There was both support and resistance from school staff members to TAs initiating and running legacy projects. John, Pam, Fiona, Kelly and Lisa stated their legacy projects were blocked or delayed as a result of complaints, hostility or conflict with other staff members. For example, Pam's effort to revive a library was stopped because the SGB chairperson wanted to use it as a boardroom. Some staff members tried to control money Kelly raised for student activities. Lisa struggled to secure a classroom into science lab as another teacher felt it was his/her own personal space. John tried and failed to start a basketball team as other staff members diverted the allocated resources to their end of year functions. Fiona eventually stopped preparing and taking learners for the Maths Olympiad and Smart Young Minds competition after repeated promises of funds were not fulfilled after she was asked to take out money from her own pocket. Mark and Sizwe lamented the likely demise of their legacy projects because they could not find ways to sustain them before they left. The legacy projects started by each participant of this study are in Table 17.

Table 17: Legacy projects of TAs/Alumni

| Cohort | Participant | Legacy Project |
|---|---|---|
| 2009 | **John** | Newsletter<br>Head of Entertainment Committee |
| | **Thandi** | Debate |
| | **Lisa** | Science lab (used equipment lying idle)<br>Renovated school courtyard & daycare centre with students |
| 2010 | **Mark** | Newsletter<br>Revived library that was lying idle |
| | **Sizwe** | Newsletter<br>Student press team<br>Technogirl (corporate mentorship) |
| | **Kelly** | Recycling project<br>Free annual eye tests |
| 2011 | **Sam** | Debate<br>Science lab (used equipment lying idle) |
| | **Fiona** | Maths Olympiad<br>Smart Young Minds (Competition) |
| | **Joy** | Revived computer lab that was lying idle<br>Awards ceremony |
| | **Pam** | Debate<br>Reading club<br>Revived library that was lying idle |
| | **Tim** | Planted trees<br>Extra Maths lessons after school<br>Cleaning the school |

M1 and M2 found that legacy projects are another way to reach learners in class, particularly with discipline issues because the learners realise the teacher cares about them, and they start accepting his/her authority overtime. All the mentors agreed that legacy projects build the confidence of both learners and TAs, broadens their thinking as well as give them a sense of achievement.

### 4.7.5. Competencies acquired

By developing relationships with the school community and by initiating a legacy project, TAs gained and honed certain knowledge and skills. The most common competencies acquired are noted in Table 18 below in descending order of

frequencies. For eight participants improving their communication skills involved honing public speaking, resolving conflict and trying to build relationships with everyone from the caretaker to the administrators who could either facilitate or impede their progress. For six participants starting and running a legacy project, often with little to no resources at their disposal, taught them to be resourceful. Their resourcefulness was revealed in Table 17 where five participants started or revived libraries or science labs using equipment that was lying idle in storage. Four participants learnt better teaching strategies by experiencing the importance of repetition, reviewing basics, emphasising the language of teaching and learning and building learner confidence, trying to meet the learning gaps of learners. Four participants cited honing their organisational skills, improving time management and gaining confidence in their own abilities. Three participants spoke about learning to lead by rallying people around a common goal and clarifying concepts.

Table 18: Competencies acquired by participants during TSA programme

| **Cohort** | **2009** | | | **2010** | | | **2011** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Participants** | **John** | **Thandi** | **Lisa** | **Mark** | **Sizwe** | **Kelly** | **Sam** | **Fiona** | **Joy** | **Pam** | **Tim** |
| **Communication** | X | | X | | X | X | X | X | | X | X |
| **Resourcefulness** | | | X | X | X | | X | | X | X | |
| **Useful teaching strategies** | X | | X | | | | | X | | X | |
| **Organisational/Time management** | | | X | X | | | X | | X | | |
| **Rallying people** | X | | X | X | | | | | | | |

Equally important, participants showed initiative to keep projects running in an environment where there were few to no after school activities. For example, reviving the libraries and science labs required buy in from management for permission, as well as securing the time, space and equipment. Fiona reached out to subject facilitators for information and guidance in preparing and taking learners to competitions. Joy took it upon herself to raise the funds in her own time.

All the mentors agreed that it is rare to find TAs who leave the programme without having experienced personal and professional growth. As Mentors noted that those who did a PGCE were often those interested in continuing to teach. M1 and M3 stated that TAs who did PGCEs during the programme often became more confident as their studies related to on-going practice and according to M1, they struggled less with

learners' misbehaviour. M1 and M3 confirmed the importance of attaining a PGCE during the programme to allow TAs to be absorbed into permanent posts in their schools or other schools if they decided to continue teaching. M1 added that independent schools and other NGOs in education often seek out TSA alumni and those with PGCEs stand a better chance of being hired by independent schools.

### 4.7.6. Recognition

A few participants mentioned receiving some kind of acknowledgement or recognition from TSA for their performance and legacy projects. For four participants, this came in the form of TA presentations and speeches at various events, honourable mentions on social media and at events. Seven participants mentioned that their work was acknowledged by their schools with praise at assembly, small tokens of appreciation and being given more responsibilities. John mentioned that his name was submitted for National Teachers Awards and Sizwe received the Teacher of the Year Award in his school. Five participants mentioned their district acknowledged their efforts by: words of appreciation in person (John, Sam, Fiona); being asked by district officials to assist in facilitating workshops. (Lisa and Joy); being asked by a district official to share materials with other schools. (Lisa); and being asked by a district official to be a cluster leader, set papers and exams for the cluster. (Joy)

There were criticisms about the lack of recognition by TSA. Five participants that TSA was selective or had favourites in deciding who to praise, reward or give a platform to. Four participants witnessed many TAs legacy projects going unnoticed, especially if TAs were far, quiet or introverts. It is true, however, that Pam, Fiona and Tim did not feel the need to communicate the progress of their legacy projects so they did not blame TSA for not having paid much attention to them. Recognition or acknowledgement of participants' is represented in Table 19:

Table 19: Recognition received by participants

| Cohort | 2009 | | | 2010 | | | 2011 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Participants** | **John** | **Thandi** | **Lisa** | **Mark** | **Sizwe** | **Kelly** | **Sam** | **Fiona** | **Joy** | **Pam** | **Tim** |
| **By School** | | | X | X | | X | X | | X | X | X |
| **By District** | X | | X | | | | X | X | X | | |
| **TSA selective/favourites** | | | | X | X | X | X | X | | | |
| **By TSA** | | | X | X | X | | | | X | | |
| **Projects unnoticed** | | | | X | | | X | X | | X | |
| **Unsure/Unimportant** | | | | | | | | X | | X | X |

M1 mentioned that funding constraints affected the graduation function for exiting cohorts but TSA certificates are always handed out with legacy projects highlighted TAs were always thanked for their service. In more recent years, graduation happens during the training of incoming cohorts, which cuts down costs. M2 mentioned how TSA marketing department regularly recognised TAs achievements through its website, newsletter and social media.

### 4.8. Alumni career paths post-TSA

This section reveals the career paths of alumni after they completed the TSA programme up until 2016. It explains the factors that influenced their decisions, how they secured their current jobs and their thoughts and plans on the possibility of a future in education.

#### 4.8.1. Participants' career paths: Six still in schools

Table 19 shows that six participants remained teachers in schools: four in public schools and two in private schools. While Pam was originally absorbed by her first school, she, Thandi and Mark also tapped into the TSA network to get to their current positions. The TSA network includes referrals from fellow alumni, TSA staff or TSA partners, such as independent schools. Tim was absorbed by his first school and remains a teacher there in a permanent post. Both Fiona and Joy were recommended to schools by subject facilitators from the district for their current posts.

