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**TEACHERS IN TRAINING: THEIR TRANSITION
EXPERIENCES AND THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF
PREPAREDNESS TO TEACH IN SOLOMON ISLANDS
SCHOOLS**

An investigation of the experiences and perceptions of seven former unqualified teachers of their transition, work experiences, teacher education, and their preparedness to teach in Solomon Islands schools as fully qualified professionals.



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the experiences of seven Solomon Islands teachers who completed the transition from being unqualified teachers (UQTs) to fully qualified professionals (FQPs) through the Teachers in Training Programme (TITP) at the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education (SICHE). It is unfortunate that in many developed and developing countries, such as the Solomon Islands, large numbers of UQTs are employed in schools. The School of Education (SOE) at SICHE, supported by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD), and with funding provided by the New Zealand government through NZAID, established the TITP to help address the issue of UQTs in Solomon Islands schools. The teachers at the centre of this study worked through this programme during 2007, 2008 and 2009, and took up teaching positions in schools as FQPs in 2010. The study presents the narratives of seven individuals who made this journey over the 2007 – 2010 period. These narratives are analysed to identify key features of the participants' transition and to evaluate the impact of the programme on those engaged in it.

Research data for this study were collected using qualitative research methods. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to investigate the perceptions of the seven participants of their transition experiences in their work in schools as UQTs; as participants in the TITP; and their perceptions of their teaching at the time of data collection as fully qualified professionals (FQPs). The seven participants were selected from four Community High Schools (CHSs); three schools were from an urban area and one was from a rural setting. The collection of data was done in the Solomon Islands in April and May, 2010. The thematic analysis approach was used to analyse the study data.

The data collected and analysed revealed some interesting findings. Of particular interest were the reasons the participants gave for becoming teachers; the professional and personal difficulties they had experienced; their perceptions of the form of support they received; the change of attitudes toward teaching and teaching practices that they experienced; the impact of the TITP in their

preparation to be FQPs; and their perceptions of their teaching now as FQPs.

The findings of the study suggest that UQTs need to be supported and nurtured with the provision of mentors as they make the journey to being teachers in schools. The study findings also suggest that schools need to be supported to accommodate UQTs; and that the TITP as a teacher education programme should be continued and extended until such time as the issue of UQTs in the Solomon Islands is properly addressed.

DEDICATION

To my late father

Ian Iabule Maelagi,

To my mother

Virah Sabe Maelagi,

With love, honour and respect.

Rekona soma & leana uka.

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There are several groups of people and individuals that I wish to acknowledge because without their help, guidance, wisdom, dedication, encouragement, understanding, patience and support, I would not have completed this study. Thus, I wish to acknowledge the following:

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- The Education Authorities of the Church of Melanesia, Roman Catholic Church, South Seas Evangelical Church, and the United Church for giving me permission to do my data collection in your schools.
- The principals of S01, S02, S03, and S04 Community High Schools for allowing your teachers to take part in this study, an indication of your support for this study.
- The seven teacher participants: one from S01 Community High School; three from S02 Community High School; two from S03 Community High

School, and one from S04 Community High School, all of whom were former UQTs. Thank you very much for your time and commitment. Without you, important data for this study could not possibly have been collected.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BSIP	British Solomon Islands Protectorate
CHS	Community High School
CITTI	Certification and In-service Teacher Training Institute
DP	Deputy Principal
EA	Education Authority
EFA	Education for All
F	Female
FQP	Fully Qualified Professional
GG	Governor General
HCC	Honiara City Council
HOD	Head of Department
M	Male
MEHRD	Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development
MP	Member of Parliament
NSS	National Secondary School
NZAID	New Zealand's International Aid and Development Agency
NZD	New Zealand Dollar
NZNDP	New Zealand Numeracy Development Project
P01	Participant number 1
P02	Participant number 2
P03	Participant number 3
P04	Participant number 4

P05	Participant number 5
P06	Participant number 6
P07	Participant number 7
PDP	Professional Development Programme
PSS	Provincial Secondary School
QT	Qualified Teacher
S01	School number 1
S02	School number 2
S03	School number 3
S04	School number 4
SBD	Solomon Islands Dollar
SICHE	Solomon Islands College of Higher Education
SIG	Solomon Islands Government
SINTA	Solomon Islands Teachers Association
SITC	Solomon Islands Teachers' College
SOE	School of Education
TITP	Teachers in Training Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UQTs	Unqualified Teachers
USP	University of the South Pacific
UTTDBE	Untrained Teachers Training Diploma in Basic Education
ZINTEC	Zimbabwe Integrated National Teacher Education Course

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Alternative route: An alternative teacher education programme apart from enrolling teacher trainees in universities and colleges now used by many countries globally where teachers are trained in school-based programmes.

Community High School: A community based high school in Solomon Islands, comprising of primary and secondary school divisions, enrolling students from Year 7 to 9. Such a school is usually built by a community and is supported by a Church or Provincial Education authority.

Education Act of 1978: The Act that administers the education system of the Solomon Islands established in 1978.

Education Authority: In the context of the Solomon Islands, an education authority is a local authority (provincial, church, a private education body or any person) approved by MEHRD to set up and run a school. It also recruits teachers and thus the employer.

Ethnic tension: The social unrest that took place in the Solomon Islands between two ethnic groups in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development: The government ministry responsible for education, training, and human resource development in the Solomon Islands.

National Secondary School: A secondary school run by the government or a church education authority in the Solomon Islands, enrolling students from Year 7 to 12, and some up to Year 13. Students enrol in such a school come from all over the country.

Pidgin: The language used as a lingua franca in the Solomon Islands.

Provincial Secondary School: A secondary school in a province run by a provincial government in the Solomon Islands, enrolling students from Year 7 to 11, and some up to Year 12. Students enrol in such a school mainly come from a particular province.

School administration: This is the term used to refer to those who are responsible to oversee, supervise or manage the daily operation of a school. It includes the principal, deputy principal, and other office staff.

School of Education: One of the schools of the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education responsible for teacher education.

Solomon Islands College of Higher Education: The only government owned tertiary institution in the Solomon Islands. It has a number of schools offering a range of programmes and courses.

Teachers in Training Programme: A teacher education programme initiative started in 2007 targeting unqualified teachers in the teaching service. It was a joint effort by the SOE of SICHE, MEHRD, the Faculty of Education of the University of Waikato, and funded by NZAID.

Wantok: In the context of the Solomon Islands, “wantok” refers to a relative or a member of a tribe or language group. It is a system of caring and supporting each other as members of a particular tribe or clan, acting “as a social protection system in the absence of a public social security system” (Solomon Islands-European Community Country Strategy Paper and National Indicative Programme, 2008 - 2013, p. 14).

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This introductory chapter sets the scene for this study, which focuses on the transition experiences and perceptions of seven teacher participants who were working in Solomon Islands schools as unqualified teachers (UQTs), and later participated in a teacher education programme and became fully qualified professionals (FQPs). This chapter briefly discusses the overall purpose and shape of the study; briefly defines the key terms; and describes the contextual background of the Solomon Islands where the study was conducted. The chapter concludes with a brief summary of the structure of the study.

1.2 Overview of the study

The study focused on former UQTs in the Solomon Islands primary and secondary school system. It investigated, firstly, their transition experiences and their perceptions of their work in schools while UQTs; it then examined their participation in the Teachers in Training Programme (TITP) at the School of Education (SOE) of the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education (SICHE); and finally considered their perceptions of their teaching as FQPs.

When interested people become UQTs, they occupy a job that they have very little previous knowledge about. As former secondary students or university graduates without any teaching qualifications, they might have only very imprecise ideas about what is involved in teaching. UQTs who move into teaching will quickly meet challenges in relation to the planning and delivery of class lessons, the effective delivery of the prescribed school curriculum, managing students and their learning and in the assessment of pupil achievement.

These challenges are sometimes substantial, but they can also motivate UQTs to become trained and qualified professionals by participating in formal teacher education programmes. Such programmes include those offered by a teacher education institution like the SOE of SICHE (Sanga, 1996) and university-based teacher education programmes at the University of the South Pacific (USP) (Burnett & Lingam, 2007; Sutherland & Thimmippa, 2001). The programme

examined in this study mirrors, to some extent, similar international programmes reviewed in chapter 2.

This study involved a sample of seven participants who were formally trained at the SOE of SICHE, and are now teaching in their respective primary and secondary schools in the Solomon Islands as FQPs. The participants were interviewed using the semi-structured interview method as it would give them more flexibility in answering the questions and because it allows “more valid response from the informant’s perception of reality” (Burns, 2000, p. 424).

1.3 Unqualified teachers

The term unqualified teachers is used in this study to refer to two particular types of teachers: teachers who do not have formal teaching qualifications, but have academic qualifications in their teaching subject areas for example, Science, from a recognised tertiary institution (Ololube, 2006); and those who have neither academic nor teaching qualifications. Generally, and in particular, in the Solomon Islands, the latter group can be graduates of secondary or high schools or individuals who have resigned from their previous jobs and gone into teaching. In both categories, UQTs have not been prepared to enter the classroom and therefore have no formal teaching qualifications (Nagy & Wang, 2007).

As noted earlier, this study’s focus was on former UQTs. In the case of the Solomon Islands, this group of teachers was recruited by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD) in 2007 to participate in the TITP, a formal and intensive teacher education programme at the SOE of SICHE. In 2009 they graduated with teaching certificates and are now qualified professionals teaching in primary and secondary schools in the country. They participated in the collection of data for this study as qualified professionals, but their experiences and perceptions of their transition from being UQTs, teacher education participants, and now qualified professionals were being sought. In this study, the term *participant* is used to refer to them as UQTs, TITP students, and as FQPs.

1.4 Importance of the study

It is hoped that this study will contribute to UQT policy development in the

Solomon Islands with a view to improving the quality of teachers at all school levels. It can make other important contributions to schools in Solomon Islands, for example, in the recruitment of UQTs and the support that should be given to them. Moreover, it will offer some insights to the MEHRD and the various Solomon Islands education authorities (EAs) in regard to the plight of UQTs as serving teachers in the schools. This will enable the MEHRD to develop and put in place proper selection policies when recruiting UQTs and help it to select the form of training which best suits individual UQTs.

This study will also introduce school administrators to the difficulties and experiences of UQTs. It will demonstrate that proper planning to embrace and enhance UQTs' presence in the schools is essential. Through this study, school principals, for example, will be reminded of the important roles that UQTs play in "establishing the school climate" (Amatea, 2009, p. 371). In this regard, it is the responsibility of the school administrations to develop professional development programmes (PDPs) and to appoint leading teachers as mentors to help and develop UQTs in their work and daily professional interactions. This will give them further opportunities as leaders to practise their leadership roles and capabilities. On that point, Wilmore (2007) emphasises that an important role of teachers as leaders is to share their "personal expertise" and experiences in "mentoring new educators" (p. 3).

1.5 Personal interest in the study

As a teacher for more than twenty years, I have always been convinced that students' learning and academic achievement in schools depend on teachers' quality, that is, their knowledge and skills in their various subject matters as well as in the field of teaching techniques and skills. This is vital if teachers are to be effective in facilitating the development of the knowledge and skills of pupils in the prescribed content of the school curriculum. *What would happen to the students if teachers were not qualified to teach? How would that affect the students, parents and the wider community as a whole? How would UQTs be trained?* I became interested in finding answers to such questions, given the fact that a large number of UQTs have been teaching in Solomon Islands schools for a very long time. In the absence of up to date statistics, *Table 1* and *Table 2* give an

appropriate picture of the number of qualified teachers in primary and secondary schools in the country. The remaining percentages are made up of UQTs.

Table 1. Total primary school teachers by gender, and percentage qualified, 2005

Province	Female	Male	Total	% Qualified
Central Islands	65	135	200	79.0 %
Choiseul	120	95	215	62.3%
Guadalcanal	252	403	655	64.6%
Honiara	228	113	341	75.1%
Isabel	68	113	181	92.8%
Makira and Ulawa	108	255	363	66.1%
Malaita	383	803	1186	59.8%
Rennell and Bellona	15	50	65	64.6%
Temotu	74	127	201	76.6%
Western	282	275	557	68.9%
Total	1595	2369	3964	67.3%

Source: *National Education Action Plan, 2007 – 2009*, MEHRD, Solomon Islands government.

Table 2. Numbers of secondary teachers by province, and percentage qualified, 2005

Province	Number of Secondary Teachers			% Qualified
	M	F	Total	
Central Islands	31	7	38	76.3%
Choiseul	15	11	26	61.5%
Guadalcanal	100	34	134	91%
Honiara	109	51	160	75.6%
Isabel	59	5	64	84.4%
Makira and Ulawa	51	18	69	76.8%
Malaita	188	58	246	77.6%
Rennell and Bellona	6	1	7	85.7%
Temotu	26	8	34	61.8%
Western	113	47	160	83.1%
Total	698	240	938	79.5%

Source: *National Education Action Plan, 2007 – 2009*, MEHRD, Solomon Islands government

As a trained and qualified professional, I know what is like to be qualified, not only in the art of teaching (Moore, 2005), but also in my teaching subject area, Social Science. For those teachers who are not trained, initially their work can be tough and challenging as they take part in the day to day teaching and supervision of pupils' learning. But being employed as UQTs is also a privilege and an opportunity to explore and experience some of what Moore (2009) describes as "teaching as a profession" (p. 1). Therefore, I wanted to find out what motivates UQTs to take up teaching as a career even though they know that there are difficulties and challenges to be encountered.

My interest in this subject increased when I was involved in the teaching of the first cohort of more than two hundred primary and secondary school UQTs from June 2007 to February 2009 at the SOE of SICHE, on a government teacher education programme commonly referred to as the 'Teachers in Training

Programme” (TITP). According to Koszler (2009), the TITP was developed to up-skill UQTs’ level of teaching in primary and secondary schools because the number of UQTs teaching in the Solomon Islands was a major concern. MEHRD and New Zealand’s International Aid and Development Agency (NZ Aid) believed that the issue of UQTs must be addressed to improve the quality of education given to pupils. The programme consisted of four six-week blocks and was offered during school term breaks. It was a joint effort by the SOE of SICHE, MEHRD, the University of Waikato’s Faculty of Education, and NZ Aid which funded the programme. This was not the first time NZ Aid has helped the education sector of the Solomon Islands. It has been working with the MEHRD for many years to improve school facilities like classroom buildings, learning materials, and increasing access to primary school (Koszler, 2009). Given the fact that more than two hundred former UQTs were trained through the TITP, I wanted to find out about their transition experiences as they moved from being unqualified class teachers to FQPs. Furthermore, the drive to undertake this study stemmed from my belief that better quality education and teaching should be provided to pupils.

The role of the Solomon Islands government (SIG) is to move the Solomon Islands forward through manpower building as set out in the *Teacher Education and Development Policy Statement* and the *National Education Action Plan, 2007 – 2009* of the MEHRD. For example, *the National Education Action Plan, 2007 – 2009* stipulated as one of its three main goals that the plan is “To provide access to community, technical, vocational, and tertiary education that will meet individual, regional and national needs for a knowledgeable, skilled, competent and complete people” (p. 13).

However, this cannot be achieved without providing improved education opportunities for its citizens. Higher quality education depends on well trained and qualified, competent teaching professionals, as one of the policies in the *Teacher Education and Development Policy Statement* states “To develop and implement strategies to ensure all teachers receive quality pre-service training in numbers sufficient to meet demand and that all existing teachers are well qualified and meet appropriate standards” (p. 10).

According to Danielson (2009), “the single most important factor under the control of the school influencing the degree of student learning is the quality of teaching” (p. 3). But how can the education system of a country such as the Solomon Islands help to achieve quality of teaching and better education quality for its pupils? I believe the answer to this question, as in other countries of the Pacific region and beyond, lies in the proper training of teachers to gain a better understanding of their subjects and to know and understand how to teach it in a way that ensures pupils learn effectively (Fox, 2005). This is what Fox (2005) refers to as knowing the “pedagogical content knowledge”, a “representation of subject matter knowledge, centred on classroom tasks and activities” (p. 259). This knowledge is part of the learning environment that will meet the expectations of the pupils, the parents, the government and other interested stakeholders in the various communities.

I have thus become increasingly interested in finding out what former UQTs involved in the TITP felt they had gained from their time in this programme, and indeed what benefits they experienced when they returned to classroom teaching.

1.6 Background information of the Solomon Islands

This section of the chapter discusses the background information of the Solomon Islands where the research was carried out.

1.6.1 System of education

The Solomon Islands education system is administered under the Education Act of 1978 together with a number of other Acts formulated after 1978 to oversee the operations of the education system (Malasa, 2007; *Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development Annual Report, 2005*). At present, the education system caters for the pupils’ basic education for up to seven years, starting from early childhood education to Year 6 in primary school. A nation-wide examination is held at the end of primary schooling to determine who goes on to Year 7 to commence secondary education. Another nation-wide examination is held towards the end of Year 9 and top students continue on to year 11. A small number of secondary schools offer years 12 and 13 programmes. This makes competition for spaces in the upper levels of secondary education intense. Those

who are fortunate enough continue to years 12 and 13 and have access to the possibility of a tertiary education. As Solomon Islands is a country of many different languages, English is the language of instruction in schools from Year 1 (Niroa, 2004; Singh, 2001) up to Year 13.

1.6.2 Social structures

The Solomon Islands is a small and poor developing country. It has a range of ethnic groups with the Melanesians being the dominant group (Phillips & Owen, 1994). The second largest group are the Polynesians, followed by Micronesians, and a small but increasing number of Asians and Europeans. Apart from that, other foreign nationals including Pacific islanders, Africans and others are also present in the country. The annual population growth rate of the country is 2.8%, higher than in most Asian and Pacific island countries (Furusawa & Ohtsuka, 2006). However, this has slowed to 2.3% according to the 2009 population census (*Solomon Star*, November 11, 2010). *Table 3* shows the population of the Solomon Islands by provinces.

Table 3. Solomon Islands population by provinces (2009 population census)

Province	Total Population
Malaita	137,596
Guadalcanal	93,613
Western	76,649
Honiara	64,602
Makira and Ulawa	40,419
Choiseul	26,379
Isabel	26,158
Central Islands	26,051
Temotu	21,362
Rennell and Bellona	3,041
Total	515,870

Source: Figures taken from *Solomon Star*, November 11, 2010 Issue.

A large part of the population (about 84%) are rural dwellers depending on subsistence agriculture and fishing, hunting and foraging of edible foods in the forests for survival (Furusawa & Ohtsuka, 2006; Gegeo & Gegeo, 2002). Solomon Islands is a Christian country. “More than 95% of the people are Christians” (Phillips & Owen, 1994, p. 81). Roman Catholic, Church of Melanesia (Anglican), Seventh Day Adventist, United Church and South Seas Evangelical Church are the major churches in the country, with a couple of other smaller and more Pentecostal denominations and a small number of Solomon Islanders and foreigners who are Muslims (McDougall, 2009).

There are a number of clinics in the provinces looking after the people’s health. Apart from that, there are hospitals situated in the provincial capitals and a referral hospital in the capital city, Honiara.

As noted already, the Solomon Islands is a country of diverse cultures. This is partly evident in the more than 80 different languages that are spoken in the country. In order for people of different ethnic backgrounds to communicate with each other, *Pidgin* and English are widely used. The *Pidgin* language was significant in this study as nearly all of the interviews were conducted in *Pidgin* and translated into English.

1.6.3 Economy

The mainstays of the Solomon Islands economy are forestry (Bennett, 2002), agriculture, including copra and palm oil (Holden & Holden, 2005) and commercial fishing, with a few small industries manufacturing consumable items to meet local demands. A very small amount of manufactured goods such as canned tuna is exported to overseas buyers. Three-quarters of the country’s labour force is involved in agriculture and fishing.

1.6.4 Politics

The Solomon Islands gained its political independence from Britain in 1978, ending about eighty years of British rule. The British government decided to make the islands a British protectorate in 1893 to put a halt to the brutal labour recruitment of islanders to work in the sugar cane plantations in Queensland, Australia and Fiji, but the islands were not officially known as the British

Solomon Islands Protectorate (BSIP) until in 1896 (Fito'o, 2009; Dureau, 1998). Charles Woodford was appointed as the first Resident Commissioner (Bennett, 2002; Richards, 2006) and was stationed at the Protectorate's headquarters at Tulagi in the central Solomon Islands (Dureau, 1998) to oversee the administration of the Protectorate. The administration of the country was completely in the hands of the British administrators for more than sixty years, when a legislative council was established in 1960 (Fito'o, 2009) to look after the affairs of the country.

The government of the Solomon Islands follows Britain's Westminster model with the Queen as Head of State represented in the country by the Governor General (GG). Fifty members of parliament (MPs) are elected by the people in the fifty constituencies every four years. The MPs then elect the GG and the Prime Minister. For administrative purposes, the country is divided into nine provinces, with the Honiara City Council (HCC) as the tenth administrative area. Each province is headed by a Premier, except the HCC which is headed by a Mayor. The provinces and the HCC elect members of the Provincial Assemblies and the City Council every four years.

1.6.5 Geography

The Solomon Islands is "located in the South-western Pacific" (Niroa, 2004, p. 228). Hviding (1998) refers to it as a "far-flung archipelago" because of the distances between islands and the remoteness of some of them (p. 257). (See *Figure 1* and *Figure 2*). It lies about 1, 900 kilometres northwest of Australia (Phillips, & Owen, 1994). It comprises six major mountainous and sparsely populated islands and numerous smaller ones scattered over an area of about 28, 369 square kilometres (Akao, 2008; Malasa, 2007; Ruqebatu, 2008). The major islands are Makira, Malaita, Guadalcanal, Isabel, New Georgia and Choiseul, which borders Papua New Guinea (LiPuma & Meltzoff, 1990; Malasa, 2007). Because the islands are scattered, transport and communication are often difficult and expensive (Maglen, 1990). Sea transport is the main form of transport for materials, goods, supplies and people from the urban centres to the islands and vice versa. The absence of proper wharves in some places can make loading and unloading of goods, supplies and people problematic. There is also a shortage of

sea-worthy ships and boats. Some remote islands and villages are visited by ships only monthly or even less often. There are a number of airfields around the country for domestic flights, and the international airport in the capital.

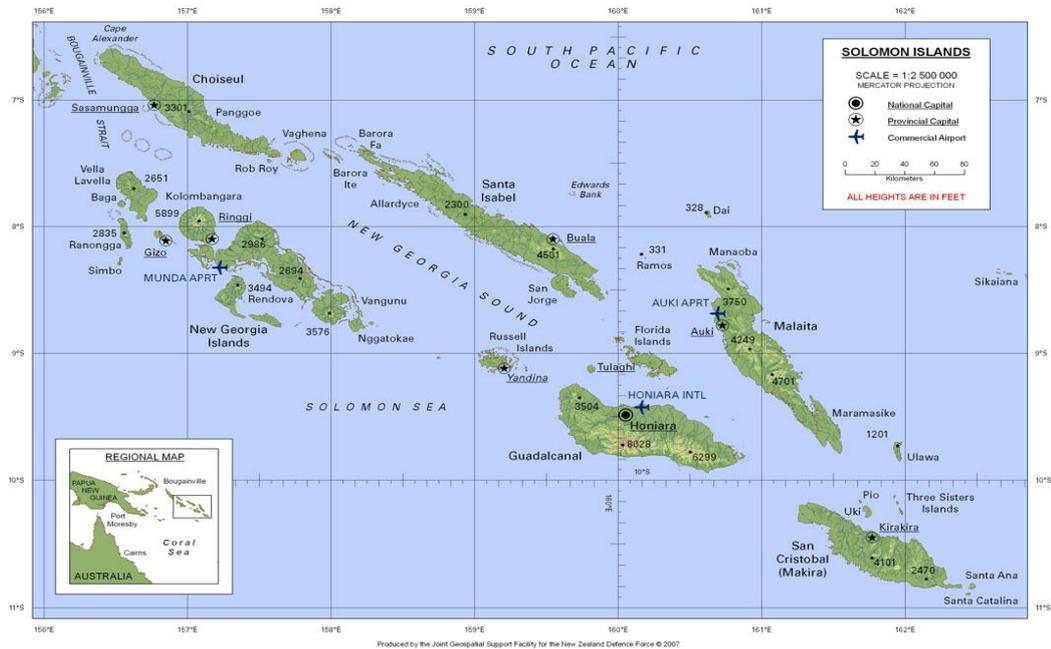


Figure 1. Map of Solomon Islands showing its location relative to Australia (See insert). Retrieved from <http://www.army.mil.nz>

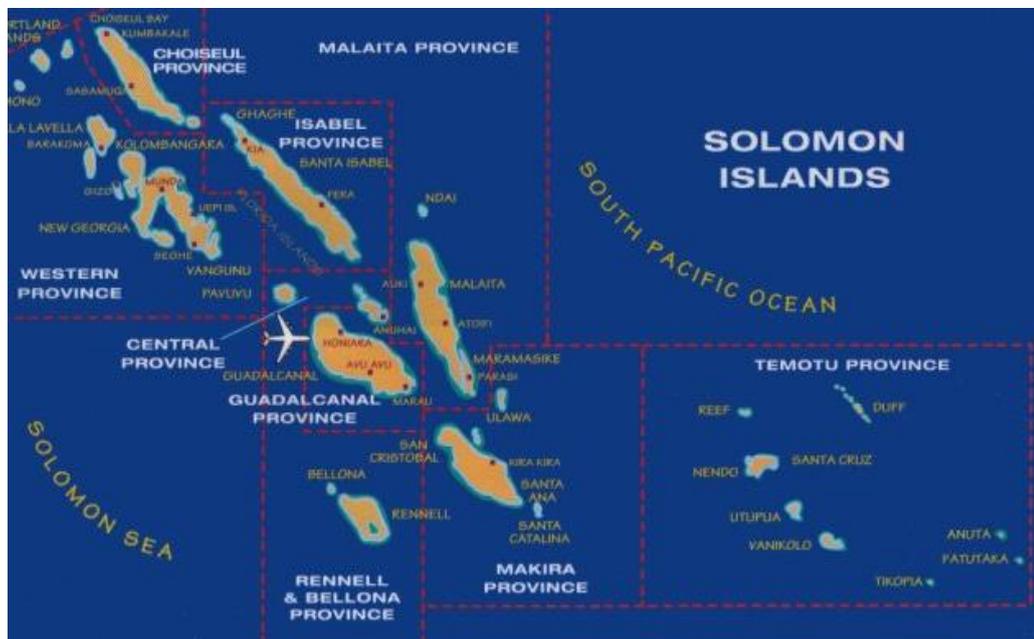


Figure 2. Map of Solomon Islands showing major islands and provincial boundaries. Retrieved from <http://www.janeresture.com>

1.6.6 Current situation in the Solomon Islands in relation to this study

At present the country is trying its best to recover socially, economically and politically from the ethnic tension and social unrest (Bennett, 2002; Kabutaulaka, 2001; Ki'i, 2001; Moore, 2008) between two rival ethnic groups that occurred between 1998 and 2003 (Kabutaulaka, 2004; McDougall, 2009) and which crippled the nation. The ethnic unrest displaced a substantial number of locals and foreigners. It also affected schools because many foreign teachers left the country, and the local teachers were repatriated to their home provinces and villages, seriously affecting the number of qualified teachers available, especially in Honiara and Guadalcanal. These circumstances make the question of UQTs and how to move them through to become FQPs more pressing than ever.

1.7 Structure of the Study

There are six major chapters in this study. The first chapter has introduced the purpose of and motivation for this study. It has raised and briefly explained the key issue of UQTs in the Solomon Islands education system. It has also provided background information on the Solomon Islands relevant to this study. In the second chapter, I examine the literature on teacher quality, school effectiveness, teacher efficacy, the rise of teacher shortage, and describe typical UQTs, supports for UQTs, and the training of teachers in the colleges and universities and other alternative ways used by governments and other education providers. Chapter Three presents the research design used in this study, the research methodology, and method and ethical issues that are considered in any research undertakings. Chapter Four presents the findings of this study, illustrating and demonstrating the recurring themes that have come to light. Chapter Five discusses the findings, taking into account what the literature and the findings have revealed. Lastly, in the sixth chapter a summary of the whole study is presented. It also highlights some limitations of the study, provides suggestions for future study, and some recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores aspects of the educational literature that are important for this study. A review of the literature is vital in any study because it serves the basic but logical purpose of showing “how new research relates to the field of study and complements what others have contributed” (Alamu, 2010, p. 16). This section of my thesis serves this purpose in this study. It provides a research context for the study and identifies important ideas, concepts and practices that frame the study. Given the nature of the subject of this thesis, it begins by examining literature relevant to the many issues surrounding the need for and nature of unqualified teachers (UQTs). This discussion includes consideration and discussion of important context concepts and fields such as school effectiveness, teacher effectiveness, teacher quality and the ways in which UQTs can be educated and developed to the point where they are able to play a full part in an education system. Literature that further develops the relevant aspects of education and the professional development of teachers and in particular within the Solomon Islands is also reviewed. Following a brief summary of the outcomes of the literature review, the chapter concludes by presenting key research questions that have emerged from chapters 1 and 2 and sets the direction for the rest of the study.

2.2 Unqualified teachers: A key education issue

A number of studies from both the developing and developed world have provided sufficient evidence that there is an acute shortage of qualified teachers (Kang & Hong, 2008; Kunje & Stuart, 1999; Lai & Grossman, 2008; Ng, 2003; Tarvin & Faraj, 1990; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, 2007). These shortages are either in specific subjects or specialised teaching areas like maths and science in secondary schools or generally to teach all subjects as in primary schools. The shortage of teachers has hindered the global aspiration of education for all (EFA) (Henley, 2005; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, 2007; Wedgwood, 2007). This is because many school pupils are denied the knowledge, skills and experiences

provided by trained and qualified teachers (Pandey, 2009). Serious teacher shortages mean governments and education providers often have no choice but to recruit and employ UQTs to fill in the gaps (Lai & Grossman, 2008). The Solomon Islands educational statistics reported that more than a third of teachers in primary and secondary schools were unqualified in 2005 (*National Education Action Plan 2007 – 2009*, Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, 2007). Turning to other developing countries, in the African nation of Mozambique, Mulkeen (2005) reported that in 2004 about 44% of the teachers were unqualified; and in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) in the Pacific, about 30% of the teachers in 1999 had no post-secondary qualifications, and therefore were unqualified (Ill, 2001).

This situation means the issue of UQTs and creating a sound pathway by which they can become trained and qualified needs to be examined.

According to Lai and Grossman (2008), “the need for a high quality teaching force” is often less debated because of the fact that “teachers should be among the most knowledgeable and skilled in a society” (p. 261). But these knowledgeable, skilled and qualified people are in short supply, as has been noted. The issue of teacher shortages has therefore passed over policy discussion tables for decades (Hanushek, Kain and Rivkin (2002). The shortage of teachers is not only a national problem for individual countries; it affects every school in the developing and the developed world. According to some studies, the problem of the shortage of trained and qualified teachers will continue to rise for several reasons:

- Rising population of school age children (Aqorau, 2008)
- Retirement of teachers (Lai & Grossman 2008; Thaman, 2007)
- Teachers leaving the teaching profession for another job (Thaman, 2007)
- Decline in people’s interest in teaching (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, 2007).