Table 19: Career path of participants still in school

| Participant | Participants' jobs post-TSA | How posts secured | Motivation (descending order of importance) | Extra-curricular Activities in current post | Future in education |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Thandi** | Limpopo: public school | TSA network | Passion for teaching | Debate team | Remain a teacher |
| **2009** | Gauteng: public school | TSA network | | Organised national conference for English educators | Pursue PhD: English |
| | Gauteng: private school & promotion | TSA network | | Mentored two students to get published in Fundza | Eventually a lecturer |
| **2. Mark** | Online Tutor | Personal network | Passion for teaching | Debate team | Remain a teacher |
| **2010** | Worked in print media | Personal network | Focus on students from low income areas. | Ashoka social entrepreneurship | Start a school |
| | Gauteng: private school & promotion | TSA network | | Assisting local orphanage | |
| | | | | Anti-bullying initiative | |
| **3. Fiona** | Gauteng: public school | Applied | Job security while pursuing further studies | None: does not feel supported by the school. | Remain a teacher |
| **2011** | Gauteng: public school | Recommended by subject facilitator | Passion for subject | | Pursue PhD: Maths |
| | | | | | Eventually a lecturer |
| **4. Joy** | Gauteng public school | Recommended by subject facilitator | Job security | Drama club | Leave teaching in few years |
| **2011** | | | Passion for teaching | Debate team | Corporate Social Investment in education |
| | | | Focus on students from low income areas | Public speaking team | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Now prompted to leave: heavy workload | Annual poetry competition | |
| 5. Pam | Gauteng public school | Absorbed by first school | Focus on students from low income areas | Debate team (felt exploited & stopped) | Leave teaching in few years |
| 2011 | Gauteng public school | TSA network | Passion for teaching | | Further studies: English |
| | | | Job security | | Work in publishing |
| | | | Now prompted to leave: limited professional growth & better remuneration | | |
| 6. Tim | Western Cape: public school | Absorbed by first school | Passion for teaching | Extra lessons | Remain a teacher for foreseeable future |
| 2011 | | | Focus on students from low income areas | | |

The most significant factor cited by all the participants as reason for staying in schools is a developing a passion for teaching (or the subject in Fiona's case). This was followed by four participants wanting to make a difference to learners from low-income areas and three participants needing job security in light of study and family commitments. Both Pam and Joy intend to leave the profession in the next few years, citing limited professional growth, unsatisfactory salary and heavy workload as motivators. Four participants continue to initiate and run extra-curricular activities in their current positions, while Fiona and Pam have stopped due to unsupportive school environments.

Four participants intend to remain teachers for the foreseeable future, with two of them planning to study further to eventually become lecturers and one aiming to start a school in the future. Both Pam and Joy do not see themselves in the classroom in the long-term but still feel strongly about continuing to positively impact learners in under resourced areas. Joy intends to do this through corporate social investment while Pam intends to continue making a difference in her personal capacity.

### 4.8.2. Participants' career paths: Five no longer in schools

Table 20 shows that two participants work for NGOs in education, two in corporate and one in a government department. Lisa, Sizwe and Sam knew from the onset they would not remain teachers. John wanted to remain a teacher but was offered better prospects at an NGO in education and benefitted from the TSA network in securing his next posts. Kelly was more driven by the need for a job than actually wanting to stay in the profession. She wanted to leave the classroom because of the conflict at her school, particularly with management and feeling forgotten by TSA. She applied for a job in the public health sector. The five participants were influenced by other positive extrinsic factors. Three by better professional growth opportunities and two by better remuneration, even if keen to continue in community service. Three participants see long-term involvement in education whether as consultants, social entrepreneurs or authors. For example, Lisa came into the programme passionate about community development and left feeling the same way. She is still involved at the moment in education through corporate social investment. Sam was undecided about long-term plans but was still interested in community service in his personal capacity.

Table 20: Career path of participants no longer in school

| Participant | Participants' jobs post-TSA | How posts secured | Motivation (descending order of importance) | Future in education |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1. John** | NGO Education | TSA Network | Wanted to remain a teacher but headhunted | Education consultant |
| **2009** | NGO Education | TSA Network | Professional growth | |
| | | | Better remuneration | |
| **2. Lisa 2009** | Corporate Social Investment (Education) | Applied | Interest in community development | Community service, not necessarily in education |
| **3. Sizwe** | National education service provider | Applied | Professional growth | Teacher training |
| **2010** | NGO Education | Personal network | Better remuneration | Author |
| **4. Kelly** | Government (Health sector) | Applied | Bad school experience: lost interest in teaching | Start a school |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2010** | | | Needed a job | Author |
| | | | Focus on students from low income areas | |
| **5. Sam** | Fulltime postgrad student | Started postgrad studies during TSA & continued after | Pursue further studies in the sciences | Undecided |
| **2011** | Corporate | TSA Network | Professional growth | |

Regarding mentors' perception on this they identified a number of factors that motivate TAs to continue teaching, the most common of which was the intrinsic huge fulfilment gained from learner interaction and performance. M1 and M2 added TAs' awareness of learners needs that compels them and the development of a passion for teaching despite difficult challenges. M3 noted positive extrinsic factors such as support provided during the programme, a coherent TSA concept, job security and valuing opportunities that can arise out of teaching.

Mentors confirmed that TAs who do not stay in the classroom knew they would not continue teaching from the onset but those who go into corporates and NGOs could still make a difference in education by being able to present the educational problems and possibilities grounded in experience. They all confirmed that, as the TSA's reputation grows, many alumni are sought after and job opportunities are passed on through TSA's database. Some are even employed by TSA itself. According to M1, salary can be an issue and more TAs in recent years have seen the value of doing a PGCE because without a PGCE, they cannot stay in schools.

### 4.9. Alumni recommendations for programme improvement

Seven participants suggested that TSA could make improvements in on-going support and the transition from TAs to alumni. Lisa, Pam, Tim and Sam had no comment on this topic. John, Thandi, Mark and Joy felt that given the TSA alumni vision, the organisation could play a more active role in assisting TAs transitioning from the programme to the next step in their careers. This could be facilitating their stay at their schools or when they look for alternative schools. Mark and Thandi suggested the possibility of reducing the number of TAs recruited to support those who wanted

to remain in the profession after the programme. Joy highlighted that TAs could move from one grade to another with the same group of students to be able to and better evaluate the impact of TAs inside and outside the classroom. Thandi felt TSA needs to keep more updated with alumni activities, as they are a good source of support and information for the organisation and incoming TAs.

On the TA on-going support, John, Mark and Sizwe suggested more consistency. John emphasised this for the first year especially to prevent TAs to develop parallel mandates by veering of the TSA mission in schools. Thandi and Mark recommended clearer guidelines and expectations for the mentor-TA relationship, while Fiona emphasised that more experts with experience in under resourced schools should be part of the on-going support team. Sizwe felt that an independent, objective team should decide which legacy projects get lauded to make recognition fair.

# CHAPTER 5

# DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

## 5.1. Introduction

Through a rigorous selection process, induction and on-going support of TAs and exposure to challenging contexts in public education, TSA aims to produce motivated leaders with a strong sense of social justice, who will have an enduring positive impact in the civic space, particularly in education. This is regardless of whether TSA Alumni choose to stay inside or outside of the classroom. The aim of the research was to explore the experiences of 11 TAs – from the first three cohorts of TSA – during their two-year commitment and beyond, by investigating how they have been impacted by the aims, rationale, strategies and experiences of TSA.

More specifically, the research sought to address the following questions:

1. What were the experiences of alumni during the programme with regard to the classroom, the school and on-going support provided by TSA?
2. To what extent do these alumni exercise leadership practices and agency during the programme?
3. What career pathways have these alumni taken after the programme and what factors influenced their decisions?

In response to these questions, this chapter focuses on an analysis of the research findings. Alumni's programme experiences and career pathways are analysed in light of TSA's goals as well as the problematic challenges of TSA's approach to teacher recruitment, induction and on-going support. This is followed by concluding comments regarding TSA recruitment, induction, on-going support, the retention of TAs and the potential contribution of TAs in education.

## 5.2. Data analysis

According to the motivation theory informing TSA, there can be significant, long-term gains in education by recruiting, inducting, mobilising and mentoring the "right" candidates into the teaching profession. The literature reviewed and our conceptual framework, which informs this study, point out that recruiting and retaining the

"right" candidate rests on identifying and developing positive intrinsic factors as well as minimising negative extrinsic factors. These separately and together influence job satisfaction and performance, motivation and commitment, as well as employees' attitudes and actions. This strategy can be translated as follows:

1. Mobilising and developing candidates who are strongly, intrinsically motivated to teach in line with the organisation's goals and values. These candidates, who are competent, are more likely to show leadership, practice agency and seek or create opportunities for self-actualisation no matter the circumstances.
2. Minimising the extrinsic factors of the work environment that cause job dissatisfaction and poor performance. These factors include the lack of enriching job content, minimal on-going development and support as well as poor working conditions.

The extent to which TSA successfully manages to recruit and develop the "right" candidate into the teaching profession is addressed in the following section. It is an analysis of the research findings examining the alumni's motivation to start teaching, stay or leave teaching. This is followed by a discussion of the impact of induction, on-going support and work conditions on alumni's experiences and their career pathways. The section ends with a discussion of the problematic challenges revealed regarding recruitment, induction, placement and on-going support. These are challenges that need to be addressed as they threaten what the programme intends to produce. They also expose unintended consequences of the strategies employed by the programme.

### 5.2.1. Research question 1: Alumni experiences of the programme

This section seeks to address the extent to which TSA successfully recruited and developed the "right" candidate through its three-pronged strategy – the "right" candidate being competent and showing strong intrinsic motivation to teach in line with organisational goals. This will be done through an analysis of the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to join, stay or leave teaching and the influence of TSA induction, on-going support and the work conditions at schools in alumni's decisions. Factors that affected their job satisfaction and performance during the programme will also be highlighted as motivators in alumni's decisions. The conceptual framework

developed earlier will serve as a guide when comparing trends in teacher motivation literature reviewed to trends in the responses of the alumni in this study.

**a) Motivation to start teaching**

The conceptual framework guiding this study claims that teacher motivation is positively influenced by rigorous and selective recruitment of the "right" candidate who should display strong intrinsic characteristics. According to Locke and Latham (2004, p. 388) "intrinsic factors that impel action" are competence, a genuine desire and passion to teach and make a difference in students' lives. Similarly, Hayes (1990) noted a love of children and a chance to express creativity while Abbott et al. (2001) mentioned the need for intellectual fulfilment. Guajardo (2011, p. 6) further noted self-efficacy and personal achievement as dynamic components of teacher motivation. Auguste et al. (2010) stressed that selecting the top third of graduates is a critical first step. Bennell & Akyeampong (2007, p.4) distinguished between a well-motivated and poorly motivated teacher by the level of effort exerted as well as the level of alignment of personal goals with the school's official goals.

The teacher motivation literature reviewed revealed that these strong intrinsic motivators were common in the US, UK and to a certain extent in South Africa. Abbott et al. (2001) found that for teacher trainees from four tertiary institutions in Northern Ireland intrinsic motivators were more of a driving force. In a survey conducted by the third largest teachers' union in the UK, teacher trainees and newly qualified teachers indicated they were primarily motivated by intrinsic factors (Marsh, 2015). In a study conducted at Harvard University Urban College, Weiner, (1993) found that, while education students from different socio-economic backgrounds shared similar intrinsic motivation, those from low-income communities placed a higher rating on extrinsic factors such as salary and job security. In South Africa Cosser & Sehloha's (2009, p. 59-60) 2006 tracer study of the aspirations and destinations of South African matriculants found that education students placed a higher rating on the mobility an education qualification can provide, possibly out of the classroom or the profession.

In its recruitment and selection process to find the "right" candidate, TSA placed a premium on carefully selecting candidates from the top academic achievers who are

strongly intrinsically motivated to teach, make a difference and display strong subject knowledge in Maths, Science or English. Additionally, TSA looked for leadership potential, agency and resilience in candidates given the challenges of teacher placements during the programme. The fact that the participants in this study made it through the rigorous selection process suggests that they possess the abovementioned qualities. Similar to the literature reviewed on teacher motivation, the findings from this study show that the most common intrinsic motivators were a desire to make a difference and to impart knowledge or teach. Two other common responses included the enjoyment of working with youth and a passion for the subject they majored in during university. TSA mentors highlighted the value of primary intrinsic motivators with two mentors adding that TAs are often driven by a sense of gratitude for their privileges and by a social justice concern for young people.

With regards to extrinsic motivators to teach, the literature reviewed suggested that, in the South African context, while the aforementioned intrinsic motivators were present in many teacher candidates, a higher rating was also placed on job security. Only three participants in this study mentioned finding a job and stability as one of the main reasons to apply to TSA. A strong extrinsic motivator with two participants expressly mentioned learner gaps in knowledge and their serious unpreparedness for tertiary education as part of the motivation to apply to TSA. Salaries and area of placements seemed to be of low significance to half of the participants. The mentors highlighted that many TAs bought into the TSA mandate as a unique opportunity to give back. One mentor noted the reality of unemployment and the need to acquire skills and experience as an external motivating factor.

In summary, while TSA recruits were driven by a mix of intrinsic and positive extrinsic factors, the strongest influencing factors to start teaching through TSA were intrinsic.

**b) Motivation to stay in teaching**

For nine of the 11 participants who completed the two-year TSA programme, the fulfilment of being part of learner development was the common strong internal motivator. Six participants were strongly intrinsically motivated by learners – strong student-teacher rapport, responsibility to students and love for the job. Six participants

also mentioned being driven by the organisation's targets to deliver results. While comprehensive information was not available in the TSA documents to the cohorts after 2013, records from 2009-2012 highlight TAs' overall commitment to the TSA programme, suggested in the low dropout rate of 9% during this period. The commitment displayed by many TAs explains the increased demand of TAs by provinces and schools, culminating in the 2016 MOU signed with the DBE to supply Maths and Science TAs, particularly in places where it is hard to attract teachers (*DBE partners with TSA*, 18 April 2016). So again, internal motivators were the main reasons for the TAs completing the programme. The TSA mentors added the alignment of TSA vision with TAs' motivation to give back, work with the youth and passion for the subject, especially once they were exposed to the needs in the schools in which they were placed.

Of the six participants who stayed in the profession post-TSA, five cited fulfilment from seeing students develop as the strongest intrinsic motivator, followed by four participants feeling a strong sense of responsibility towards learners. Among the six participants, the most common extrinsic motivator cited by five participants was job security.

The most commonly mentioned factors to contribute to job satisfaction and performance were (in descending order of frequencies): ensuring adequate support, recognition or appreciation, a conducive working environment, insufficient resources, better compensation and limited career development. The mentors echoed the importance of on-going support during the programme and how encouraged TAs were if they saw results and received positive feedback from the learners. As a result, they would be more likely to stay in the profession as they saw how they could make a difference.

The TAs interpretation of the TSA's mandate is important in their experience of the programme. How TSA communicates this mandate is also key to manage TAs' expectations and their understanding of their roles and the realities of their work environments. From the participants' and mentors' responses, the interpretation of TSA's mandate impacts job satisfaction. However, the following issues needed to be addressed by TSA: the term 'change agent' needed to be clarified and consistent;

better understanding of what was possible given the school contexts and limited timeframe to achieve results; better understanding of what it meant to be part of an alumni network; and dedicated, tangible support for TAs in transitioning out of the programme and for maintaining an alumni network.

One of the criticisms of Teach for America (TFA) is the high attrition rate of TFA recruits, 80% of whom left teaching within three years of exiting the programme (Heilig & Jez, p. 7). As a result, critics question how genuine their interest is in education. In South Africa, the highest attrition rates are primarily teachers in their first few years, in mid-career and then towards retirement age. Most of these teachers resign due to challenges related to a difficult work environment (OECD, 2008, p. 299-300, 302; Peltzer et. al., 2005, p. 5-6, 34, 51; SACE, 2010, p. 8, 18, 23). The six participants in this study who stayed in teaching had started exhibiting these trends in attrition to an extent. Four stated that they had long-term plans to remain in the profession – with two aiming to be lecturers in higher education. The other two expressed a desire to be involved in education in the long-term, but may leave the classroom for the same reason as other teachers in South Africa: challenges in the work environment.

According to Maslow (1943), people can experience different levels of motivation simultaneously, which seems to hold true for the four participants who have long-term plans in teaching. This is despite having various needs unmet, such as perceived low pay, limited resources, poor professional growth and inadequate support. Furthermore, these participants seemed to do relatively well as alumni, since two received a promotion, two were recommended for posts by subject facilitators, four sustained extra-curricular activities and one was nominated for the National Teacher Awards. Mentors confirmed having witnessed some TAs who, despite having substantial unmet needs, had more determination and motivation to perform than those who had more resources and opportunities in Gauteng. However, Maslow (1943) maintains that unmet needs can dominate thoughts, which seems to be what is happening with the other two participants who are still teaching but plan to leave soon due to dissatisfaction that Herzberg (1987) calls extrinsic hygiene factors related to the job environment.

In summary, the participants in this study who stayed in the profession post-TSA continued to be more intrinsically motivated, even though job security became increasingly important for more participants post-TSA. Both mentors and participants highlighted the significance of adequate support and positive feedback in job performance and satisfaction. Consistency and clarity on TA roles and expectations in the light of school realities were also key factors in participants' experience of the programme. TSA would do well to reflect and improve on these key elements of participants' experiences, given its short and long-term goals of alumni's completion of the programme with a continued commitment to education.

**c) Motivation to leave teaching**

As previously discussed, the struggle in the US, UK and Sub-Saharan Africa to attract and retain young teachers, especially teachers of Maths and Science and those in high needs areas. In these countries, the most common reasons for job dissatisfaction linked to leaving the profession come from difficult work conditions or negative extrinsic factors. An intrinsic factor, linked to job dissatisfaction and particularly felt in Sub-Saharan Africa, is generally low levels of teacher competence. While the attrition rate in South Africa is relatively low by international standards, it is worrying that there are more qualified teachers leaving than entering in or returning to the profession (Bernstein, 2015, p. 19). Of the five participants in this study who chose to leave the profession post-TSA, three knew from the onset that they would not continue teaching but they continued to be committed to education in the long-term. Three participants also cited limited professional growth opportunities as a major reason for leaving the profession and two cited better remuneration elsewhere.