- “Conventional approaches to teacher education” being unable to meet the demand for quality teachers (Anamuah-Mensah, & Erinosh, 2007, p. 1)

2.3 Defining UQTs and Teachers in Training

It is important at this stage to examine how UQTs are defined. UQTs can be classified into two categories. First, there are those who have qualifications in their teaching subjects but no formal teaching qualifications (Nagy & Wang, 2007; Ololube, 2006); and second, those who complete secondary or college education and go straight into teaching (Kang & Hong, 2008; Kanu, 1996). In some countries, such as the Netherlands (Veenman, Gerrits & Kenter, 1999), the term Teachers in Training (TITs) is used. The argument here is that such teachers “may have had some informal or formal in-service training” (*Inception Report: Teachers in Training Programme (Certificate in Teaching Primary)*, MEHRD, 2010, p. 3).

However, in this study, such teachers are referred to as UQTs (Campbell, Ghali & Imhoof, 1975; O’Sullivan, 2001) in support to what Nagy and Wang (2007) suggest, that such teachers are not being prepared to teach before entering the classroom and therefore do not have the prerequisites of teaching such as an “understanding of pedagogy, instructional strategies, classroom management, and students’ social and academic developmental issues” to mention a few (p. 99). As a result their constructive movement “to the classroom depends on the extensive and efficient support provided by principals, mentors . . .” and teachers in the schools (Nagy & Wang, 2007, p. 99). However, Nagy and Wang note that if such help and support is inadequate, UQTs are often left to just do the best they can.

In this study I use the term “teachers in training” to refer to that period of time when the seven participants at the centre of this project were engaged in a formal teacher training programme, specifically the TITP at the SOE of SICHE. The nature of the programme is briefly described on pages 5, 6 and 34. At this time the participants were still UQTs, but they were in a properly constituted programme of teacher training.

2.4 Transition and work experiences of UQTs

The most important period in the life of a teacher is that time when the teacher first faces and is fully responsible for teaching

a class. This is the moment of beginning to teach. The teacher is now fully responsible for the management of a class, for its organisation and the conduct of interaction, and for the evaluation of pupils. The moment of beginning to teach is perilous and fraught with risks. It is a time of entering an unknown territory. It is the beginning of a major life-change. (McDonald & Elias, 1983, p. 5)

What McDonald and Elias (1983) say is true of beginning teachers teaching for the first time after graduating as trained teachers; and this situation can be even worse for UQTs as they have not been previously prepared to teach. For UQTs, teaching is truly an unknown territory and this will have a powerful effect on them. The movement of qualified teachers (QTs) and UQTs into a classroom is a transition that is part of the person's life. Some important events in that transition are highly visible while others pass by nearly unnoticed (Fowler, Schwartz & Atwater, 1991). For Pearsall (1998), transition is a "process or a period of changing from one state or condition to another" (p. 1969). It is a process of shifting from a state or condition that a person is familiar with to a new environment that he or she may know little or nothing about (Green, 1997), and in which certain changes and challenges will be met. For example, transitions that are milestones in people's lives are moving from childhood to adulthood and from college or university to the workplace. Changes in behaviour, attitude, education level, knowledge and skills are some of the things that are often noticeable and experienced. Cooke and Pang (1991) state that "Teachers have to face the reality of their new teaching situation, and for many beginners this requires considerable adjustment. The term 'reality shock' or 'transition shock' has been used in the literature to characterise this experience" (p. 93).

The transition and work experiences of UQTs are further evident when they shift from their former careers and take up teaching as a new career instead. According to Jorissen (2003), during the transition period UQTs can develop new "skills, knowledge, abilities, values, experiences, and motivations, career development becomes the creation of new aspects of the self" (p. 43). It means that there is a change in identity and the roles that UQTs play in schools. Barley (1989, cited in Jorissen, 2003) states that "As a role shift, a status passage invokes a change in how one presents oneself to others, a change in how one is treated by others, and

in many instances, a change in one's interactional partners “ (Jorissen, 2003, p. 43)

When a person changes his career to teaching or, having graduated from a university, college or secondary school, goes into teaching, indeed that person undergoes a role shift and experiences changes in the roles that he or she plays. The person undergoes some kind of transformation and extends the realisation of his or her possible self as a result of his or her interactions with others in a school as a social context (Leigh, 1999). In creating the features of the self as a teacher, a person becomes not only a teacher, but also a leader, administrator, manager, mentor, implementer of the prescribed curriculum, an assessor and evaluator of pupils' academic work and achievements (Hall & Mirvis, 1996, cited in Jorissen, 2003). For UQTs, these are duties that will form part of the uncharted waters of teaching.

2.4.2 UQTs in the Solomon Islands

The Solomon Islands government's goal is to “provide universal access to basic education for all children by 2015” (*National Education Action Plan 2007 – 2009*, MEHRD, 2007, p. 13). This is indeed an enormous goal and will need good planning and considerable resources to see it achieved. Human resource in the form of teachers is vital in this regard. To meet this goal trained and qualified teachers are needed in all school levels: early childhood education, primary, community high schools, provincial and national secondary schools in the Solomon Islands. However, according to statistics for 2005, only 18.3% of ECE teachers, 67.3% of primary school teachers, and 79.5% of secondary school teachers are qualified teachers (*National Education Action Plan 2007 – 2009*, MEHRD, 2007). Mathematically, the remaining percentages (ECE – 81.7%; Primary – 32.7%; and Secondary – 20.5%) must comprise UQTs employed by the government, church and provincial education authorities to patch the gap of teacher shortages. For the Solomon Islands as a developing country, these percentages are huge and can have an enormous effect on the pupils' education if the government does not quickly address the issue.

2.5 The rise of teacher shortages

The literature suggests that the dominant current teacher education models (university and college-based teacher training programmes) not only cannot produce a sufficient quantity of new teachers to meet the demand for qualified teachers (Anamuah-Mensah & Erinosh, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Kunje & Stuart, 1999; Lai & Grossman, 2008) but also have failed to produce potential teachers (Korthagen, 2001) that could teach efficiently and effectively in schools (Kunje, & Stuart, 1999). This has contributed to the “growing demand for teachers” (Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow, 2002, p. 287). As a result, a significant number of UQTs have been recruited as a convenient “shield” to meet the demand of teachers (Lai & Grossman, 2008; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, 2007). This has always been the case in the Solomon Islands since trained and qualified teachers are in short supply.

The shortage of trained teachers will be experienced in the schools in Solomon Islands for some time yet because of the high enrolment of students caused by the rapid population growth rate of the country (Aqorau, 2008), and people retiring or looking for new jobs (Thaman, 2007). However, I am aware that there are a large number of people wanting to become teachers as a very large number of applications are received each academic year at SICHE, but there is limited number of spaces available. The *Teacher Education and Development Policy* paper of the Solomon Islands government (SIG) stipulates that teachers in the country must be “well qualified, trained, committed and competent, and are able to motivate and encourage all students to learn” (p. 13). On paper this looks convincing, but in reality there is still a great need to have more trained and qualified teachers in the Solomon Islands schools because as Aqorau (2008) argues, UQTs can negatively affect the education quality in schools.

2.5.1 Current initiatives to address teacher shortages

The SOE of SICHE, the only government-owned teacher education institution in the Solomon Islands, is trying its best to train teachers of both quantity and quality for the whole nation. But it is not possible for it to meet the demand for trained and qualified teachers in schools for the reasons noted earlier. With

the help of the Faculty of Education of the University of Waikato, the SOE of SICHE has upgraded all its courses in all school levels (early childhood education, primary and secondary schools) to diploma and graduate diploma levels. In 2009, the first cohorts of students were enrolled in the new courses. According to the *School of Education Teacher Education Handbook* (2009) this means “that the quality of teacher education at the School of Education, SICHE has been significantly raised and is now comparable with the best practice teacher education elsewhere in the world” (p. 8). This is a step in the right direction so that teacher trainees or “student teachers” as Younger, Brindley, Pedder and Hagger (2004, p. 245) call them will be able to get the best teacher education to raise the quality of teachers and thus the standard of education in the Solomon Islands.

2.6 Motives for becoming teachers

According to Yong (1995), “Teaching attracts different people for different reasons” (p. 276). In the past, short-listed pre-service and UQT candidates who applied to the SOE of SICHE to undergo formal teacher education in early childhood education, primary and secondary schools in the Solomon Islands were interviewed by panels made up of SOE staff. One reason why they had to be interviewed was to determine a candidate’s suitability to become a teacher. One question that the panels normally asked the candidates was what had made them to be interested in becoming teachers (Phillips & Hatch, 2000). The candidates often gave very intriguing responses which were related to *intrinsic* motives: a goal, an opportunity to develop academically; *extrinsic* motives: inability to get and do other jobs, teaching as a secure job, being influenced by others such as parents; and *altruistic* motives: a desire to work and share knowledge with children (Yong, 1995). Apart from these, other studies have discovered other reasons that influence people’s decisions to become teachers. These include the need to work (Kunje & Stewart (1999); teaching being seen as a mission or calling (Joseph, 1986); people’s own experiences while they were students; having previous teaching experiences such as training adults in an industry; changing career (Younger et al., 2004); the quest to gain exhaustive knowledge of a subject by teaching it; “the love of children” and benefits related to the teaching profession such

as “short working hours, vacations, [and] immediate or definite employment” (Papanastasiou & Papanastasiou, 1997, p. 306). These reasons are enough to motivate pre-service teacher trainees and UQTs globally and in the Solomon Islands to become teachers.

However, the job is hard and can be stressful (Alexander, 2008). Stress in teachers can be caused by a variety of factors, such as lack of support from the school administration, unfavourable working conditions, being excluded from decision-making, excessive paperwork and having very limited resources for staff and student use (Hammond & Onikawa, 1997, as cited in Brown & Uehara, 1999). Nevertheless, people want to become teachers because of the intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic reasons mentioned above. It seems that many of these motives have an emotional basis. Teaching is a profession that can involve many emotions and where attitudes, values and beliefs play an important part (Hargreaves, 1998; Wilson, 2004).

2.7 Scaffolds for UQTs

At the start of a building, builders will erect a steel or concrete frame to support the construction while other parts are put in place to complete it. Later they will put up scaffolding where they can stand to work on the exterior of the building. In a similar manner, UQTs must be supported. UQTs entering a classroom to teach lack the knowledge and skills to teach effectively. These can be in the form of subject content knowledge (Bianco, 2006; Creemers, 1994; Elliott, 2005; Fox, 2005; Johnson et. al., 2009; Leaman, 2008; Kerry & Wilding, 2004; Rowan, Chiang & Miller, 1997; Sherin, 2002; Stones, 1992), and knowledge of teaching (Sherin, 2002; Shulman, 1987, cited in Killen, 2003, p. 37). For these basic but important reasons, it is absolutely necessary that appropriate help and support is provided for UQTs. Scaffolding to support UQTs can be in the form of induction, mentoring and professional development programmes (PDPs) that can be either internally or externally initiated and organised.

2.7.1 Induction and mentoring programmes for UQTs

Whether a person is a QT or an UQT and teaching for the first time, he or she needs guidance and support to be an effective teacher in the classroom.

(William, Niles, Magliaro and McLaughlin, 1989). These authors suggest that beginning to teach is not an easy task because the novice teacher has to play two important roles in a school: teaching and learning to teach. A beginning teacher has so much to learn. They go on to say that a beginning teacher needs considerable time, effort and resources to fulfil both roles effectively. Beginning teachers including UQTs do need guidance and support over time to assemble and develop the profession specific knowledge and skill to be successful and effective teachers. There are a number of strategies, practices and processes that can assist with this. School induction programmes are a very important one of these. Beginning teachers, including UQTs, need to be properly inducted. “Induction” is a term that is given to any course of action in terms of the process of supporting and training teachers who enter a classroom for the first time (Veenman, Gerrits & Kenter, 1999).

In addition, school principals should identify and appoint experienced teachers as mentors in the development of teachers. A mentor can be defined as an “experienced and trusted adviser” (*The New Zealand Oxford Mini Dictionary*, 2006, p. 329). As advisers, mentors are very valuable guides and can support and help teachers to develop professionally in the early stages of their teaching career (Veenman, Delaat & Staring, 1998). Wilson (2004) says that mentoring is aimed at “supporting teachers in realizing their full professional potential . . . [and is] . . . a very useful tool to help teachers articulate their teaching purposes and find the best ways of achieving them” (p. 130). If trained beginning teachers require mentors for their development, UQTs who have no formal teacher preparation and teaching qualifications will be in even greater need of mentors to guide them in their development as teachers.

However, mentoring itself is a complex professional task. Busher & Harris (2000) claim that in order for mentors to be effective, they need to establish a culture of collaboration with those that they are helping to guide. But these authors, citing the work of Moyles et al. (1998), point out that mentors need to have “good interpersonal skills and good communication skills as well as

sound knowledge of professional practice” (Moyles et al., 1998, as cited in Busher & Harris, 2000, p. 135).

2.7.2 Professional development programmes

Professional development programmes (PDPs) can be defined as the “ongoing learning opportunities available to teachers . . . through their schools” (*The Research Center: Professional Development*, 2009, p.1). On this note, Farina and Kotch (2008) assert that the basis of PDPs is the principle “that learning never ends, [and] helps us focus on instruction and push ourselves to do more and do it better” (p. 100). Such a statement highlights the fact that the planning and implementation of PDPs in schools is crucial to guide and support teachers such as UQTs to enable them “to be most effective in the classroom” (Busher & Harris, 2000, p. 138). To date, many organisations have used PDPs to improve the performance of their staff in the workplace. For example, Higgins and Parsons (2009) note that in New Zealand, “the design and implementation of the professional development model of the New Zealand Numeracy Development Project (NZNDP) has been successful in improving teachers’ knowledge and practice as well as student outcomes” (p. 231). If PDPs have been successful in New Zealand, they can be similarly effective in other countries such as the Solomon Islands.

2.8 Importance of teacher education, teacher efficacy and school and teacher effectiveness in relation to quality

In the literature, quality is a term that is difficult to define because it can mean different things to different people (Straker, 2009). In this chapter, quality is defined broadly to mean something characterised by being good, excellence and worthwhile (Harvey & Green, 1993; Reeves & Bednar, 1994; Zeithaml, 1988). In the field of education and teaching, the goodness, excellence, or worth of teachers is of crucial importance to students’ performance and achievements in schools. In line with this understanding, Morley and Rassool (1999) see the quality of education in schools “in terms of having a highly qualified teaching staff” (p. 20). Sallis (2002) contends that improving teacher quality is necessary “because of the important work and responsibilities that teachers carry” (Oduolowu, 2009, p. 330). Teacher quality is also seen as very important because quality teaching

enables the students to develop their talents and capabilities fully and makes learning relevant to students' lives. When this happens, students can use what they have learned in their lives in the community (Fetherston, 2007). Others such as Memon (2007) have noted that the quality of teachers is "a key factor in any education system" (p. 49), and therefore crucial to the levels of achievement attained by students. Again this is important for the future life chances of students. All of these points reinforce the need for schools to employ, and indeed to help develop trained and qualified teachers (Ogawa, Huston & Stine, 1999; Rockoff, 2004). Teacher quality is important to determine institutional academic accomplishments (Clotfelter, Ladd & Vigdor, 2006).

Other studies have been quite specific about the key dimensions of teacher quality. For example, Lubbers, Repetto, and McGorray (2008), citing Eggen's and Kauchak's (2006) work, stress that teachers have to have certain basic knowledge such as: "(a) knowledge of content, (b) pedagogical content knowledge . . .", if they are to be good, excellent and worthy in their teaching careers (p. 282). Grimmatt and MacKinnon (1992) express similar ideas when they list important knowledge as: "curriculum knowledge . . . knowledge of educational context, and knowledge of educational purposes, and values . . ." (p. 386). Thus, it is only proper that teachers are well prepared in these areas, whether they are studying in universities and colleges doing full-time courses and supervised teaching practicum or through other teacher preparation routes (Lai & Grossman, 2008). This is essential if an understanding of the knowledge and skills so important to being effective teacher are to be instilled.