In the teaching profession in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Africa, many teachers are generally considered dissatisfied, poorly motivated and uncommitted as manifested in poor job performance and seen in the high rates of absenteeism, tardiness, insufficient contact time and low student performance (as shown in international assessments) (Bennell & Akyeampong. 2007, p. 25, 47, 51-53; UIS, 2014, p. 12). This is highlighted in a South African survey where Peltzer, et al. (2005, p. 50) found that over half of the teachers surveyed indicated that they would quit if they could. A common demotivating, extrinsic factor is the low pay. In South Africa, this is

exacerbated by teacher salaries that plateau and a pay system that does not distinguish between teachers who perform well and those who do not (Armstrong, 2014, p. 1).

In the studies by Mwamwenda (2010) and Cosser and Sehloha (2009) suggest that teachers' motivation was influenced more by extrinsic factors such as job security and working conditions than by intrinsic factors such as perceived professional development opportunities. This highlights the importance of minimising negative extrinsic factors in the work environment and supports Maslow's (1943) contention that unmet needs can dominate one's thoughts. These studies also suggest that the negative extrinsic factors, which speak to more basic needs in Maslow's hierarchy, can be a stronger influencer on teacher motivation than self-fulfilment needs – helpful indicators in an organisation's consideration of what strategies should be prioritised in addressing employees' motivation, satisfaction and performance.

Though the literature links teacher dissatisfaction from negative extrinsic factors and incompetence in Sub-Saharan Africa to poor performance and attrition, this does not always have to be the case. Again, Maslow (1943) maintains different levels of motivation can be experienced simultaneously, thus emphasising the significance of rigorously and selectively recruiting candidates with strong intrinsic qualities, which drive them to perform well even in adverse circumstances. These are candidates who may be the exception when it comes to unmet basic needs dominating thoughts and negatively affecting performance. They may also be the exception with regards to self-fulfilment needs being a stronger influencer than basic unmet needs. This partly explains why TSA recruits would join TSA, knowing they would be working in difficult conditions. This suggests that the pay off for these type of candidates would be work experience and professional and personal development – in the short to medium-term. This is supported by Auguste et al. (2010), who found that, beyond selective recruitment, the world's top performing school systems focus on the rigorous training and on-going support to retain the "top third+" candidates.

However, this does not nullify the importance of addressing negative extrinsic factors, which affect job satisfaction and long-term commitment to the profession. From participants' responses, this pay off can and should come from addressing extrinsic factors by increasing pay, improving work condition and job security, which could

incentivise them to keep moving in line with the ideals of the profession and reduce their dissatisfaction. Still, given how much participants emphasised the importance of stimulating opportunities on the job, the pay off should also address intrinsic growth factors, which, according to Herzberg (1987), are linked to positive attitudes and behaviour and increase job satisfaction. These factors, such as recognition, growth, advancement and responsibility, positively influence employees' desire to act in line with the profession's ideals on their own accord.

**d) Impact of induction, on-going support and work conditions**

To ensure job performance and commitment, the goal-setting theory recognises the need for consistent feedback of progress towards goals and include rewards for performance or taking part in goal setting (Locke et al., 1981). According to ten and eleven participants respectively, support and recognition were the most significant factors that affected job performance and satisfaction. Therefore one could say that consistent feedback of progress towards goals, rewards and participation in shaping training have to be central to how support for teachers is provided. This section covers the extent to which these factors were present for the participants from the AIP to their experiences at schools.

Poorly motivated teachers in South Africa can also be said to exert little effort and not to operate in line with the school's goals or the profession's ideals. This underlines the importance of knowing an organisation's goals and the ideals of a profession, as identified by the goal-setting theory. According to Locke et al. (1981), guiding values, embedded in an organisation's goals, are as important needs when it comes to driving motivation and commitment. Therefore, it is important to stress the selective recruitment of those who share the same values and believe in their mission, as TSA strives to do. After which, values can continue to be shaped and reinforced, through the AIP and on-going support experienced by participants.

According to the majority of the participants, the AIP did not adequately prepare them for the harsh realities they encountered at schools as they initially felt overwhelmed. Similarly, critics of TFA question the preparedness of TFA recruits, many of whom they say leave the profession feeling frustrated and discouraged (Blumenreich & Rogers, 2016, p. 25; Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Heilig and Jez, 2014). The

commitment of TAs can be gauged by their attitude and actions, particularly in their challenging school contexts. When placed at schools after the AIP, the participants experienced considerable trials. Despite feeling down at times, ten participants ultimately felt pride, a sense of achievement and gained self-confidence. While four participants felt that TSA goals were unrealistic and farfetched, they still strove to make a positive impact at schools. This is evident in their responses to how they interpreted the organisation's mandate and the idea of being a "change agent". For example, six participants understood it to mean making a difference in the school community.

While almost half the participants complained about insufficient visits and communication from mentors, the majority of the participants were nevertheless satisfied with the relationships with their mentors. Support from school personnel largely hinged on the extent to which schools understood and adhered to the partnership agreement with TSA. An introduction and handover of TAs was also helpful in the roles of TAs but it did not always happen. Hence, most participants and mentors reported experiencing only pockets of support from school personnel. Most participants felt that they had benefitted from TSA workshops though they could have been more relevant to their experiences at schools and less repetitive. Similar to TSA workshops, for almost half of the participants, district workshops were useful for the purposes of networking and sharing information. But they were criticised for being often irrelevant and repetitive. Sekete's study on TSA backs these findings by finding that on-going support was generally positive and confidence building, but unfortunately inconsistent and insufficient.

Support and collaboration among TAs was a highlight for most participants as this alleviated personal and professional challenges and contributed to professional growth. Perhaps if teachers and TAs had a chance to play more active roles in shaping in-service training and the on-going support programme respectively, the latter would become more relevant and less repetitive.

The literature on teacher induction in chapter 2 highlighted the significance of a contextual, well designed and well supported induction programme with a wide-ranging professional development activities, mainly focusing on mentorship and

collaboration (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Maringe et al. 2015; Wong et al., 2005). The fact that most participants felt ill-prepared for the harsh realities at schools from the AIP and experienced pockets of school based support and inconsistent support from TSA points to issues in design, strategy and implementation of the core business of the programme and has implications on job satisfaction and performance. As previously stated, rewards can constitute an incentive for performance and commitment to goals (Locke et al., 1981). Considering the extent of the challenges participants faced over the two years in school, there was not enough positive, consistent feedback and recognition for their gains. Even when TSA did highlight certain gains by TAs, almost half of the participants felt that some were favourites while many TAs went unappreciated. This is an important finding given that the majority of participants considered recognition of their efforts as an important factor in job satisfaction and performance.

### 5.2.2. Research question 2: Leadership and agency during the programme

As one of its strategies, TSA aims to promote personal and professional growth by honing TAs' critical skills, especially leadership, through their experiences in the programme. According to Christie (2010, p. 696), leadership is not about position but can be exhibited and developed throughout the school by different stakeholders and role players. Furthermore, Blank and Jansen (2014) highlight the importance of taking initiative by both principals and teachers as an effective school practice.

All the participants launched and sustained at least one extra-curricular activity borne from needs they witnessed or interest from learners. Five participants did this in hostile environments where their activities were blocked or delayed. Again, almost half the participants found support from and collaboration with other TAs a critical factor in running their activities. Mentors emphasised the importance of extra-curricular activities as another way that both TAs and their learners could develop and have a sense of achievement. However, sustainability of these projects remains an issue, as was lamented by two participants, given that the projects would most likely stop if the TAs were not absorbed by schools and if they left after two years. This is especially true if there was resistance to the projects and efforts were not made by TA to get buy-in from other staff members.

The most commonly cited skills that were developed, according to most participants were associated with communication and resourcefulness. Seven participants obtained a PGCE, mostly during the programme with two mentors noting greater self-confidence and less problems with learners' misbehaviour as a result. Similarly, Darling-Hammond et al. (2005, p. 22) and Boyd et al. (2006) noted that TFA teachers improved after becoming certified in their second or third year. In the US, there are conflicting studies about the effectiveness of TFA teachers, as previously discussed, while there are no studies that have been conducted so far to assess the effectiveness of TAs from TSA.

### 5.2.3. Research question 3: Alumni career pathways and influences

Of the 155 TAs placed from 2009 to 2012, 89 continued teaching post-TSA, 13 transitioned into the civic space, eight into corporate and four were studying full-time (information unavailable for 27). This shows that at least 63% of the first four cohorts were retained as teachers. The programme seems to have had a significant impact on the trajectories and long-term goals of most of the participants. Nine participants now plan to be involved in education in the long-term whether inside or outside the classroom because of their experiences and development in the programme. Nine of the eleven participants in this study had never considered teaching before, with several having a low opinion of the profession. Yet eight initially wanted to remain teachers, with six actually changing their intended career paths to teaching post-TSA. Four of the six participants who continued teaching, teach in public schools and continued to launch activities at their schools. Additionally, two of the six participants have received promotions in their schools. Responses from these six participants highlighted intrinsic influencing factors from their time in the programme such as: personal development, cultivating a passion for education and raising awareness of the needs in education. Despite half of these six participants wanting to leave the classroom in the next few years, they appear committed to a long-term involvement in education.