Furthermore, knowing and understanding pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) should be an important part of teacher education, as being a teacher is more than just knowing how to teach. According to Segall (2004), it was in 1985 that Lee Shulman first brought PCK "into the discourse of teacher education" (p. 489). PCK provides a link between subject matter knowledge and knowing how to teach (Niess, 2005; Segall, 2004). In this regard, teachers should not only know their subject matter well, but also know how to "transform their understanding of it into instruction that their students can comprehend" (Fernandez-Balboa, & Stiehl,

1995, p. 293). PCK guides the teacher when performing that instruction in the classroom (Driel, Jong, & Verloop, 2002).

PCK includes knowledge such as the knowledge students bring to the classroom; teachers' knowledge of methods to assess students' understanding; the teaching approaches that teachers should use that will help students to link what they are currently learning to what they already know (Carpenter, Fennema, Peterson, & Carey, 1988); classroom management; and the school and students (Drie et al., 2002).

2.8.1 Teacher efficacy

The importance of quality and its relation to teacher quality and its importance with regards to teacher preparation have been discussed. What then is the importance of quality in relation to teacher efficacy and teacher effectiveness? To begin with, the term *efficacy* is simply to do with people's performances to achieve desired outcomes due to their own judgments and capabilities that will enable them to produce the desired outcomes (Onafowora, 2005). In this scenario, teachers are no different. Studies have shown that when teachers are prepared they have a sense of efficacy, the belief that they have the "ability . . . to perform a task or achieve a goal" (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008, p. 497) especially in bringing "about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning, even among those students who may be difficult or unmotivated" (Armor et al. 1976; Bandura, 1977, cited in Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001, p. 783). If prepared teachers may also have a feeling that they will stay on in the teaching profession (Darling-Hammond et al. 2002). Darling-Hammond et al. also say that teacher preparation gives teachers "confidence about their ability to achieve teaching goals" (p. 296). Garcia (2004) believes that a teacher who has a high level of efficacy or self-efficacy as first coined by Bandura (1977, cited in Dembo & Gibson, 1985) will be more confident in managing their classrooms and will feel able to use very challenging teaching strategies that will increase the pupils' "mastery of cognitive and affective goals" (p. 297). All these comments point to the fact that obtaining quality in teaching through teacher preparation is important.

However, Dembo and Gibson (1985) argue that the belief of teachers that they have the ability to cause change can be narrowed by issues that are external to

them such as the pupils' "home environment, family background, and parental influence" (p. 175). Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2007), note that teaching circumstances are also a factor. A teacher's sense of efficacy is high if the teacher feels that his or her teaching performance will be a success, and that will also influence any future performances, but it drops if the teacher feels that his or her performance is a failure; and that will also contribute to the failure of his or her performance in the future.

2.8.2 School effectiveness

Schools, too, need to be effective. One of the contributing factors to school effectiveness is teacher quality. Teacher quality and school effectiveness are often a priority of governments, private education providers, and the wider communities that surround the schools as learning communities (Groundwater-Smith, Ewing, & Cornu, 2006; Wilmore, 2007). Groups of people in the wider communities may work closely together to achieve goals in a collaborative manner (Wilmore, 2007). In that regard, school effectiveness is often the concern of everybody affected. In other words, all those who are concerned want to see that schools thrive and enhance learning and pupils' academic achievements.

What is school effectiveness then? To answer this question, it is essential to know what 'effectiveness' is. Putting it simply, *effectiveness* is the production of end results by means of an activity (White, 1997). White (1997) contends that *effectiveness* is a term that connotes doing something with the aid of something else that causes desired results at the end. To support his argument, White (1997) uses the image of a hammer as an example of a proper and an effective tool to drive a nail into wood. The result is something made of wood that needs nails being made or fixed. Similarly, by using the right kind of tools or approaches, teachers in schools can "provide children with possibilities for high achievement" (Creemers & Reezigt, 1997, p. 397).

More recently school effectiveness has been described as a "field of activity" (Goldstein & Woodhouse, 2000, p. 353) and is assumed by scholars to be a notion of many dimensions (Reynolds, 1985; Cheng, 1996, cited in Gaziel, 1998). White (1997) argues that although some aspects of school effectiveness may differ between researchers, he has outlined a list of factors that make schools effective.

These factors include “participatory leadership, shared vision and goals, teamwork, a learning environment, [and] high expectations” (pp. 31-32). I have chosen to concentrate on only three of the above factors because of my strong conviction that they can cause substantial pupils’ academic achievements (White, 1997). Firstly, White (1997) argues that an adequate learning environment is essential. It will include appropriate facilities and resources. These help to enhance what knowledge learners already have and to develop new knowledge and skills. Appropriate learning facilities would provide such environments as Price, Matzdorf, Smith & Agahi (2003) consider necessary for “knowledge creation” (p. 212); therefore the lack of them would have a negative impact on the quality of learning that students would receive, and thus such schools can be deemed not effective.

Secondly, the leadership in schools has a positive impact on the effectiveness of schools. The term *leadership* is a peculiar one to define (Wilmore, 2007) simply because of people’s differing views of it. In this study, it is used to mean the ability to influence others to organise the activities of an organisation (Yukl, 2002, cited in Pont, Nusche & Moorman, 2008), and to develop the organisation’s vision and purpose (Busher, 2006). Like Busher (2006), Rogers and Reynolds (2003) see leadership as “vision building”, but also add “motivating” and “inspiring” as essential characteristics of leaders (p. 61). Schools as learning communities (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2006; Wilmore, 2007) are organisations (Cheng, 1996) that “provide systematic, structured learning opportunities for young people” (Hayes, Mills, Christie & Lingard, 2006, p. 171). If schools are to be effective they need leaders who can inspire and influence others and have the vision and purpose to take the schools. Good and effective school leadership is essential to inspire, shape and motivate learners in order to achieve desired outcomes. To do that, school leaders have to work with others to deal with school issues (Hartley & Allison, 2003, cited in Rogers & Reynolds, 2003). In this case, the two foremost groups of people in schools that could enhance school effectiveness are teachers and principals. The two should work together to enable school effectiveness to be achieved. Teachers as leaders (Gunter, 2005; Wilmore, 2007) must work collaboratively with school principals in whatever they do as “equal partners” (Marks & Printy, 2003, p. 371). Teamwork between school

leaders engaging in what White (1997) refers to as “participatory leadership” must be part of the day to day school activities (p. 31).

Lastly, schools will not necessarily be effective if teachers are not qualified professionals. It is essential that teachers in schools be qualified and thus adequately equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to nurture the attitude and behaviour of students with regard to learning and academic achievements. In fact, the teachers and the schools themselves are agents of change (Farooq & Shahzadi, 2006; Fullan, 1993; Niroa, 2004).

2.8.3 Teacher effectiveness

As has been noted earlier, among others, effective schools depend on teachers and the qualities that they possess “as members of a noble profession” (Sullivan, 1998, p. 121). It has come to be generally agreed that teachers are fundamental parts of “the success of school education” (Cheng & Tsui, 1996, p. 7). In this regard, some studies on teacher effectiveness have concentrated on teachers’ performances in the classrooms on an individual basis (Cheng & Tsui, 1996). What is teacher effectiveness, then? According to Cheng and Tsui (1996), defining the term *teacher effectiveness* can be problematic because people may define it differently despite the many studies that have been conducted. However, citing Medley’s (1982) work, Cheng and Tsui refer to teacher effectiveness as the “results a teacher gets or . . . the amount of progress the pupils make toward some specified goals of education” (p. 8). Similarly, Emery, Kramer and Tian (2003) state “that measuring student achievement is the purest form of assessing teacher effectiveness” (p. 38).

However, if students are to be motivated, engaged, and achieving, teachers too need more detailed practical knowledge and skills too. Beginning teachers need to know how to plan and prepare lessons prior to going into the classroom to teach. The planning and preparation of a lesson is an important aspect of “pedagogical content knowledge” (PCK) - knowing how to teach (Shulman, 1987, cited in Killen, 2003, p. 37) as has been noted earlier. Lesson planning in particular is one of the tasks that consumes much of a teacher’s time (Johnson et al., 2009). Whitton, Sinclair, Barker, Nanlohy and Nosworthy (2004) note that knowing the importance of lesson planning is an indication that a teacher knows and

understands the curriculum, the pupils, and the teaching approaches. Moreover, there are other advantages that flow from planning a lesson properly. A quality lesson provides a professional working document for a given period of time (Whitton et al., 2004), which guides a teacher while teaching (Killen, 2003) and supports the teacher “to be more organized, more focused and, therefore more effective in the classroom” (Leaman, 2008, p. 38).

On the other hand, in order for a prepared lesson to be successfully implemented in the classroom and ensuring that teaching and pupils’ learning are successful (Whitton et al., 2004), it is important for a classroom to be managed properly as a learning environment (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2006; Latham, Blaise, Dole, Faulkner, Lang & Malone, 2006). On that note, Groundwater-Smith et al. (2006) add that classroom management is often an area that teachers teaching for the first time are most concerned about. This will definitely affect UQTs.

Managing a classroom as a learning environment is more than just disciplining the pupils so that they will listen and obey what the teacher tells them to do. Classroom management is running the “classroom in a way that keeps students interested and engaged all the time” (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2006, p. 16). Groundwater et al. (2006) add that managing of the interactions within the classroom is also central to good classroom management.

2.9 Access to teacher education

Although universities and colleges are suitable places for teacher education, some international research has shown that other alternative teacher education programmes such as “school-centred initial teacher training and employment-based teachers training for non-qualified serving teachers” have become increasingly important in this field (Lai & Grossman, 2008, p. 262). Such programmes have enabled more teachers to be trained on aspects of teaching to help lessen the acute shortage of teachers than would have been possible following the normal way of enrolling teacher trainees in universities and colleges (Lai & Grossman, 2008). The supporters of alternative teacher education routes claim that teachers going through such programmes are often of better quality because they have the advantage of teaching continuously in schools and therefore have greater practical experience than graduates from the

university and college based teacher education model (Lai & Grossman, 2008).

Lai and Grossman state that:

The proponents of alternative pathways consider that traditional teacher preparation systems are not providing enough quality teachers. Traditional programmes are perceived as too slow; inflexible in scheduling; and inaccessible to ‘talented’ graduates who have not studied education and mid-career professionals who wish to change their careers to become teachers. (p. 264)

However, Lai and Grossman (2008) point out that proponents of the traditional teacher education programmes have refuted these criticisms and accused the alternative routes of not preparing teachers adequately by neglecting to spend enough time exposing teacher education students to theory or exploring underlying attitudes, values and beliefs about teaching. Lai and Grossman (2008) further argue that there is a need for teachers to be better prepared to teach in more challenging school contexts such as in remote poorer rural schools in developing countries.

2.10 Education and the role of teachers

The literature states that the term education in its Latin origin is ‘educare’, which means to educate and bring up (Jackson & Tap, 1998); in the case of this study, a person or people. Bringing up and educating a person generally can take place in several places - at home, in the workplace, within peer groups, in ceremonies (Brint, 1998) and so on, by people such as parents, managers and religious leaders, to mention just a few. This approach suggests that education is mostly about gaining practical knowledge and relevant skills for the local context of family and community (Schoeman, 2010; Wadham, Pudsey & Boyd, 2007). However, others use human capital theory to note that the education of a nation’s citizens is also vital to the development of a nation’s human resources (Brint, 1998; Catherwood, 2007; Olaniyan & Okemalinde, 2008; Polachek, 2004; Robeyns, 2005). According to Olaniyan and Okemalinde (2008), an “educated population is a productive population” (p. 158). Similarly Sanders (2006), notes that a labour force that is “well-educated . . . is seen as vital to economic productivity and expansion” of a nation (p. 2). In this regard, it is important for a country to invest heavily in education (Olaniyan & Okemalinde, 2008) to develop

and expand the human resources capacity of the workforce so that economic growth can be advanced (Spring, 2008).

Others have pointed out that education is important in quite specific areas such as:

(a) The individual's own personal development. Personal development in terms of a person's own growth and progress cannot take place in isolation - someone has to make it happen through education. In most cases, people are brought up in schools by teachers as Jackson and Tap (1998) state, in "all aspects of personal development" (p. 435).

(b) Literacy. According to an issue of the *Solomon Star* (September 2, 2010), literacy provides people with worthwhile skills that enable them to play important roles in their communities and nation as a whole because of their abilities to read and write (Deverson, 2006; Wadham, Pudsey & Boyd, 2007). For example, people need to be literate to be able to read and follow instructions in the workplace. Students have to know how to read and write so that they can communicate well with their teachers and to read the materials that are provided in schools. Furthermore, people need to read labels of goods sold in shops so that they will be able to buy the right kind of goods.

(c) Democracy. Democracy as a system means the significant participation of people in making meaningful decisions on what "affect their lives"; "how and what to produce and consume"; and "where there is genuine negotiation of societal goals and meanings" (Edelsky, 1994, p. 252). In this sense, democracy has to be taught to people (Camps, 1997). This led Schoeman (2010) claim that education and democracy are linked therefore cannot be separated from each other.

(d) Poverty reduction. We have seen earlier that education "is about learning" to gain knowledge [and skills] (Schoeman, 2010, p. 135). A person with better knowledge and skills gained through better education delivered by trained and qualified teachers has a better chance of "escaping poverty" either through employment or utilising the knowledge and skills gained to earn money (Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2008, p. 161).

However, if schools are to be as effective as possible in providing these outcomes for the individual, communities and nations, pupils need to be under the supervision and guidance of specially trained and qualified teachers (Ayodele & Akindutire, 2009; Pudsey, Boyd & Wadham, 2007). Darling-Hammond (1998) states that recent studies have shown that the proficiency of a teacher is a vital aspect in determining the achievement of a student, independent of other aspects such as small class size and a quality physical and resourceful environment. In a study in the United States, Akiba, Le Tendre and Scribner (2007) state that the federal government sees the quality of teachers as important to the achievement of students, and because of that teachers quality is recognised and acknowledged by “policymakers, practitioners, and researchers to be the most powerful school-related influence on a child’s academic performance” (p. 369). Reeves (2004) makes the same claim pointing out that research has found that “teacher quality is the most important single influence on student learning” (p. 94). The statement made by Tatto, Nielson, Cummings, Kularatna and Dharmadasa (1993) perhaps gives a good summary of the importance and effect of educational quality of teachers by emphasising that:

Educational quality, as measured by pupil academic achievement, has shown to be largely a function of teacher quality. . . Teacher quality is, in turn, a function of the teacher’s mastery of subject matter, use of appropriate teaching skills, and positive professional attitudes. (pp. 41-42)

2.11 Teacher education in the Solomon Islands

According to Sanga (1996), the initial formal training of teachers to obtain a primary school teaching certificate started in 1978 when the then government established the Solomon Islands Teachers’ College (SITC). Initially SITC admitted Year 8 school leavers and UQTs with considerable teaching experiences and introduced the upgrading courses needed to enable them to enter the certificate programme. In 1984, the National Parliament passed an Act that established SICHE, and the SOE within it which replaced SITC. (SICHE also has several other schools). After some years in operation, the primary school teaching programme was reviewed by SICHE and resulted in the development and implementation of the Diploma in Secondary Teaching at the SOE (Sanga, 1996).

It took SICHE and SOE some time to upgrade the teacher training courses. In the initial stages of this process, certificate courses for both primary and secondary school UQTs were written by the SOE staff through a partnership programme between the SOE, SICHE and the Faculty of Education, University of Waikato, funded by NZAID. As part of this upgrading, a programme to train UQTs to become fully qualified professionals (FQPs) was developed. The programme began in 2007 when more than two hundred primary and secondary school UQTs were selected by the MEHRD and trained at the SOE in four blocks of six weeks intensive teacher training sessions during school vacations (January to February, and June to July). The programme was popularly referred to as the ‘Teachers in Training Programme’ (TITP). The students were enrolled in the programme in January 2007 and completed it in February 2009. Some of the teachers who graduated at the end of 2009 and are now teaching in schools in the Solomon Islands as FQPs comprise the participants in this study. The concept of educating UQTs using this alternative pathway was welcomed by teachers, schools, education authorities (EAs), the Solomon Islands Teachers Association (SINTA), and the SI government (SIG) as a way towards achieving the long-term goal to have all pupils in the country educated by qualified teachers.

2.12 Teacher education in other countries

The concept of using alternative pathways similar to the TITP in the Solomon Islands to train teachers is also employed in other countries. For example, in the African nation of Ghana, a distance education programme known “as the Untrained Teachers Training Diploma in Basic Education (UTTDBE)” was introduced and implemented to train teachers with the aim of improving “the personal and professional competences of the trainees in order to improve the quality of education at the basic school levels” (Kumasi, 1994, p. 1).

In the US according to Heine and Emesiochl (2007) the “No Child Left Behind Act of 2001” (p. 3) requires all teachers teaching in public schools to be of high quality. In order to meet the requirement of the Act, apart from training teachers in the traditional way of enrolling them in universities and colleges for a four year full-time degree course in education, a large number of UQTs have been trained in other professionally recognised programmes “such as Teach for

America”, so that more teachers are trained in an attempt to lessen the shortage of teachers due to the retirement of aging teachers and the fact that fewer people are interested to taking up teaching as a career than was formerly the case (Lai & Grossman, 2008, p 262).

2.13 Summary

The responsibility for educating students of school age lies largely with teachers. Teachers must therefore be well trained and qualified in order to enhance students’ acquisition of the knowledge and skills the society expects its citizens to possess.

Sadly in the world today in both developing and developed countries, governments and other education providers allow schools to employ UQTs as a buffer to meet the demand for teachers where there are shortages. These teachers are often not being well prepared, and thus lack knowledge and proficiency in important areas in teaching such as subject content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, instructional methods, and classroom management.

As a result, UQTs often face difficulties and many challenges as they struggle to acquire new knowledge and understanding, skills, values, and to do the work required of them. In both developing and developed countries, UQTs teaching in schools are still a problem for the governments and education providers to resolve. Some governments, however, have moved to lessen the problem by training teachers to meet government policies on the quality of all teachers in schools and to uphold the notion that education is the key to a nation’s development as well as trying to meet the notion of education for all (EFA). The programme at the centre of this study is one such example.

2.14 Research questions

In reviewing the outcomes of the literature and the nature of the goals for this study as outlined in the first two chapters, I settled on the following research questions to guide the rest of the study:

1. What are the participants’ perceptions of the knowledge and skills they gained during their time of working in a school(s) as unqualified teachers (UQTs)?

2. What are the participants' perceptions of the knowledge and skills gained through their participation in the Teachers in Training Programme (TITP)?
3. How have the participants' attitudes about teaching and their teaching practices changed as a result of their experiences in the TITP?
4. How effective has the TITP been in preparing the teachers to teach in Solomon Islands schools?

In the next chapter, Chapter 3, I focus on how I developed an appropriate research methodology for this study.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the design, methodology, and research method used in this study. The chapter begins by discussing definitions of research and research paradigms appropriate for this study. Issues of reliability and validity are also discussed. The design of this research project is then discussed with a particular focus on the methods of data collection and data analysis used. Finally ethical issues are considered and some limitations of the research are raised.

3.2 Defining research

Research is defined as an investigation that is done systematically, carefully, and needs patience to establish facts and get answers to a problem or issue in question (Burns, 2000; Charles, 1995), and it “needs to be purposeful” (Mutch, 2005, p. 14). Researchers carry out research because they want to satisfy their need to know about an issue or problem and to extend their knowledge on what they already know (Smith, 1999). Furthermore, research involves the collection of fresh data from essential or direct sources or using currently available information for a new intention or purpose (Best, 1981; Best & Kahn, 1993). This study is about the experiences and perceptions of seven teacher participants of their transition and teaching in schools as unqualified teachers (UQTs); their participation in formal teacher education; the changes in their attitudes toward teaching and teaching practices; and their perceptions of their preparedness to teach in Solomon Islands schools as fully qualified professionals (FQPs). Therefore this study is part of the field of educational research that involves the collection of fresh data from the participants as the appropriate sources.

3.2.1 Educational research

What is educational research? There are several answers that can be given to this question. An appropriate answer can be that it is a way of creating new knowledge or understandings, and/or extending existing ones for the advancement of teaching and learning (Bailey, 2001). In addition, educational research can be seen as a process that is “deeply entwined with feeling and with perceptual processes”

(McLaughlin, 2003, p. 69). In order to do this well, educational researchers follow specific steps to produce research that is meaningful and purposeful. Mutch (2005) and Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (2002) provide a good summary of the steps. They suggest that educational research involves:

- selecting a topic or problem to investigate
- designing the research
- considering the place of theory
- considering ethical issues
- planning and choosing research strategies and tools
- collecting data
- analysing the data
- writing up a research report.

As can be seen in these steps, doing educational research is an intricate exercise. The educational researcher has to consider other aspects as well, such as paradigms and assumptions that are important to relate theory to practice. Most importantly, a researcher has to respect the participants, thus “ethical principles, rules and conventions” must also be considered (Burns, 2000, p.17). The quality of educational research should also be considered. Any research that is carried out must have evidence of quality to be accepted as providing new knowledge or extending on what is already known. This study has followed the above steps as closely as possible to make sure that it is meaningful as well as purposeful so that it could have an impact on the development of UQTs and the education of pupils in the Solomon Islands.

In the world of education, it is important to create new knowledge to enhance understanding for the advancement of the existence of humanity and the need to create a sense of reality on the environment in which human beings live and interact (Ary et al., 2002). Ary et al. (2002) go on to say that “Educational research is the application of the scientific approach to the study of educational

problems. Educational research is the way in which people acquire dependable and useful information about the educative process” (p. 17). The recruitment of UQTs and the subsequent problems that they encounter and which are considered in this study can be viewed as educational problems. It is those problems that the processes employed in this study wanted to investigate and perhaps to address.

But perhaps a good definition to summarise what educational research is comes from Bassey (1999). He states that “Educational research is critical enquiry aimed at informing educational judgements and decisions in order to improve educational action” (p. 39). This definition exposes the significance of educational research to teaching and learning because it embraces the term *inform*. The definition also signifies that educational research is usually carried out by educationists (Bassey, 1999). I have been a teacher for more than twenty years, and thus consider myself an educationist who believes that the students’ performances and achievements depend very much on the quality of teachers. The outcomes of educational research are often welcomed by teachers. It is teachers that put new and existing knowledge into practice in their daily interactions with the students in their classrooms. It is hoped that the outcome of this study will enable continuing and experienced teachers in the schools to realise that they have the potential and are capable of helping and supporting UQTs as they venture into the unfamiliar realities of teaching.

3.3 Research methodology

Kaplan (1973, cited in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007,) “suggests that the aim of [research] methodology is to help us to understand . . . not the products of scientific inquiry but the process itself” (p. 47). In any research undertaking, it is of paramount importance that researchers should know about research methodologies and how they can be used in the world that they study (Simi, 2008). There are two major and contrasting approaches to educational research: qualitative and quantitative. Quantitative research is the kind of research approach in which the information collected can be analysed according to numbers (Best & Kahn, 1998; Sharp, 2009). The numbers can be taken from research methods such as surveys, experiments, and questionnaires (Malasa, 2007; Sharp, 2009). In contrast, qualitative research is the kind of research that systematically collects,

organises, and interprets a broader range of information (Malterud, 2001). Simi (2008) notes that the qualitative approach examines and describes the words and actions of participants in a way that represents the circumstances that the participants may go through, feel or face. As this study focused on a small sample and aimed to gain detailed cognitive and affective data from the participants, a qualitative approach was selected as the most appropriate, and is further discussed next.

3.3.1 Significance of qualitative research

Generally, in qualitative research, the researcher interacts with the participants so that accurate and comprehensive data are collected through research methods such as interviews, observations, and listening to what the subjects know, perceive and experience in the world that is studied (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Burrens, 2000; Liberty & Miller, 2003). In addition, Burton and Bartlett (2005) explain:

. . . that qualitative research focuses on natural settings and is ‘concerned with life as it is lived, things as they happen, situations as they are constructed in the day-to-day, moment-to-moment course of events’. The researcher seeks to understand and to portray the participants’ perceptions and understanding of the particular situation or event. (Burton & Bartlett, 2005, p. 22)

Burton and Bartlett (2005) further add that qualitative research is about people and what they personally know, perceive and understand of the environment they live in. In this study, the qualitative research approach was employed so that the researcher could interact with the participants, and listen to what they said so that first-hand information would be derived from their responses to what the researcher intended to get or find out about what the participants had perceived and experienced of the world that was being studied.

3.4 Research paradigms

Humans can be creative at times as well as being critical of the environment that surrounds them. Using that environment they may formulate theories after making observations and investigations “to make general statements about variables and the relationships among variables” (Ary et al., 2002, p. 12). Ary et al. (2002) are of the view that theories are important because they can be used by researchers to

“state and test hypotheses deduced from theories, which results in the development of new knowledge” (p. 13).

On the other hand, a particular view of the world that a person holds is a paradigm (Mutch, 2005; Patton, 1990/1980, cited in Cohen et al., 2007). Donmoyer (2006) sees a “paradigm as a world view, a general perspective, [and] a way of breaking down the complexity of the real world” (p. 35). Gorard and Taylor (2004) provide another view. They see a paradigm as a collection of recognised regulations within any discipline for the purposes of unravelling problems – where problems or puzzles are regarded as questions relating to science. Guba and Lincoln (1994) provide yet another definition in stating that:

A paradigm may be viewed as a set of basic beliefs (or metaphysics) that deals with ultimates or first principles. It represents a worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the ‘world’, the individuals place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its part . . . (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 107)

Citing Bassey’s (1990) work, Burton and Bartlett (2005) re-affirms that a paradigm “is a network of coherent ideas about the nature of the world and of the functions of researchers which, adhered to by a group of researchers, conditions the patterns of their thinking and underpins their research actions” (p. 18). Educational researchers seek new knowledge using a range of paradigms: *positivism* or *quantitative*; and *interpretive* or *qualitative* paradigms (Burton & Bartlett, 2005) that constructively contribute to research. This study adopted the *interpretive* or *qualitative* paradigm, which will be discussed next.

3.4.1 Interpretive paradigm

The characteristic of the *interpretive* or *qualitative* paradigm is the concern that it has for the individual (Cohen et al., 2007). Cohen et al. (2007) emphasise that:

. . . the context of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience. To retain the integrity of the phenomena being investigated, efforts are made to get inside the person and to understand from within. The imposition of external form and structure is resisted, since this reflects the viewpoint of the observer as opposed to that of the actor directly involved. (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 21)

The focus of an interpretive approach is to do with actions and with intentional behaviour that is associated with meaning (Cohen et al., 2007). They add that “Interpretive paradigms strive to understand and interpret the world in terms of its actors” (p. 16). Researchers using the interpretive or qualitative paradigm believe that the direct participation of human beings as actors in research is important in the collection of data. The interpretive approach uses data collection tools like interviews and observations (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006) in research. As a researcher, I believe in interacting directly with the participants as the actors to provide the data required. Because of that, this study adopted the interpretive or qualitative approach and used the semi-structured interview as the data collection tool to interview seven teacher participants who were former UQTs.

3.5 Research design

This section discusses the research design used in this study.

3.5.1 Data collection

Data are the “materials researchers collect from the world that they are studying, they are the particulars that form the basis of analysis” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 73). The method engaged to collect the data for this study in the Solomon Islands was the semi-structured interview and the *Pidgin* language was used. These were then transcribed and translated by the researcher into English. The transcribed scripts were given back to the participants to check for accuracy and to make sure that vital data were not left out during the translation process.

3.5.2 Sampling: The selection of participants

The main type of sampling used in qualitative and interpretive studies is purposive sampling (Kemper, Stringfield & Teddlie, 2003). Purposive sampling includes six main sampling techniques: convenience; extreme/deviant case; confirming/disconfirming cases; typical case; homogeneous case; stratified purposive and random purposive; and opportunistic and snowball sampling (Kemper et al., 2003).

This study used opportunistic and snowball sampling. This form of sampling involves using convenience factors and taking opportunities as they arise (Kemper et al., 2003): I was based in Honiara and Munda for my field work and did not

have enough funds to travel widely to find participants in other provinces. So I approached schools in Honiara and Munda and as events turned out this resulted in finding seven suitable participants as explain below.

Participants were selected on the basis of their status as former UQTs and having participated in the TITP at the SOE of SICHE between 2007 and 2009. A sample of seven participants was selected to represent the voices of the more than two hundred UQTs who participated in the TITP. In Honiara, six teachers were interviewed at the following schools: S02, S03, and S04. In Munda, a teacher was interviewed at S01 School. The decision to interview the seven former UQTs came about because they had experienced what it was like to be working in schools as teachers with no prior formal teaching qualifications; they participated in a teacher education programme, the TITP; and were now teaching in schools as FQPs. They were in an excellent position to describe their own experiences and perceptions of their transition to becoming trained and qualified school teachers in the Solomon Islands.

3.5.3 Contacting the participants

A list of schools in Honiara and Munda was prepared. From the list, S02, S03 and S04 were selected in Honiara and S01 in Munda. On my arrival in the Solomon Islands, the principals of these schools were visited to find out if there were former UQTs teaching in their schools. I believe that doing it that way was a cheap and better way of contacting and meeting the school administration and the participants if the schools were in the same locality. It was fortunate for me as the researcher that the schools had the required participants. If not then I would have contacted the other schools on the prepared list. I then talked with the school principals about the research, and later, with the teacher participants individually about the research and their participation.

3.5.4 Interview as a method of data collection

There are a number of ways to collect qualitative data. Some of the main methods are: observation; reviewing documents; and conducting interviews (Best & Kahn 1998; Cohen et al., 2007; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). However, probably the most common technique is the use of the interview. In its simplest form, an interview is a method of research in which people (participants) are asked

questions verbally (Wallen & Fraenkel, 2001). Cohen et al. (2007) extend this to show that an interview is when two or more people meet to exchange views on an interesting topic where interaction is involved for the production of knowledge. Moreover, Mills (2001) mentions that an interview “is a purposeful conversation . . . that is directed to get information” (p. 292). However, a good relationship must be created between the interviewer and the interviewee in order for the interviewer to access information that is needed. This is what Jones, Bunce, Evans, Gibbs, and Hein (2008) note: “in any interview situation, the . . . relations between the interviewer and interviewee can have a significant effect on the kinds of data that are generated” (p. 3). However, the data collected depends on the interviewee’s responses to the interview questions asked.

Kvale (1996 cited in Cohen et al., 2007) states that “the use of the interview in research marks a move away from seeing human subjects as simply manipulable and data as somehow external to individuals, and towards regarding knowledge as generated between humans, often through conversations” (p. 349). Humans are important in the interview process. It is through the interaction between the researcher and participants that knowledge on a particular issue or problem is generated. Therefore it is necessary that the interview is conducted thoroughly in a proper conversational manner with all the necessary ethical issues addressed and observed.

3.5.5 Strengths of interview

Cohen et al. (2007) and Burns (2000) state that the interview has a number of strengths:

- it raises the importance of the questions
- interviews are constructed on and come out of observations or opinions
- in an interview, there is an agreement between individuals
- participants are asked and respond to the same questions, thus increasing the similarity in the answers provided

- interviews will always be conversations between two or more people and are conditional
- the time spent on the interview is sometimes longer than expected and thus increases the level of relationship between the researcher and interviewee
- the language used is familiar with and understood by the participant, making it possible for the participant to understand the concepts of the research
- both the researcher and interviewee(s) have the same standing in the dialogue.

Based on these advantages of interview this study went on and collected the data required.