Among the five who left immediately after the programme, three continue to work in education with two in NGOs and one in Corporate Social Investment. This is partly in line with the long-term vision of TSA, which is alumni commitment to making a difference in education inside or outside the classroom and at various levels. As one

mentor stated, “TSA get gems in the education department, even if making a difference to a small group of people. Small differences made are important because TSA takes a long-term view to making a significant impact in education in South Africa.”

Four participants were either unaware or unclear about the long-term vision of an alumni network positively impacting education. The rest of the participants understood the alumni vision to an extent and in theory, though two were sceptical of how it could work in practice. This was echoed by one of the mentors who pointed to limited funding as the main reason hindering alumni activities from getting off the ground. Apart from funding challenges, some participants also expressed feelings of disappointment, abandonment and betrayal in how TSA managed their transition to alumni, which could go some way to explaining why participants did not catch onto the alumni vision as much as the TSA mandate when they were TAs. The organisation seems to do a better job of communicating a clear vision to TAs and mobilising them at the beginning of the programme than it does the alumni vision as they transition out of the programme.

### 5.2.4. Problematic challenges: from recruitment to on-going support

Data analysis revealed several problematic challenges in the programme from recruitment right through to on-going support that need to be addressed by TSA, given some unintended consequences. Firstly, the programme initially attracted more candidates with teaching experience and teaching qualifications in the first cohort. This exposed the need for refining the recruitment and selection process, which they did and subsequently attracted younger graduates in later years.

Secondly, participants’ responses suggested a gap between the teacher preparation at the AIP and school realities during this time. Furthermore, both participants and mentors spoke of how tough it was to make a difference, both inside and outside the classroom, especially given the time constraints of a two-year programme and the prevailing environment in dysfunctional schools. This compromised what participants’ were able to achieve as well as the sustainability of their projects in the long-term. Given that it is generally accepted that teacher induction should ideally be at least two years or more, it is problematic to call the AIP “induction” when it only

lasts two weeks and did not adequately deal with practical, contextual issues faced at schools, as stated by several participants. Even if induction starts before school placement, the consensus is that it continues over an extended period of time for new teachers to become competent professionals (Maringe et al. 2015, p. 14; Wong, 2002, p. 52). Therefore, TSA might consider extending the programme and calling the entire two years or more an induction programme instead of just the two weeks of the AIP.

Thirdly, all the TAs recruited in the first three cohorts were able to get placed in schools. However, from 2012, securing placements became an issue, as six TAs were not placed after induction in 2012, 12 were not placed in 2014 and the same for 20 in 2015. Two mentors highlighted that, while the demand for TAs grew across the country, TA was at the mercy of Provincial Departments to secure posts, which sometimes came late or not at all. To complicate matters, sometimes departments only offered one post in an isolated area, which compromised on-going support of TAs. This puts into context why several participants mentioned inconsistent and insufficient support in some cases. Most TAs were placed in Gauteng, followed by Limpopo then Western Cape for the first three cohorts, which suggests a better working relationship with these provinces than the other provinces TSA expanded into in subsequent years.

Lastly, most participants also spoke of little to no support from school personnel at first, which suggests that these schools were unprepared to receive TAs given how these participants were treated once they arrived at schools. Initially, limited support from school personnel compromised the launch and operation of legacy projects. Another issue with providing support was that cohorts grew faster than TSA could provide sufficient, consistent on-going support for TAs, due to financial constraints. This was particularly felt by those placed in provinces outside of Gauteng. The relevance of TSA workshops was questioned, highlighting the demand for an on-going needs analysis, a better understanding of challenges faced by TAs and a participatory approach to planning and delivering workshops. The support TAs provided to each other was initially underestimated, but when it became clear to mentors how vital this aspect of on-going support was, they sought to facilitate and strengthen exchanges among alumni, using various communication platforms. Support was also a key factor in the transition out of the programme, from being a TA

to an alumnus. It was clear from both participant and mentor responses that not only did most participants have different views about their roles as alumni, but TSA also underestimated how much support TAs needed during this transitional period and its role in facilitating the establishment of an alumni network.

In summary, the conceptual framework was useful in analysing the findings given the influence of strong intrinsic factors in joining and staying in teaching and the strong influence of negative extrinsic factors in participants' experience, which were linked to reasons for job dissatisfaction and leaving the profession. Hence the significance of rigorous recruitment and selection of candidates into the profession. It was also useful in highlighting the need for improving positive extrinsic factors in participants' experience to increase job satisfaction, performance and long-term commitment.

### 5.3. Conclusion

This final section consists of concluding statements on how TSA positions itself in providing new resources into South Africa's education system, as well as its viability given its strengths and weaknesses and the environment within which it operates. Lastly, recommendations are given based on the findings of the study.

Wendy Kopp, founder of TFA aptly sums up the philosophy behind the programme:

> In the end, improving education and ensuring that all our kids have access to the opportunities they deserve is not going to be about one thing. There's no one solution. We can't solve the problem by giving every kid a computer or changing the curriculum. It's going to take doing a lot of things really well. The implication of that is that leadership is everything and it's going to require many, many people working at every level of the education system, at every level of our government, in civic spaces. People who are united to ensuring that all of our kids have access to an excellent education (*TEACH South Africa 5$^{th}$Yr Anniversary*, 2016).

The DBE recognises the need to expand the teacher education system and make it more accessible as part of a well-resourced countrywide network (DoE, 2011, p. 15). TFA and TSA position themselves as a part of the solution to improving educational outcomes, and not the solution.

Research on the world's top performing educational systems shows that teachers play a central role in improving educational opportunities for students, hence the importance of ensuring the recruitment, support, on-going training and retention of the "right" kind of candidates to teach (Auguste et al., 2010). The findings suggest that the strength of the TSA programme is primarily in its recruitment. TSA seems to be as aggressive and selective as a corporate would in finding the right candidates. What the programme does well is attract top-tier, young, intrinsically motivated graduates driven to make a difference in education and who normally would not consider teaching. Furthermore, these are traits that the programme aims to develop through on-going support provided. Beyond having a strong academic background, the participants in this study displayed some additional qualities sought by the TSA in its selection criteria, perceived as "predictors of teaching success" by the world's top performing education systems, namely:

- they demonstrated resilience, agency and some leadership in difficult circumstances.
- They sought and gained from the self-development opportunities available through the programme.

Not only does the programme attract quality, intrinsically motivated candidates, but it also impacted the trajectory of some TAs career paths, as a significant number of TAs decided to remain teachers despite a myriad of challenges experienced during the programme. At least 63% of TAs continued teaching from the 2009-2012 cohorts and 60% from 2016. This means that TSA has injected high-achieving, new, young teachers into the education system who teach critical subjects and most likely would have never considered teaching were it not for the programme. This, in a society where teaching has a low social status and the DBE struggles to attract top-tier candidates into the teaching profession. Therefore, TSA has a role to play as an additional source of high quality recruits; it should continue to be materially supported in this regard, as long as the organisation demonstrates good governance in its operations. This is particularly the case given the DBE's goal to draw top-achieving young, motivated and suitably trained candidates into teaching (DBE, 2011, p. 9; DoE, 2011, p.11). Additionally, most of the participants who left teaching still

envisioned positively impacting education in the long-term. One of the mentors, M3, aptly summed it up:

> Not many ambassadors are aware of the dilemma in education and its implication before training, but afterwards they get into it and really get an understanding of the need. When they finish their two years they're compelled by that need, so whether someone is watching you or not, you're driven by that love for your country, the children and making a difference. The programme wires you to think that way. They understand what they're dealing with and want to be the solution - lasting impact.

Recruiting the "right" candidates to the profession is not enough to improve quantity and quality of teachers. TFA is criticised for its high attrition rate after two years, but attrition is a problem throughout the profession, not just among TFA teachers: this speaks to an unconducive work environment affecting teachers in general. While organisations like TSA can work with the DBE and other stakeholders to play a key role in attracting and inducting top-tier candidates into the profession, it is primarily the DBE that can and should ensure a conducive environment to retain talent in the long-term. Especially given that the DBE signed an MOU with TSA in 2016 to recruit Maths and Science teachers in hard to find areas, in growing recognition of the calibre of TSA recruits (*DBE partners with TSA*, 18 April 2016). As summarised by a former District director of Personnel in McAllen, Texas, "We want corps members to stay more than two years, but Teach for America's job is to bring them here. Our job is to get them to want to stay here," (Tatet, 1999, p. 42). Donaldson & Johnson (2011, p. 51) echo this viewpoint by adding that schools which are hard to staff should turn into places where it is possible for new, top-tier, committed teachers to thrive and thus choose to remain. According to Heilig and Jez (2014, p. 7), Darling Hammond et al (2005, p. 22) and Boyd et al. (2006), both TFA teachers and non-TFA teachers show improvements with certification and experience, especially after the second year of teaching, which highlights the need to ensure retention of talent. Rigorous recruitment and induction and creating a conducive environment for retention of teachers would also have implications on policy as summed up by Darling-Hammond et al. (2005, p. 24):

> …analyses of urban districts that have resolved teacher shortages indicate that additional state and local policies are needed to create the labor market conditions required to hire and retain an adequate supply of prepared teachers. These typically include aggressive outreach and streamlined hiring systems, training subsidies and partnerships with local universities, and recruitment incentives, as well as competitive salaries, reasonable working conditions and supportive administrators.