The above strengths of interview related to this study in the following ways. First, the focus questions were carefully prepared and written at the University Of Waikato in Hamilton, New Zealand, so that they were significant and relevant to the research topic. Second, my knowledge of the large numbers of UQTs in the Solomon Islands as a teacher educator prompted me to find out their own experiences and perceptions during their time working as UQTs in schools by using seven participants as genuine representatives of the entire UQTs population. Third, the careful planning of how the interviews should be conducted resulted in the systematic collection of data required as the respondents answered the same questions. Fourth, the interviews remained conversational between the researcher and the participants from the start to finish. Fifth, originally it was expected that the interviews would last between 40 to 60 minutes. However, some of the interviews lasted a little more than that, allowing additional depth in the relationship and understanding between the researcher and the participants. This resulted in the participants' openness to respond well to the questions asked. Lastly, the Solomon Islands *Pidgin* language used by the researcher in explaining the concepts of this study to the participants prior to the conduct was well understood by both parties. This created a relatively equal status between them during the conversations.

3.5.6 Limitations of interview

Despite the strengths of interview, it has its own limitations as well. For Cohen et al., (2007); Burns (2000); and Gray (1998, cited in Bell, 2005) some of the limitations are:

- organising and analysing the data can be quite hard
- openness is limited when the interview is attached to certain persons and situations
- important and notable topics may not be included
- before the interview is conducted, the researcher may not know the number of sessions needed nor how long they will take.
- interviews may take a long time to complete.

In order to minimise the effects of the above weaknesses of interviewing in this study, first, the interviews were conducted in a friendly and understanding environment and manner allowing flexibility in how the participants would respond to the questions asked. Second, the interviews conducted and the data collected did not have any influence whatsoever on the research topic. It remained unchanged throughout this study. Lastly, I was intending to spend two separate sessions and a time of between 40 to 60 minutes with each participant. This created a good length of time for both interview and verification purposes. As part of the second session, participants had time to listen to their own recorded voices and make changes to what they had said if there was a need to do so.

Burns (2000); Cohen et al. (2007); Mutch (2005); and Lankshear and Knobel (2006) mention three types of interviews: the structured interview, in which respondents are asked a planned set of questions, leaving the interviewer little freedom to change or modify the schedule (Wallen & Fraenkel, 2001); unstructured interviews, where the conversation between the researcher and the respondents does not follow a pre-planned series of questions (Mutch, 2005); and finally, there is the semi-structured interview that this study actually employed and which is discussed next.

3.5.7 Semi –structured interview

This is the type of interview where a “set of guiding questions is used but where the interview is open to changes along the way” (Mutch, 2005, p. 225). Mutch (2005) goes on to comment that this kind of interview follows a more imprecise approach whereby some guiding questions are prepared, but the interviewees are asked other questions based on their responses (Lawson & Philpott, 2008). Mills (2001) adds that semi-structured interview schedules are often preferred by educational researchers because participants are allowed to express themselves more fully but are also prevented from aimlessly expressing themselves. Reinharz (1992, cited in Bishop, 1997) supports this and adds that semi-structured interviews allow respondents to express their own knowledge, ideas, opinions, thoughts and memories more verbally.

In this study, I used the semi-structured interview because of its flexible manner and for allowing “more valid response from the informant’s perception of reality” (Burns, 2000, p. 424). It best suits the research topic to interview the seven former UQTs participants. They described thoroughly what they had experienced and perceived. Four guiding questions (See section 2.14) were prepared beforehand to guide the interviews. In this kind of situation, Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle (2006) state that the interviewer starts the discussion by asking the guiding questions followed by asking other questions that relate to the respondents’ responses. This is what Lodico et al. (2006) refer to as probing, where the interviewer wants the respondent to clarify or extend his or her response to a question.

3.6 Data analysis

Analysing the data collected in an interview is the next thing to do in order to know what the data mean so that they can be interpreted and the results written up (Gerson, 1998). It is important that the data collected should be analysed, or read several times to become thoroughly familiar with them in order to be able to classify, categorise, order and structure the main results (Delamont, 1992).

In this study, in order to make the data collected meaningful, the thematic analysis was chosen, as a strategy often used in qualitative research (Mutch, 2005). In this approach, the data are arranged and presented through a process of coding

responses and then organising the codes into informative groups (or themes) (Burns 2000; Cohen et al., 2007; Gerson, 1998) based on the four main focus questions for this study. This was done in order to reduce the volume of the data to a size that could be managed (Sharp, 2009). This also made it easier for me to refer to the necessary information, and I could go back and find the right information if I needed to add anything else in the report (Chapter 4).

3.7 Validity and reliability in educational research

Quality in educational research is evident if, as Mutch (2005) states, the readers of the study can be convinced that it is: *valid*, as the study determines what it is all about; *reliable*, that if the study is conducted by somebody else, like results can be attained; and *trustworthy*, where data analysis methods engaged are properly accepted, and that the investigator was there to gather the information needed (Eisenhart, 2006).

However, in order to achieve quality in the data collected so that validity, reliability, and trustworthiness are evident, the researcher needs to display a certain degree of commitment to these principles right from the beginning and I have endeavoured to do this throughout as explained below.

3.7.1 Validity

In doing research, Fraenkel and Wallen (1993) argue that validity is crucial to consider when a method is prepared or selected to use. It is to do with how best the chosen instrument or an item draws meaningful, justifiable, convincing, and logical measurement of what that instrument or item is supposed to measure in an investigation (Bell, 2005; Creemers & Kyriakides, 2008; Creswell, 2002; Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993; Mears, 2009). In addition, Fraenkel and Wallen (1993) state that “More than anything else, researchers want the information they obtain through the use of an instrument to serve their purposes” (p. 139). In the case of this study, its validity comes in the form of careful planning and construction of the four research questions and the interview guides in its initial stage. Furthermore, the seven teacher participants’ own voices, words, and sentences in responding to the interview questions asked further strengthened the validity of data collected. Appropriate ethical considerations and procedures were also considered, followed, and upheld (See Appendices 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10).

3.7.2 Reliability

If the term *reliable* from which the term *reliability* is derived is mentioned, words and phrases that are similar in nature like consistent, dependable, trustworthy, steadfast and “good quality” usually come to mind. Moreover, what is done, created or said must have some truth, consistency and quality in it to achieve the status of being reliable. Thus, reliability refers to the consistency, steadfastness or trustworthiness of observations, data and scores collected in research (Creswell, 2002; Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993; Mears, 2009; Shavelson & Webb, 2009). On the other hand, Bell (2005) refers to reliability as “the extent to which a test of procedure produces similar results under constant conditions on all occasions” (p. 117). It means that similar results will be obtained even if the research is conducted in a different location but using the same instrument (Bell, 2005; Best & Kahn, 1998; Borg & Gall, 1983; Creswell, 2002; Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993; Shavelson & Webb, 2009). In this study, I am convinced that even if other former UQTs from other urban and rural settings in the Solomon Islands were interviewed using the same questions, similar results could be obtained.

This study used the processes stressed by Cohen et al. (2007) as yielding reliable data. These included the semi-structured one-on-one interviews, recording of the participants’ responses using a mini digital recorder, and returning the transcripts of the interviews to individual participants for verification. In addition to the above, prior to conducting the interviews, the interview procedure and the research questions were carefully explained to the seven participants so that they would have a clear idea of the intention of the study. Because I was a teacher and a person who was involved in the teaching of former UQTs, including the seven participants, from 2007 to 2009 at the SOE of SICHE, it was in my best interest that the data collected in the cause of the research were trustworthy.

3.8 Ethical protocols in research

The researcher is responsible for the honesty and truthfulness of the processes in which the research is conducted, therefore ethical issues had to be considered for this study since it used the interpretive or qualitative approach to interact with the seven participants as the human subjects or actors in this study. On this note, Griffiths (1998) reminds researchers that issues concerning ethics are unavoidable

in any research undertaking. Cohen et al. (2007) comment that the main concern is the interaction between the respondent(s) and the researcher, therefore ethical protocols must be carefully considered to allow any research to be carried out appropriately.

In the context of this study, I had taken every necessary precaution to ensure that all ethical protocols were adhered to. The first thing that I did was to submit a research proposal to the Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee of the University of Waikato for consideration. The research proposal was then approved by that committee (see Appendix 1). I also took into consideration ethical issues such as the notions of respect, privacy and confidentiality, informed consent, getting access to schools, and contacting the relevant Solomon Islands education authorities (EAs), including the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD). Cultural aspects of the participants were also considered as Solomon Islands is a multi-cultural country. These ethical issues were taken into consideration to demonstrate my understanding as a University of Waikato trained researcher of their importance and to ensure that no harm was caused to the participants during and after the research was conducted.

3.8.1 Respecting participants

Educational research mostly depends on individuals for the data required for the production of new knowledge and extending existing ones (Bailey, 2001; Smith, 1999). According to the *Concise Edition English Dictionary* (2007, p. 278), to respect is “to feel or show esteem or regard to; to treat considerately”, especially, in the context of research, the subjects whom the researcher interacts with. This definition points to the fact that respect is something that should be displayed to anybody including research participants. In research, respect is a show of consideration for others in which an understanding based on knowledge, trust, and values is created between oneself and others. In my home village in the western part of the Solomon Islands, respect is regarded as the key to communal consciousness. Respect for one another creates the trust that everyone needs for peaceful co-existence within the community. For the sake of peaceful co-existence, each one is for everybody. For example, communal activities that are labour-intensive need the helping hands of community members, as Ninnes

(1995) puts it, “helping each other with laborious tasks such as a house construction and gardening” (p. 18).

In any form of research, I believe that the notion of “One is for everybody” also applies. The notion should be exercised with dignity. The researcher and the participants need each other’s co-operation and assistance for the successful conduct of any research study. In this study, I did my best to show respect to the participants in a way that helped create an atmosphere of mutual trust, faith, dependency, reliance and expectation so that the collection of data would be done in the smoothest way possible.

3.8.2 Privacy and confidentiality

Privacy and confidentiality are the other key ethical issues that should be given high regard when doing research. In any research undertaking, confidentiality rests with the researcher, who is what O’Brian (2001) describes as the “repository of the information and [who] therefore has control over the distribution and transmission of that information” (p. 30). The researcher knows the participants’ identities and all the information given; therefore confidentiality is of utmost importance (Cohen et al., 2007). The researcher should use pseudonyms to protect the participants’ identities. Burns (2000) states that:

Confidentiality involves a clear understanding between researcher and participant concerning the use to be made of the data provided. It is extremely important to ensure that responses to personal questions, scores on tests, etc. are confidential and anonymous so that the reader of the research would be unable to deduce the identity of the individual. (Burns 2000, p. 20)

The participants should be clearly informed that the information that they provide will be kept private. They must feel confident of the commitment of the researcher or else possible participants will withdraw their willingness to participate (Burns, 2000). It is important that the identities of the participants are protected. In this study, I assigned different codes to represent the participants to conceal their identities, as the following example shows:

My mother is currently a teacher, and no one in the family wants to follow her footsteps. So I decided to be a teacher so that if one day my mother passes away, I will continue her job as a teacher. (P06/M)

Privacy according Deverson (2006) refers to the “[right to] being private; [and] freedom from intrusion or publicity” (p. 421). Although this gives a general definition of the term, it is relevant to the participants in a research project in that as human subjects they have the right to privacy which has been enshrined in international laws such as the “UN Declaration of Human Rights” (Burns, 2000, p. 21). It means that the concerned participants have the final decision on which personal information is to be passed on to other people and which is to be withheld (Akao, 2008). Akao (2008) reiterates that participants “should not be made to feel that their privacy has been invaded” (p. 67). On the other hand, privacy can only be relinquished by the participants if they choose to give up their “right to privacy” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 63). In this study, the right to privacy of each participant was upheld. During the course of this study’s process, I was very cautious in the way I treated the participants. In the interviews, I never asked any questions that were personal in nature. The interview focus questions were posed, and I only asked other questions when further clarification or detail was needed in order to achieve the purposes of this study. I made sure that the participants in this study did not feel that their right to privacy was being infringed in any way.

3.8.3 Informed consent

It is important that in research, there should be consultation taking place between the researcher and the participant to seek the participant’s informed consent to participate in research (Durrant & Holden, 2006). The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1995) defines the term *to consent* as a way to “express willingness; give permission; [and/or] agree” (p. 283). The participant’s permission, willingness and approval to participate in research must be maintained. Other words like *agreement* and *acceptance* are also related to the word consent. If people are invited to participate in research, they must agree and accept the invitation. Researchers have no right to use coercion to recruit people to participate in research. Informed consent on the part of the participants is an essential principle in research (Burns, 2000), for without it, the collection of data cannot commence. Wolfensberger (1967) refers to informed consent as the basis “of all considerations of the welfare and protection of subjects” (p. 48). He adds that participants in research must fully understand what is required of them and the benefits and/or risks of the research before they can show their willingness to

participate. Wilkinson (2001) cautions researchers that the prime objective of informed consent is that participants' permission should first be sought. Bearing this in mind, prior to the commencement of the research I asked the seven participants in this study to sign a consent form that stated clearly the intention of the research, how it was going to be done, its risks and benefits, and their right to retire from participating if they wished to do so (Burns, 2000). (See Appendix 6). Burns (2000) adds that asking for formal consent provides evidence that the person is properly informed and willingly agrees to take part in research. By signing the consent form, the seven participants in this study showed that they willingly agreed to participate.

3.8.4 Legal and political issues

Cohen et al. (2007) contend that in any research undertaking, the researcher should first seek the right of entry and approval. This is important not only if the research is conducted in a different country, but also in the researcher's own country. Permission should first be sought and obtained from the government department responsible for research carried out within that country. In addition, Cohen et al. (2007, p. 55) reiterate that permission for access to "the institution or organisation where the research is to be conducted, and acceptance by those whose permission one needs before embarking on the task" is important. If research is conducted in another country, the researcher should exercise diplomatic protocols. O'Brian (2001) emphasises that "ethical research practice must occur within the limits and demands of the law" (p. 29). In the case of Solomon Islands, the MEHRD is responsible for anything to do with research under the Research Act of 1982 that provides the instructions that regulate the conduct of "any research activities in the country" (*Solomon Islands Ministry of Education Annual Report, 2002, p. 3*). To collect the data for this study, I had first to write a letter to the Permanent Secretary of the MEHRD seeking access and approval to do data collection in the Solomon Islands (see Appendix 8). An application form was then filled and signed and submitted to the Under Secretary of MEHRD (see Appendix 9). Other letters were sent to the teacher participants (see Appendix 3), education authorities (EAs) (see Appendix 10), and school principals (see Appendix 7) seeking their permission and approval to conduct the research in the schools, and in particular, in the four selected CHSs. The MEHRD

subsequently granted approval to conduct the research to collect the required data for this study.

3.9 Summary

This chapter has presented the design, methodology, and research method employed in this study. It first defined the term *research*, by referring to it as a systematic investigation. Part of the discussion on research focused on what educational research was, and its importance. The chapter also discussed the research methodology used in this study. It briefly addressed the two major approaches to educational research: quantitative and qualitative, then described the interpretive or qualitative paradigm, a view that tries to understand and interpret the world and those living in it, and which was selected as appropriate to this study. The chapter next addressed the research design and the method used for data collection. It looked at the interview as a data collection method, then discussed how the data collected was analysed, and how participants were selected. Validity and reliability, two important terms with regards to the quality of data collected, were also discussed. Finally, the ethical protocols that should be considered in research were discussed.

The next chapter, Chapter 4, reports the findings of this study as guided by the methodology and research tools addressed in this chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The data collected from the interviews with the seven teacher participants are presented and analysed in this chapter. The data were collected using the semi-structured process based on the following guiding questions:

1. What were the perceptions and experiences that you went through in making the transition from student (or non-school worker) to become an unqualified teacher (UQT)?
2. What are your perceptions of the knowledge and skills you gained through your participation in the Teachers in Training Programme (TITP)?
3. How have your attitudes and feelings about teaching and your teaching practices changed as a result of your experiences in the TITP?
4. On reflection now that you are a fully qualified and practising teacher, how effective was the TITP in preparing you to teach in Solomon Islands schools?

4.2 The participants

At this point before presenting the key findings, the study participants are introduced. The participants came from four of the nine provinces of the Solomon Islands: Western, Isabel, Temotu and Malaita. It was a coincidence that the sample schools had former UQTs from four different provinces. However, this is helpful as the participants are thus more representative than if they had all come from the same province.

Four of the seven participants are females (P01, P02, P05, and P07) while the other three are males (P03, P04, and P06). The letter 'P' placed before the numbers means "participant", while the numbers (0 plus another number) that follow indicate the order of interview. In the quotes, two letters are added, "F" and "M" to indicate whether a participant is a female or male.

One participant, P01, is currently teaching in a village school in Munda in the Western Province, while the other six - P02, P03, P04, P05, P06, and P07 - are

currently teaching in Honiara, the capital city of the Solomon Islands. The participants were teaching in four Community High Schools (CHSs): S01, S02, S03, and S04. Five of the participants, P01, P02, P04, P05, and P06, were teaching in the primary division of their schools while the other two, P03, and P07, were teaching in the secondary division of their schools. The two secondary division participants were university graduates while the five primary division participants were secondary school leavers. All of them were part of a group of more than two hundred UQTs who participated in the TITP offered at the SOE of SICHE from the middle of 2007 to the beginning of 2009. All had completed the programme successfully and graduated with certificates in teaching (primary or secondary) at the end of 2009. They are now teaching classes ranging from preparatory to Year 13 as fully qualified professionals (FQPs). *Table 4* provides a brief summary of the participants' profiles.

Table 4. Participants' profiles

Participants	Gender	Province of origin	Highest prior education level	Teaching School	School Location	Class Taught
P01	F	Western	Secondary School	S01/ Primary div.	Munda	Year 6
P02	F	Isabel	Secondary School	S02/ Primary div.	Honiara	Preparatory Class
P03	M	Temotu	University Graduate	S02/ Secondary div.	Honiara	Year 13
P04	M	Malaita	Secondary School	S02/ Primary div.	Honiara	Year 5
P05	F	Malaita	Secondary School	S03/ Primary div.	Honiara	Year 1
P06	M	Western	Secondary School	S03/ Primary div.	Honiara	Year 3
P07	F	Malaita	University Graduate	S04/ Secondary div.	Honiara	Year 9 and 10

I have used the abbreviation UQTs in this chapter to refer to the participants when they were teaching as unqualified teachers, and when they participated in the TITP, but note that in some of the participants' quoted responses, the term "untrained teacher" is used because the participants actually used that term in their responses.

Once the interview data was transcribed I used the data analysis method of thematic analysis as outlined in chapter three to identify major themes. As my analysis continued, I was also able to identify sub-themes within the major themes. The themes and sub-themes that emanated from this analysis are shown in *Table 5*.

Table 5. Themes and sub-themes of the findings

Sections	Themes	Sub-themes
4.3	Participants' perceptions and experiences in making the transition to being <i>UQTs</i> teaching in schools.	<p>4.3.1 Reasons for choosing teaching</p> <p>4.3.2 Nature of difficulties experienced</p> <p>4.3.3 Sources, nature and degree of help received</p> <p>4.3.4 Lack of induction and mentoring support</p> <p>4.3.5 Knowledge and skills of teaching gained</p>
4.4	Participants' perceptions of the knowledge and skills gained through the TITP as a formal teacher education programme.	<p>4.4.1 Achieving a broader range of knowledge and skills in teaching</p> <p>4.4.2 Greater understanding of pupils</p> <p>4.4.3 Deeper knowledge of teaching methods</p>
4.5	Changes in the participants' attitudes to teaching and teaching practices.	<p>4.5.1 Attitudes and feelings towards teaching</p> <p>4.5.2 Greater appreciation of the need for preparation and commitment to teaching</p> <p>4.5.3 The nature of pupils' understanding</p> <p>4.5.4 Improved confidence as practising teachers</p>
4.6	Participants' perceptions of their preparedness to teach in Solomon Islands schools as fully qualified professionals.	<p>4.6.1 The effectiveness of the TITP in preparing the participants</p>

4.3 Participants' perceptions and experiences in making the transition to being *UQTs* teaching in schools

When the participants were asked the question about the "*experiences and perceptions that they had gone through in making the transition to become unqualified teachers (UQTs)*", they gave a number of very interesting responses. In this section, I present examples of the responses under five sub-themes as outlined in *Table 5*.

4.3.1 Reasons for choosing teaching

Despite the possible challenges that the participants would encounter as UQTs, they gave compelling reasons for taking up the challenge of becoming teachers. Some of the reasons that influence those decisions were personal as well as being inspired by other people. In this section, I present the participants' reasons for choosing teaching in four significant categories:

4.3.1.1 Enhancing children's need for education

The decision of three of the participants P01, P02 and P05, to become UQTs was influenced socially by their feeling of closeness to the children and a desire to help children to have formal education. On that note, P01, the only participant from a rural school (S01 School), expressed that she became a teacher when she saw that there were not enough teachers in her home village, and so somebody had to take up the responsibility of looking after the children and providing them with the education that they deserved. Initially she had no intention to teach:

Firstly I would say that I was not intending to become a teacher, but when I saw the need of the children at home to have proper formal education . . . I decided to become a teacher. (P01/F)

Meanwhile, P05 seemed to extend the sentiment that P01 had expressed, stating that she became an UQT because of her interest in helping to shape and mould children to become good citizens in the future. This response seems to display a civic-minded view of becoming a teacher. She said:

I became a teacher . . . because of my interest in helping the children in order to grow and become good citizens in the future. (P05/F)

P02, on the other hand, associated her reason for becoming a teacher with being a parent. She clearly explained that, as a mother, her experience in teaching her own children and learning from them at home had encouraged her to become a teacher so that she could help other children to learn from her just like her own children.

In schools, pupils not only learn from what the teachers teach them. It can also happen that they will be fascinated and inspired by the way the teachers teach them, and that may make them to want to become teachers themselves as the next reason for becoming a teacher states.

4.3.1.2 Being fascinated and inspired by former teachers

Three participants, P04, P05, and P01, stated that they became interested in becoming teachers because they were inspired by the way their former teachers had taught them when they were secondary school students themselves. On that point P04 said:

When I was a secondary school student, I was fascinated by the way one of our Social Science teachers taught us. I liked the way he used body language and interacted with us. His approach was very humane. For those simple reasons, I decided to become an untrained teacher. I wanted to teach like him. (P04/M)

Similarly, P05 said:

I started to develop an interest to teach when I saw how my teachers taught me in class when I was a student myself. The teachings of some teachers were very interesting, giving us the opportunity to be involved more in our own learning which was what I liked the most. (P05/F)

Likewise, P01 became interested in becoming a teacher when she saw how her teachers had taught her and thought that she could teach like them, or even better.

What made me want to become a teacher was that when I was a student I saw how my teachers taught me, and I thought that I could do well just like them or even better. (P01/F)

What these participants said may indicate that there are teachers who have the ability to teach in a way that will not only inspire pupils but may encourage them to become teachers. However, other people may have the confidence in themselves to become teachers because of certain experiences they may already have.

4.3.1.3 Self – confidence

If people are confident in doing what they want to do, there must be something that makes them to feel that way. On this point, P04 gave his leadership roles when he was a student as the reason he had the courage and confidence to take up teaching as an unqualified teacher (UQT). As a student leader, he had held two important and demanding roles:

As the head boy and president of the Students' Scripture Union of the school, thus a student leader, I had to help in looking

after a large number of students . . . It was a very challenging task for me, but because of the responsibilities and my ability to carry out my tasks successfully and the experiences that I had at that time gave me a lot of courage and confidence to become an untrained teacher. (P04/M)

Another participant, P07, relied on her prior knowledge of her subject's content, science, through having gained a Bachelor of Science degree, as her reason for having the confidence to teach:

The content knowledge that I have and the experiences in Science that I gained during my time at the university all those years were enough to give me confidence to teach. With the experience and my content knowledge in pure Science, whenever students asked me questions in and outside of the classroom, I knew that I would be able to respond to them pretty well. (P07/F)

4.3.1.4 Lack of job opportunities

When two of the participants, P03 and P07 returned to the Solomon Islands after successfully completing their university studies, the ethnic tension in the Solomon Islands was at its height. Businesses were forced to close down, causing job losses and reduced job opportunities. Because of that, they took up teaching as an alternative to the jobs they were intending to do because teaching vacancies were available. It was also a means of doing something worthwhile, and an opportunity to earn some money, as P03 explains:

I came back to the country during the ethnic tension in 2001. Job opportunities in the Solomon Islands at that time were scarce . . . so I had to try my best to do something useful to earn some money. It so happened that teaching vacancies were advertised, so I applied and got one. I would say here that I became a teacher, not by choice, but because the opportunity to venturing out to do other jobs was not possible. (P03/M)

P07 also experienced the effects of the ethnic tension. She was intending to work in the mining industry upon returning to the Solomon Islands but just stayed home with her aunty because the mining company that she was intending to work for had closed down:

When I came back to the country, my aim was to work in a mining company. This was during when the ethnic tension took place. Almost everything was closed. I just stayed with my aunty . . . It was during that time that I learned that this school

[referring to where she was teaching when the interviews were conducted] needed a Science teacher. My aunty asked me if I could avail myself to take up the post since I was not doing anything concrete. I accepted the offer just to do something useful and to keep me busy. (P07/F)

4.3.2 Nature of difficulties experienced

All the participants described various difficulties that they had not been able to avoid as UQTs. In this section, I present the difficulties that the participants experienced in two categories: professional and personal difficulties.

The professional difficulties that some participants experienced were the lack of knowledge and skills in preparing lessons, and classroom management, while the personal difficulties that other participants experienced were related to accommodation, salary, transportation, being unsure of what to do, and the fear of facing the students in class.

4.3.2.1 Nature of professional difficulties experienced

Difficulties concerning a teacher's professional duties were experienced by three of the participants, P02, P04 and P07. P04 explained:

I experienced a lot of difficulties . . . For example, I did not know what to write in my work book or to prepare a scheme of work and to plan and prepare my lessons . . . so that what I taught would have a positive effect on the children's learning. I did not have the ability and skill to do those kinds of stuff. It was difficult for me. (P04 /M)

Similarly, P02 found preparing proper lesson plans and a scheme of work difficult, even though some teachers tried to explain them to her:

One . . . difficulty that I faced when I was an untrained teacher was how to make proper lesson plans. . . Basically, I had no idea how to make a lesson plan or even a scheme of work. I really found it hard because I did not have any knowledge of doing it. The teachers tried to explain it to me, expecting me to know, but I still could not do it. (P02/F)

P07 raised another problematic issue: managing the classroom in order to control the students. She expected that every student should be nice, but her expectation was often not met:

Classroom management was quite hard for me to do. I went through lots of experiences on how to handle some of the students because of my lack of understanding on how they should behave in class. I expected everyone to be nice. But I realised later that influences on the students' behaviour could come from outside of the school. Some of them might come in with a bad mood. Some of them even hit my desk in the classroom. (P07/F)

Similarly, P05 claimed that managing her classroom was one of her main difficulties, too:

One of the difficulties that I faced was classroom management. I was not able to do that since there were different kinds of children; some were rough and sometimes would not listen to what I said. (P05/F)

P06 added:

When I was working as an untrained teacher, I faced a lot of difficulties. One was on how I would be able to control the children. (P06/M)

The difficulties expressed by these participants are related directly to teaching as a profession and are, by and large, an inevitable aspect of teaching in a school as a UQT. However, the participants often faced difficulties that were personal in nature as well. These are discussed in the next section.

4.3.2.2 Nature of personal difficulties experienced

One of the difficulties that affected the participants on a personal level was accommodation. P01 stated that during her time as an UQT, she had to live with wantoks (relatives or members of the same tribe or language group, in Solomon Islands Pidgin) because the school did not provide her with any accommodation. It affected her work at times when other relatives visited the house as there would be less privacy. She also reported that she was poorly paid, only receiving a meagre salary once a month or sometimes even after more than a month. She said:

During my work as an untrained teacher, I was not being given proper accommodation; I lived with wantoks. Financially I was paid once a month or even after several months then I was paid a meagre salary. (P01/F)

P01 further explained that she actually regarded these as minor difficulties. Her major difficulty was the professional one of how to take good care of the students' learning.

Transport to some rural parts of the Solomon Islands is difficult because of the large distances between the islands, and the remoteness of some of them. In addition, there are not enough boats serving the sea routes between the islands. In this regard, P03 commented that transport was his immediate difficulty. He was to teach in a school on a remote island, but boats would normally go there only once a month and it would take about three to four days of travelling to reach that part of the Solomon Islands, depending on the load and the speed of the boat:

One thing that haunted me day and night at that time after knowing that I would be teaching in Temotu was how to get there. I knew while in town that Temotu was my destination. I also knew that it would be difficult for me to go there as soon as possible because of transport difficulties. (P03/M)

In a work place, employees should know what they are supposed to be doing. Thus, teachers should know what they suppose to be teaching on the very first day. P06 said that on his first day in class he just stared at the children, because he had not prepared any lesson due to his lack of knowledge of how to prepare one. He further explained:

On the day when I entered the classroom, I did not know what actually I was going to do. I just stared at the children. I did not know what lesson to teach because I did not know how to draw up a lesson plan so there was no lesson for me to teach. It was really hard for me. (P06 /M)

While P06 experienced the lack of knowledge to prepare lessons, P03's concern was the fear that he experienced when he first entered the classroom:

When I entered the classroom, the 40 faces and 80 eyeballs starring at me was a scary experience. I tried to fan myself with a book, but sweat kept running down my cheeks. For a month I never focused my eyes at the students. I always starred up to the ceiling and talked, because it was an awful experience for me to look directly at the students because when I looked directly at them, sweat would run down my cheeks. (P03/M)

Similarly, P05 simply said of her first day experience in her class:

When I first entered the classroom I found it hard to stand in front of the children and teach. It was not a good experience for me. (P05/F)

As can be seen, the personal difficulties expressed by these participants are not related directly to teaching as a profession, but to their teaching in schools as UQTs.

Despite the professional and personal difficulties that the participants faced, they were not left totally alone. In fact they received some form of help from responsible people such as the principal, deputy principal, headmistress, head of department, experienced teachers, and the schools' education authorities.

4.3.3 Sources, nature and degree of help received

In this section, I present the findings on the sources, nature, and degree of help and support that some of the participants received while teaching in schools as UQTs in three categories:

4.3.3.1 Nature of help received for professional difficulties

With regards to the professional difficulties that the participants experienced, the principal, deputy principal, head of department and the experienced teachers were very helpful. The forms of help offered to the participants ranged from attending formal courses, taking part in departmental discussions, getting additional hints on lesson planning, monitoring of classroom teaching, being members of school committees, to writing and compiling exam questions. For example, P02 stated that her principal sent her to the Solomon Islands Campus of the University of the South Pacific in Honiara to attend a literacy course:

What the principal did as part of my professional development as a teacher was that I was sent to do a course on literacy at the University of the South Pacific, Solomon Islands Campus of which I gratefully attended. (P02/F)

P07 said that she received some professional help from her head of department and colleagues in the Science department:

The help that I needed used to come from my head of department at that time. The discussions that we normally held in the Science department really helped me. Besides that, my

colleagues used to give me extra tips on how to effectively plan and teach my lessons. (P07/F)

P07 went on to add that the deputy principal was very helpful to them as teachers by keeping an eye on what they were doing:

The duty principal monitored what we were doing. Sometimes he would come to our classes to observe our lessons. It was good because he would normally tell us about the strengths and weaknesses of our lessons. We felt that it was good for the deputy principal to do that especially for us untrained teachers to know our own weaknesses so that we could work on them to improve ourselves as teachers. (P07/F)

On another note, P06 stated that the headmistress of the primary division of his school (S03 School) assigned them to various school committees to help out in the running of the school's programmes. He saw that as an opportunity to gain more knowledge and experience on what was like to be a teacher.