Another strategy for retention of top-tier recruits, which was highlighted by the CDE, is to strategically develop and use them as future leaders at various levels in the education system (Bernstein, 2015, p. 16). This would potentially address the shrinking pool of qualified, experienced, mid-career teachers who could be incentivised to stay in the profession and education through improved prospects for career development.

Despite the fact that most participants did not grasp the full scope of their roles and the TSA mandate, ultimately they understood it as making a difference in schools, whether inside or outside the classroom. This was in alignment with the main motivating factor for participants to join the programme. Those who stayed in the classroom became largely intrinsically motivated by their commitment to the development of their learners. Furthermore, four of the six who remained teachers showed agency and leadership traits to an extent by continuing to identify needs and run activities post-TSA, without the accountability and support of the programme. For those who remained teachers, not only did the TAs who obtained PGCEs seem more confident, but they also had better prospects after the programme. So, TSA should continue to greatly encourage and inform TAs about the benefits of a PGCE from induction through to graduation. Furthermore, similar to TFA, perhaps in the future as the programme evolves, stronger links could be forged with tertiary institutions to improve TAs' subject content and pedagogical skills through short or long courses. This would also go some way in addressing concerns in the level of the programme's induction and support.

Networking, particularly among alumni and TSA partners, seemed to play a key role both during and after the programme as well as providing some measure of job satisfaction. This was mainly with regards to launching and sustaining activities, addressing personal and professional challenges and finding jobs. However, TSA is a still a young programme and it remains to be seen if alumni will become leaders who can influence and innovate at various levels of the education system, as envisioned by TSA and displayed by TFA alumni.

Data analysis revealed that key areas of concern, which compromise TAs' experiences and threaten the viability of the programme, are unsecure placements and the design and provision of on-going support. Firstly, how and where TAs are placed can either make for a smooth or tough transition as well as influence the extent to which TAs can perform at the schools. This suggests that TAs should not be placed in severely dysfunctional schools or be placed alone in schools, which are far from other TAs as this also has a detrimental effect on the access to on-going support. A strength of the programme was found in the various forms of personal and professional support participants gave each other both during and after the programme. Hence, it is imperative that TAs be placed in close proximity to each other, to facilitate the provision of on-going collaboration and support among TSA. Mentors recognised the value of exchanges among TAs and started facilitating interactions on different platforms. TSA should prioritise this aspect of on-going support.

Secondly, the design and provision of the induction and on-going support programme should continue evolving to ensure sufficient preparation and support of TAs, thus curbing the job dissatisfaction and discouragement of TAs from pursuing a career in education. Furthermore, consistency, relevance, recognition and clear expectations in the TA-mentor relationship were key issues that needed to be addressed in providing on-going support. Thus, securing sufficient funding should be a priority to the extent that the expansion and reach of the programme should not be at the expense of quality recruitment, selection, induction and on-going support.

Instead of rapidly expanding its reach across the country, perhaps focusing on strengthening and extending relationships with schools, districts and provinces that are already supportive could yield better results both inside and outside the classroom. For example, the presence of TAs can be extended, where possible, through their absorption as permanent staff members, provided their completion of a PGCE. Another way to build on these strong existing relationships is by facilitating pathways to other levels in education.

Ensuring sufficient resources for optimal operations is especially important given that TAs' work in unfavourable environments and TSA is at the mercy of provincial

education departments with varying agendas as political terms change, thereby affecting established relationships.

On the basis of what has been outlined in this analysis and conclusion on the findings of the study, the following needs to be addressed:

Recruitment

Candidates for TSA should not be recruited unless posts are assured by either the DBE or private funders.

Placement

TAs should not be placed in severely dysfunctional schools. TAs should not be placed at schools until SMT members are informed and clear about the partnership agreement and the role played by TAs.

On-going support

There should be focus on improving and maintaining relevance and consistency of the provision of on-going support to TAs. There should also be focus on facilitating networking and collaboration among TAs on key concerns (accommodation, school realities, legacy projects, life after TSA etc) from AIP to transition to becoming alumni. Various forms of recognition for achievements, both inside and outside the classroom, should be apportioned fairly and measured against objective criteria. School personnel ought to attend and support the TAs to retain them. Similar to TFA, explore closer working relationships with education departments in tertiary institutions around the country where TAs are placed.

Transition to alumni

TSA could play a more active role in TAs' transition out of the programme and in facilitating interaction and exchanges among alumni on various platforms, as TFA does at a local, regional and national level.

Funding

Prioritise securing sufficient funding and building on existing relationships with schools and provinces over rapid expansion of cohorts and geographical reach of the programme.

### 5.4. Recommendations for further study

Given the DBE's goal to attract top-achieving learners and graduates into teaching, there should be further investigation on what motivates such candidates to join and remain in the profession or not, in the South African context. It would be particularly important to further study what such candidates would need to motivate them to consider placements in the long-term in difficult schools and areas.

The concept of the TSA programme is compelling and recruits are touted as high quality teachers by TSA, the CDE and the DBE. However, more research needs to be conducted on the effectiveness and impact of TAs and alumni, which considers student outcomes both inside and outside the classroom over time. A study of career pathways of alumni from the first to the most recent cohort could also assess the extent to which TSA has evolved to produce more of what it intends to in the long-term.

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**Appendix A: 2016-2017 Alumni Snapshot**




*Alumni Survey and Snapshot*. (n.d.).

**Appendix B: Information Sheet – TEACH South Africa**

To: CEO, Dr. M. Diaho
Teach South Africa

My name is Lindiwe Ngwenya, a former TEACH Ambassador (2011-2012) and current Masters student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. My research project is on the experiences and career paths of some TEACH South Africa (TEACH SA) alumni. This involves individual interviews of 10 alumni from the 2009-2011 cohorts and up to three mentors from the programme.

I would like to request permission to access information on-site at the Teach South Africa offices concerning profiles of TEACH Ambassadors (TAs) from the 2009 – 2011 cohorts. Profile information needed would include subject taught, placement, TA progress reports by mentors and contact details. I also request access to any available information on alumni career paths post-TEACH SA. This information would not be taken off-site. It would be used strictly for the research report and identification and contacting of research participants. Additionally, I would like to request your consent in approaching up to three mentors/on-going support staff to interview about their experiences with and views of the 2009-2011 cohorts. If no longer working with the programme, I request access to their contact details. All efforts will be made to protect the anonymity of research participants.

The findings of this research could in a small way contribute to the body of knowledge concerning the way in which teacher recruitment, training and support take place. Alumni perspectives and experience should also be useful in building on Teach South Africa's strengths and addressing weaknesses.

All research data collected will be in my possession for the duration of the project and will be destroyed between three to five years after completion.

Please contact me for further information or clarification.
Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely
Lindiwe Ngwenya
Cell: Email:

**Appendix C: Information Sheet – Teach Alumni**

To: ……..

My name is Lindiwe Ngwenya, a former Teach Ambassador (2011-2012) and current Masters student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. My research project is on the experiences and career paths of some Teach South Africa alumni. This would involve individual interviews of 10 alumni from the 2009-2011 cohorts and up to three mentors (on-going support staff) from the programme.

I would like to invite you to participate in this study by allowing me to interview you about your experiences during the programme and beyond. Interviews will be up to an hour long. An interview schedule would be emailed to you the day before the interview takes place to help you recall and note experiences you would like to share during the interview. Efforts will be made to ensure the time and place of interviews are convenient for you. Interviews are voluntary throughout the process so you may withdraw at any time without penalty. You will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way as you will not be paid for this study and your anonymity will be protected. For example, your name, current job title, company/organisation name, specific geographical location will not be revealed. Rather, this type of information in the report will be unspecified e.g. Three participants remained teachers in the public sector, two are in private schools, two are in an NGO and three are in corporates.

The findings of this research could in a small way contribute to the body of knowledge concerning the way in which teacher recruitment, training and support take place. Alumni perspectives and experience should also be useful in building on Teach South Africa's strengths and addressing weaknesses.

All research data collected will be in my possession for the duration of the project and will be destroyed between three to five years after completion.

Please feel free to contact me for further information.
Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely
Lindiwe Ngwenya
Cell: Email:

**Appendix D: Information Sheet – Mentor**

To: ……..

My name is Lindiwe Ngwenya, a former Teach Ambassador (2011-2012) and current Masters student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. My research project is on the experiences and career paths of some Teach South Africa (Teach SA) alumni. This would involve individual interviews of 10 alumni from the 2009-2011 cohorts and up to three mentors (on-going support staff) from the programme.

I would like to invite you to participate in this study by allowing me to interview you about your experiences with and views of the 2009-2011 cohorts during the programme and beyond. An interview schedule will be emailed to you a week before the interview takes place to give you time to recall experiences and consult records concerning your mentorship of the 2009-2011 Teach Ambassadors. Interviews will be up to an hour long. Efforts will be made to ensure the time and place of interviews are convenient for you. Interviews are voluntary throughout the process so you may withdraw at any time without penalty. You will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way as you will not be paid for this study and your anonymity will be protected as far as possible. Though names shall not be revealed, please keep in mind the risk of identification particularly among programme participants and Teach SA staff/management given the small pool of mentors to draw from in Gauteng who were present from 2009-2011.

The findings of this research could in a small way contribute to the body of knowledge concerning the way in which teacher recruitment, training and support take place. Alumni perspectives and experience should also be useful in building on Teach South Africa's strengths and addressing weaknesses.

All research data collected will be in my possession for the duration of the project and will be destroyed between three to five years after completion.

Please contact me for further information or clarification.
Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely
Lindiwe Ngwenya
Cell: Email:

**Appendix E: Informed Consent form for Teach Alumni/Mentor**

**Title: The experiences and career paths of some Teach South Africa alumni**

I …….. (participant's full name) have read and understand the information sheet. **Yes/No**

I indicate my willingness to participate in the research project by:

1.1. Participating in an hour-long interview at a time and place negotiated with the researcher. **Yes/No**

1.2. Allowing my interview to be audio recorded strictly for the purposes of accurate data collection and transcription. **Yes/No**

If you answered **yes** to 1.1 please indicate your consent and understanding of the following:

- I understand that I may withdraw my participation in the interview at any time without any negative consequences. **Yes/No**
- I understand that I have the right to decline to answer any of the questions in an interview. **Yes/No**

1.3. If you answered yes to participating in an interview and/or having the interview audio recorded, please indicate your understanding of the following:

- I understand that my participation is voluntary and unpaid. **Yes/No**
- I understand that my responses will be used for research and academic purposes and may be published in journal articles, conferences and books. **Yes/No**
- I understand that my responses will be used anonymously at all times and I will not be identified in any research publications. **Yes/No**
- I understand that the data will be stored securely and will be destroyed within three to five years after completion of the research. **Yes/No**

_____ _____

Signature Date

**Appendix F: Interview Schedule – Teach Alumni (Original)**

**Title: The experiences and career paths of some Teach South Africa alumni**

**Section A: Motivation**

1. What did you study at university and why?
2. How did you initially intend to use your qualification after graduation?
3. Were you in your final year of studies or already working when you applied for Teach SA?
4. Why did you apply to become a Teach Ambassador?
   - Why not pursue teaching another way?
5. What do you believe Teach SA hopes Teach Ambassadors achieve by the end of their two-year commitment?
   - How did you feel about these goals during the programme?
   - What motivated you to pursue these goals during the programme?
   - How do you feel about these goals now?
6. What do you believe Teach SA envisions for alumni after the programme?
   - How do you feel about this vision?
7. How did you feel about being placed anywhere in the country, possibly not your first choice?
8. Where were you placed?
   - Was it your first choice? If not, where was your first choice and why?
9. How do you view the teacher's role in a class and the school as a whole?

**Section B: Experiences during the programme**

1. What subject did you teach?
   - Upon placement were you asked to teach an additional/different subject?
   - If yes, how was that experience?
2. How did you experience the on-going support and development of the programme?
   - What did you gain from it? What could have been done better?
   - Describe sources of support and development you may have experienced apart from mentors and workshops provided by the programme.
3. Did you do a PGCE during the programme and why/why not?
   - If yes, how did this benefit you during and after the programme?
4. Did you at any stage seriously consider and/or voice an intention to drop out? If yes, what led you to stay?

**Section C: Competences acquired and effect**

1. What project(s) did you launch or were you involved in during the programme?
   - How did that come about?
   - How did students, colleagues and other TAs respond?
   - How did this particular experience impact you?

2. How do you believe you impacted your students, colleagues and other TAs?
3. Describe some highlights/achievements during the programme.
    - How did they make you feel?
4. Describe some challenges encountered and how you handled them.
    - How did they make you feel?

**Section D: Experiences after the programme**

Teaching

1. How did you feel about continuing to teach post-Teach SA and why?
2. Where have you taught and in what capacity? (teacher, HOD etc.)
    - How did you find and secure the post(s)?
    - What motivated you to work in this place/these places?
3. What project(s) have you launched or been involved in at the new school(s)?
    - How did it/they come about?
    - What has been the response of students, colleagues and other TAs or alumni?
4. How do you believe you are impacting your students, colleagues and other TAs or alumni?
5. Describe some highlights/achievements after the programme.
    - How did they make you feel?
6. Describe some challenges encountered and how you have handled them.
    - How did they make you feel?
7. How long do you see yourself teaching and why?
8. Given no more Teach SA supports and accountability, how does one stay motivated and committed to teaching well?
9. Where do you see yourself in the short and long term?
    - What would you like to have achieved in your career?

Not Teaching

1. How did you feel about continuing to teach post-Teach SA and why?
2. Where have you worked since the end of the programme and in what capacity?
    - How did you find and secure the post(s)?
    - What motivated you to work in this place/these places?
3. To what extent and how do you believe Teach experience influenced your career path after the programme?
4. Do you see yourself continuing to be involved in education and if yes, how?
5. Where do you see yourself in the short and long term?
    - What would you like to have achieved in your career?

**Appendix G: Interview Schedule – Teach Alumni (Refined)**

**Title: The experiences and career paths of some Teach South Africa alumni**

**Section A: Motivation**

1. What did you study at university and why?
2. How did you initially intend to use your qualification after graduation?
3. Were you in your final year of studies or already working when you applied for Teach SA?
4. Why did you apply to become a Teach Ambassador?
   - Why not pursue teaching another way?
5. How did family and friends react to your decision to teach?
   - How did this make you feel?
6. What do you believe Teach SA hopes Teach Ambassadors achieve by the end of their two-year commitment?
   - How did you feel about these goals during the programme?
   - What motivated you to pursue these goals during the programme?
   - How do you feel about these goals now?
7. What do you believe Teach SA envisions for alumni after the programme?
   - How do you feel about this vision?
8. How did you feel about being placed anywhere in the country, possibly not your first choice?
9. Where were you placed?
   - Was it your first choice? If not, where was your first choice and why?
10. How do you view the teacher's role in a class and the school as a whole?
11. What do you consider rewards of the teaching profession?
12. What do you believe is essential for teachers to perform and experience job satisfaction?
13. What is your concept of a change agent?

**Section B: Experiences during the programme**

1. How prepared did you feel after initial training?
2. What subject did you teach?
   - Upon placement were you asked to teach an additional/different subject?
   - If yes, how was that experience?
3. How did you experience the on-going support and development of the programme?
   - What did you gain from it? What could have been done better?
   - Describe sources of support and development you may have experienced apart from mentors and workshops provided by the programme.
4. Did you do a PGCE during the programme and why/why not?
   - If yes, how did this benefit you during and after the programme?
5. Did you at any stage seriously consider and/or voice an intention to drop out? If yes, what led you to stay?

**Section C: Competences acquired and impact**

1. What project(s) did you launch or were you involved in during the programme?
   - How did that come about?
   - How did students, colleagues and other TAs respond?
   - How did this particular experience impact you?
2. How do you believe you impacted your students, colleagues and other TAs?
3. Describe some highlights and/or achievements during the programme.
   - How did they make you feel?
4. What skills and knowledge did you acquire by the end of the programme?
5. Were achievements recognised or acknowledged by TEACH SA? If yes, how? Same people picked all the time?
6. Were achievements recognised or acknowledged by the school or district? If yes, how?
7. Which of these challenges did you encounter (provide example for each):
   - Overcrowded classrooms
   - Heavy workload
   - Insufficient resources
   - Tough workplace conditions
   - Adverse teacher-state relations
   - Maladministration of salaries
   - Unaccountable staff & students
   - Ineffective school management
   - Inadequate induction and in-service training
8. Describe any other challenges encountered (not mentioned above).
9. How did you handle the aforementioned challenges?
   - How did they make you feel?

**Section D: Experiences after the programme**

<u>If still teaching</u>

1. How did you feel about continuing to teach post-Teach SA and why?
2. How significant were salary (including benefits) in your decision to remain a teacher?
3. How significant was the potential for career advancement and professional growth in your decision to remain a teacher?
4. How significant was job security in your decision to remain a teacher?
5. How did family and friends react to your decision to remain a teacher?
   - How did this make you feel?
6. Where have you taught and in what capacity? (teacher, HOD etc.)
   - How did you find and secure the post(s)?
   - What motivated you to work in this place/these places?
7. What project(s) have you launched or been involved in at the new school(s)?
   - How did it/they come about?

- What has been the response of students, colleagues and other TAs or alumni?

8. How do you believe you are impacting your students, colleagues and other TAs or alumni?
9. To what extent are you still connected to other alumni now? How?
10. Describe some highlights/achievements after the programme.
    - How did they make you feel?
11. Describe some challenges encountered and how you have handled them.
    - How did they make you feel?
12. How long do you see yourself teaching and why?
13. Given no more Teach SA supports and accountability, how does one stay motivated and committed to teaching well?
14. Where do you see yourself in the short and long term?
    - What would you like to have achieved in your career?

<u>If not teaching</u>

1. How did you feel about continuing to teach post-Teach SA and why?
2. How significant were salary (including benefits) in your decision to leave teaching?
3. How significant was the potential for career advancement and professional growth in your decision to leave teaching?
4. Where have you worked since the end of the programme and in what capacity?
    - How did you find and secure the post(s)?
    - What motivated you to work in this place/these places?
5. To what extent are you still connected to other alumni now? How?
6. To what extent and how do you believe Teach experience influenced your career path after the programme?
7. Do you see yourself continuing to be involved in education and if yes, how?
8. Where do you see yourself in the short and long term?
    - What would you like to have achieved in your career?

**Appendix H: Interview Schedule – Mentor/On-going support staff (Original)**

**Title: The experiences and career paths of some Teach South Africa alumni**

**Section A: Motivation**

1. Why is the application process for the programme so rigorous over the course of several months?
2. What qualities is the programme looking for in potential Teach Ambassadors (TAs)?
3. In your opinion and from your experience as a mentor, is there something else Teach South Africa should be paying attention to in its recruitment?
4. Describe any differences you may have observed in the TAs recruited from the 2009-2011 cohorts.
5. In your opinion, what do you think attracts applicants to the programme?

**Section B: Experiences during the programme**

1. How many Teach Ambassadors (TAs) did you mentor from the 2009, 2010 and 2011 cohorts?
   - In which areas?
2. Describe your role as a mentor/on-going support staff?
3. How does the training before the start of the programme benefit/equip TAs?
4. How often did you get to visit and observe TAs on site from the 2009-2011 cohorts?
5. Did you observe differences between those that did a PGCE and those that did not? If yes, what were those differences?
6. How do you believe the on-going support and development provided by the programme benefits the TAs? (Personal and Professional)
7. What were some challenges faced in providing support and training for the TAs from 2009-2011 cohorts?
8. What are some of the highlights/achievements that stood out to you from the TAs you mentored in the 2009-2011 cohorts?
9. What are some of the challenges faced by the TAs you mentored from the 2009-2011 cohorts?
10. How important is placing TAs in their first choice of area in relation to their achievements later on?
11. From your experience and observations what motivates TAs to complete their two-year commitment despite the challenges?
12. What were the some of the common reasons for a TA dropping out before completing the programme from the 2009-2011 cohorts?
    - How did the programme approach the situation when a TA indicated they would like to drop out?
13. What are some other sources of support and development available to TAs that are not directly provided by Teach SA?
    - To what extent do TAs make use of these opportunities and how?

14. In your opinion is there something else or something more Teach SA can do in the provision of on-going support and training?

**Section C: Competences acquired and effect**

1. How do you believe the projects launched by TAs impact them during the two-year commitment?
    - Are there any in particular that stand out to you from the 2009-2011 cohorts?
2. What is a successful TA in your opinion?
3. Overall, what do you believe TAs have gained by the end of the programme? (Personal and Professional)

**Section D: Experiences after the programme**

<u>Teaching</u>

1. Keeping the 2009-2011 cohorts in mind, why did some TAs continue to teach?
2. To what extent does Teach SA help alumni find teaching posts after the programme?
3. Given the absence of the programme's supports and accountability, what do you believe motivates them to stay in the profession several years post-Teach SA?
4. Describe some highlights/achievements post-Teach SA from the 2009-2011 cohorts?
5. What kind of impact do you think Teach SA hopes alumni still working in education have?
6. Give some examples of what you would consider successful alumni, who are still teaching and have benefitted from the programme.

<u>Not Teaching</u>

1. Keeping the 2009-2011 cohorts in mind, why did some leave the profession after the programme?
2. If not teaching, where have the alumni been working?
    - To what extent does Teach SA play a role in helping alumni find posts after the programme?
3. What does Teach SA envision for alumni who are no longer teaching?
4. Give some examples of what you would consider successful alumni, who are not teaching but are still involved in education somehow.

**Appendix I: Interview Schedule – Mentor/On-going support staff (Refined)**

**Title: The experiences and career paths of some Teach South Africa alumni**

**Section A: Motivation to apply**

6. What qualities is the programme looking for in potential Teach Ambassadors (TAs)?
7. In your opinion, what do you think attracts top young graduates and professionals to apply to the programme?
8. How does TEACH SA recruit and select TAs?
9. Describe any differences you may have observed in the TAs recruited from the 2009-2011 cohorts.
10. In your opinion, and from your experience as a mentor, is there something else Teach South Africa should be paying attention to in its recruitment and selection?

**Section B: Experiences and motivation during the programme**

15. How many Teach Ambassadors (TAs) did you mentor from the 2009, 2010 and 2011 cohorts?
    - In which areas?
16. Describe your role as a mentor/on-going support staff?
17. Describe any differences you may have observed in training at the academy of the 2009, 2010, 2011 cohorts.
18. How does the training before the start of the programme equip TAs?
19. How does on-going support for TAs take place during the programme regarding the following:
    - adjusting to the placement (living and working conditions)
    - visits on school sites
    - classroom observation
    - workshops
20. How did you see on-going support benefit TAs during this period? (personal and professional growth)
21. What were some of the main challenges faced in providing support and training for the TAs from 2009-2011 cohorts?
22. What are some of the highlights/achievements that stood out to you from the TAs you mentored in the 2009-2011 cohorts?
23. Were achievements by TAs recognised and acknowledged by TEACH SA? If yes, how?
24. What are some of the challenges faced by the TAs you mentored from the 2009-2011 cohorts with regard to the following:
    - adjusting to the placement (living and working conditions)
    - experience in the classroom
    - relationship with learners, colleagues and management

25. Did you observe differences between those that did a PGCE and those that did not? If yes, what were those differences?
26. How important is placing TAs in their first choice of area in relation to their performance in the classroom and with the legacy project?
27. From your experience and observations what motivated TAs during this period to complete their two-year commitment despite the challenges?
28. What were the some of the common reasons for a TA dropping out before completing the programme from the 2009-2011 cohorts?
    - How did the programme approach the situation when a TA indicated they would like to drop out?
29. What are some other sources of support and development available to TAs that are not directly provided by Teach SA?
    - To what extent do TAs make use of these opportunities and how?
30. TAs are described as change agents and leaders. What are they expected to change and how are they expected to lead?
31. In your opinion is there something else or something more Teach SA can do in the provision of on-going support and training?

**Section C: Competences acquired and effect**

32. How do you believe the projects launched by TAs impact them during the two-year commitment?
    - Are there any in particular that stand out to you from the 2009-2011 cohorts?
33. What is a successful TA in your opinion?
34. Overall, what do you believe TAs have gained by the end of the programme? (Personal and Professional)

**Section D: Experiences and motivation after the programme**

<u>Teaching</u>

35. Keeping the 2009-2011 cohorts in mind, why did some TAs continue to teach?
    - significance of salary and career progression and development in their decision.
36. To what extent does Teach SA help alumni find teaching posts after the programme?
37. Given the absence of the programme's supports and accountability, what do you believe motivates them to stay in the profession several years post-Teach SA?
38. Describe some highlights/achievements post-Teach SA from the 2009-2011 cohorts?
39. What kind of impact do you think Teach SA hopes alumni still working in education have?
40. From your observations, have alumni from this period shown leadership and impacted their schools? If yes, how?

Not Teaching

35. Keeping the 2009-2011 cohorts in mind, why did some leave the profession after the programme?
    - significance of salary and career progression and development in their decision.
36. To what extent does TEACH SA play a role in helping alumni find posts after the programme?
37. What does Teach SA envision for alumni who are no longer teaching?
38. From your observations, have alumni from this period shown leadership impact outside the classroom? If yes, how?