The headmistress was very helpful. She put us in the various school committees so that we could take part constructively in the overall running of the school's programmes . . . This had given me new knowledge and experience that in a school, a teacher's job was not only to teach but also to help out in the daily operations of the school. (P06/M)

The participants also received help from the experienced teachers in the schools in areas such as examination writing, as this comment from P04 explains:

The primary school teachers and a few secondary school teachers often helped me if I faced difficulties like in terms of writing and compiling good exam questions, because I did not only teach Grade 5 Blue, but also other classes like Grades 2 and 4. (P04/M)

P04 was very fortunate to have received help in one of the difficult tasks that teachers would often face, particularly as he was teaching multiple classes.

4.3.3.2 Nature of help received for personal difficulties

For personal difficulties associated with accommodation, salary, and teaching resources, the principal, the school's education authority and the school administration (including the secretary and bursar) had been instrumental in helping the participants. For example, P01 stated that the headmaster continued to pay her salary despite being late at times.

Similarly, P03 stated that the principal provided him with food and money:

One way that the principal was of help to me was that I was provided with food rations apart from giving me \$200 a fortnight to buy basic necessities like soap. The principal also tried his best to have me included in the government's payroll so that I could receive my fortnightly pay. (P03/M)

Meanwhile, P05 mentioned that during her time as an UQT, her salary, bus fare and accommodation were being paid for by her school's education authority. The school's education authority also provided her with her own accommodation. She said:

During my time as an untrained teacher, my salary was being paid by the school's education authority. It also provided me a house and a little bit of money for my bus fare apart from my salary. (P05/F)

P07 commented that she received help with the materials and equipments that she needed for her class lessons:

The school administration helped me very much with the provision of materials and equipments that I needed for my class lessons. (P07/F)

4.3.3.3 Insufficient help and support

Despite the forms of help that participants received from various responsible people in the schools, they claimed that the forms of help and support that were rendered to them were often insufficient. For example, P01 claimed that it would be much better to participate in formal teacher education in an institution before becoming a teacher:

According to my own knowledge I would say that the help and support that teachers displayed for my own development as an untrained teacher were not enough. Therefore it would still be best to attend formal teacher education in an institution to gain more knowledge and skills of teaching. (P01/F)

P03 thought that the help and support he used to receive from responsible people when he was an UQT were enough until he attended formal teacher education. He later realised that the help and support he had received were in fact not sufficient at all:

At that point in time when it happened, I thought that the kind of help and support given to me were sufficient. Not until later when I took up formal teacher education that I realised that what the responsible people in the school provided me were just marginal. They were not enough. I still needed a lot of help and support. (P03/M)

On similar lines, P07 noted:

At the time when I was an untrained teacher, I thought that the kind of help given to me was sufficient. Not until I participated in the TITP that I realised that I needed more help and support from the responsible people in the school where I was teaching. (P07/F)

For P03 and P07, their participation in formal teacher education, the TITP, had given them the opportunity to realise that during their time teaching as UQTs, the type of help and support that they received had been inadequate. There are a number of ways that could have been used to help and support them when they were UQTs.

4.3.4 Lack of induction and mentoring support

In this section, I present the findings in two significant categories: the lack of induction sessions and mentoring support provided by the schools to some of the participants.

4.3.4.1 Lack of induction sessions

It is important for UQTs to have a formal induction programme as beginning teachers. This is necessary to familiarise them with some of the basic aspects of the complex tasks of teaching children and young people. However, sadly for most participants there were no induction sessions held for them when they were UQTs. P03 attributed the situation to some kind of assumed trust between him and the school that perhaps he was left alone because he was a university graduate:

Those things like inductions never took place. I often look back to those days and thought of the situations that I had gone through. There seemed to be some kind of trust between the school and myself at that time, so I was left alone, believing may be that I was a university graduate. (P03/M)

Sharing the same concerns raised by P03, P07 said that when she arrived at school on the first day, she was given books and other materials, but there was no induction that would enable her to know what exactly she would be doing:

I do not remember that I was inducted. When I went to the school that very first morning, I was given the books and other materials and that was all . . . The school did not organise any tour of the school for me. I think may be because it was a small school so I was expected to find my own way around. But it would be very helpful if the school had organised a proper induction session for me so that I would be able to know and understand what to do. (P07/F)

Although schools in the Solomon Islands are small in size with regards to the area occupied and the pupils' population, beginning teachers need to be inducted so that they can feel helped and supported right from the start. This should be followed up by ongoing support from a mentor. But again this was not the case for the participants in this study.

4.3.4.2 Lack of mentoring support

The participants reported that there were no mentors officially appointed by the schools to guide them in their development as teachers. However, they often regarded the teachers whom they worked with as mentors because of their continuous help, support and guidance. P03 reported that:

The school did not provide a mentor for me. I just seek help from responsible people if I had problems. If I did not seek help, it meant that I did not have any problem. I was left alone to "paddle my own canoe". (P03/M)

Supporting what P03 said, P07 commented:

The school did not officially appoint a mentor for me. Everything was left to the head of department (HOD), Science to do whatever he could to help me as an untrained teacher. So I regarded my HOD as my mentor. (P07/F)

P04 added:

Luckily, I was teaching with a teacher who assisted me very much. I also asked other teachers for assistance if I came across any difficulties. (P04/M)

P02 had a much better experience:

When I started teaching, I was helped by a teacher. I observed how she was teaching her lessons. But then I was allocated to another teacher to assist her. She really helped me very much in certain areas that I was not sure of. Again I observed every lesson that she was teaching, until I was ready to teach a lesson myself. (P02/F)

Although the participants had not been provided with official mentors by the schools, they were often fortunate to work with teachers who were ready to help them.

4.3.5 Knowledge and skills of teaching gained

The participants stated that they gained some knowledge and skills while teaching as UQTs but according to their own perspectives, they were not enough. In this section, I present the views of P01, P02, P04, and P05 on the issue. P02, for example, explained that her knowledge of the subjects that she was teaching her pupils was very limited. She was not able to look beyond the surrounding environment to see what she could use instead of depending on books and written materials most of the time:

As an untrained teacher, the knowledge and skills that I had were very limited. I was not creative enough on what I should be doing as a teacher if learning resources were not available. (P02/F)

Likewise, P01 expressed that the knowledge and skills she gained were not enough. She said:

“They were meant just to keep me going in my teaching as an untrained teacher”. (P01/F)

On the other hand, P04 was able to gain some knowledge and skills:

When I was an untrained teacher, I was able to gain some knowledge and skills but they were not sufficient or enough to my own knowledge. For example, I was teaching the same materials as what I am teaching now, but I did not really understand what to teach . . . (P04/M)

P04 then went on to explain that when he was an UQT, the knowledge that he had gained was on how to handle and teach a big class.

I gained a bit of knowledge on how to handle and teach a big class although it was a little bit tough. I had 40 plus pupils in

my class so it would be difficult for a single teacher to teach and control such a big class, but in the course of that academic year, I was able to learn how to do it in order to teach them and to inject in them [with] the knowledge and skills that the pupils deserved. (P04/M)

On the other hand, P05 stated that she tended to do the same things all over again rather than make progress.

On the skills of teaching, I mainly did the same things all over again. I just did what I was able to do. I just gave them work to do and I made sure that they sat down quietly while doing them. When they finished, that was it. I was not able to go on. I found it hard to go on further. (P05/F)

P06, on the other hand, mentioned that he gained skills on how to prepare a lesson during his time as an UQT. He was given a lesson plan format on which to base the lessons that he had to prepare:

The very first skill that I learned during my time as an untrained teacher was on how to prepare a lesson by using a lesson plan format . . . But the knowledge and skills that I learned at that time were just not enough. (P06/M)

In summary, the findings revealed that the participants felt that a lot more should have been done during their time as UQTs to aid their development as teachers.

4.4 Participants' perceptions of the knowledge and skills gained through the TITP as a formal teacher education programme

From 2007 to 2009, the SOE of SICHE offered a teacher education programme, the TITP, to train *UQTs* to become fully qualified teachers. In this section, the participants' perceptions of the knowledge and skills gained in the TITP based on the question about "*the participants' perceptions of the knowledge and skills gained through their participation in the Teachers in Training Programme*" are presented in three sub-themes:

4.4.1 Achieving a broader range of knowledge and skills in teaching

All seven participants claimed that their participation in the TITP programme had broadened the limited knowledge and skills in teaching that they had had on entry to the programme. For example, P01 said that the TITP was a very good programme that had given her much encouragement and support in her teaching career:

The programme broaden the little knowledge and skills in teaching that I had when I was an untrained teacher. It was a very good programme. It really helped me. It gave me much encouragement in my teaching career. I had learned a lot of things that I did not know when I was an untrained teacher. (P01/F)

P03's comments were stronger. He commented that the programme had opened his eyes to what it was like to be a good teacher:

The TIT programme was really an eye opener. This is because when I tried to reflect on it, I found that I learned a lot from it. All along during my time as an untrained teacher, I thought that I was a teacher, but I wasn't. I was there just to fill in the gap as advertised. In terms of knowledge and skills, I learned a lot from the programme. It had set me up to a worthwhile career in teaching. (P03/M)

P06 agreed with the views of P01 and P03 and added more specific detail about what he learned from the TITP:

There were several knowledge and skills that I learned in the TITP, like how to organise my time, drawing up a time table; lesson planning; scheme of work and writing up daily activities for the children. (P06/M)

P07 commented that the TITP continued to sharpen her teaching knowledge and skills, and considered it a very helpful and effective programme.

It sharpened my knowledge and skills in teaching more than before. I was able to know that there were other ways of teaching and learning that I did not know, and so I would say that it was a very helpful and effective programme. (P07/F)

The above comments show that the TITP had been very helpful in giving the participants broader knowledge of and skills for teaching. The next section describes ways in which the programme had helped participants understand their pupils.

4.4.2 Greater understanding of pupils

The TITP had given the participants an opportunity to learn and understand how pupils learn and behave. For example, P07 stated that the programme had enabled her to understand the way students can be "influenced" or taught in a way that enhanced their learning:

The programme had enabled me to understand the students properly. For example, I have come to know and understand that there are different ways that can influence how students can learn better in the classroom. I was not aware of them when I was doing my content studies in Science. I would strongly say here that the TIT programme was very helpful as well as useful. (P07/F)

Sometimes a teacher does not really know much about a child in the class and would just regard a child as naughty if that child is not behaving in a way that the teacher expects. P06 claimed that the TITP had made him to be aware that it was good to know the personal background of the children.

An interesting thing that I learned was on how to understand the children properly. Sometimes a teacher just looks at how a child behaves and makes some kind of judgment of what kind of a child he or she is without knowing the child's personal background . . . All a teacher does at times is to consider a noisy child as a naughty child, but the teacher may not really know the child's background well. It is always good to find that out. (P06/M)

These observations suggest that the participants seemed to gain greater understanding of pupils' needs and how to find ways to help the pupils to concentrate more and learn better instead of having a predominantly negative perception of their behaviour.

4.4.3 Deeper knowledge of teaching methods

The participants commented that by the end of the TITP, they had gained more comprehensive knowledge of teaching. For example, P03 stated that he became knowledgeable on areas such as lessons and programme planning, and different teaching and learning strategies:

One new area of knowledge about teaching that I learned and which impressed me most was in the structuring of lessons which would be applicable to different types of learners. I also learned how to sequence and interpret the lessons. In the first instance, I started with the type of learning that targeted individuals, and then I moved on to looking at group and collaborative type of learning. These were the new things that I learned from the programme. (P03/F)

P04 claimed that the TITP had changed him a lot in terms of his teaching capability and practice, particularly in relation to being student-centred and being

able to assess learning outcomes:

By the end of the TITP, I had learned a lot of things and therefore it changed me to what I am now in terms of my teaching capability. During my time as an untrained teacher, I did not really know whether the children had learned anything from my lessons or not. But now I consider myself as a student-centred teacher who must teach in a way to meet the academic requirements of the children. (P04/M)

P07 raised similar ideas, saying that by the end of the TITP she had learned that students could learn a lot if they were given time to work in a problem-solving manner:

I learned several ways on how students could learn a lot of things. They could learn things not only by giving them more notes and explaining them later in the lesson, but by also allowing the students to work on their own or in groups. That is the best way in which students will be able to learn a lot of things, rather than the “note and explain” way of teaching which has its own limitations in the students’ learning and achievements . . . Give students activities to do rather than the teacher controlling the whole class session. (P07/F)

In summary, the above findings point to the fact that the TITP appears to have been regarded as important for UQTs to undertake as it had given the participants an opportunity to gain a range of new knowledge and skills to improve their teaching.

4.5 Changes in the participants’ attitudes to teaching and teaching practices

The participants also reported that they had experienced changes in their attitudes to teaching and their own teaching practices as a result of their participation in the TITP. The participants’ views noted here relate to the question on “*the participants’ change in attitudes about teaching and their teaching practices as a result of the experiences in the TITP*”. In this section, I present the findings under four sub-themes below.

4.5.1 Attitudes and feelings about teaching

The participants stated that their attitudes and feelings about teaching changed as a result of their participation in the TITP. For example, P06 stated that in the past, he used to give work to his pupils on the board and would then sit down, letting the pupils do their work on their own. However, he had now learned that group

work is important as well as checking on what the pupils are doing in class. He further explained:

My attitude toward teaching changed. In the past I used to have the attitude of going to the class just to give pupils work on the board, explained it a bit and sat down on my chair. I did not have the slightest thought to put the pupils in small groups to do the questions given or to go round the class checking on how the pupils were doing. After the TIT programme, I learned that group work was important and it would be much better to go round the class to see what the students are doing. (P06/M)

P07 expressed her change of attitude toward teaching and teaching practice this way:

I am now more aware of the student-centred type of learning. Every time I plan my lessons, I have to include it in my planning; whereas in the past, I did not do that because I did not know what student-centred learning was . . . Now that I am aware of it, my lessons must be at least student-centred. That is the attitude that I now have. (P07/F)

On another point, P04 commented that before his participation in the TITP, he had felt that he was not part of the teaching team in the school where he was teaching as an UQT, but the programme changed this:

Before I participated in the TIT programme, my feeling when I was wearing the untrained teacher label was like I was not being part of the community of teachers or practitioners. I felt being left outside . . . It was after the programme and my graduation as a fully qualified professional that I had an awesome feeling that I am now part of the community of teachers as a whole. (P04/M)

These comments reflect broad general changes in attitude. The following sections focus on more specific attitudinal changes reported by participants.

4.5.2 Greater appreciation for the need for preparation and commitment to teaching

The TITP appeared to make the participants more appreciative of the need for thorough preparation and a strong commitment to teaching. This is evident in P01's comments:

At the time when I was an untrained teacher, I often did not prepare my lessons well, but after I participated in the TIT

programme, it helped me a lot in my lesson planning. My commitment to teaching and my work as a teacher improved a lot to a level that was much appreciated by my colleagues. (P01/F)

This comment shows the benefits of the TITP were felt not only by the participants in the programme but also by their teaching colleagues.

4.5.3 The nature of pupils' understanding

All the participants commented that the pupils now understood their teaching much better than when they were UQTs:

When I was still an untrained teacher, I often did not prepare my lessons well, so sometimes when I taught those lessons, the children often did not understand quite well what I was teaching them. But the TIT programme has shown me the way to prepare my lessons and how to teach them, so the children now understand me better when I teach them. At the same time, I also try to understand their behaviours and attitudes. (P01/F)

On similar line, P03 said:

Now that I can plan and teach my lessons properly, I can also see and feel the positive reactions of the students. In the past they used to ask me a lot of questions because they were often in doubt, but not anymore. (P03/M)

P05 expressed the pupils' understanding of her teaching since the TITP simply as:

The way I teach now is very different from when I was an untrained teacher. The children are able to understand the lessons that I now teach. (P05/F)

Similarly, P07 had this to say:

I know that the pupils understand my teaching more than when I was an untrained teacher. They can now quickly grasp what I am teaching them. I used to struggle in class trying to teach them, but now as I have mentioned my pupils understand me more when I explain things or give them instructions on what to do . . . On the whole, the pupils now have understood me more than before. (P07/F)

Clearly the feeling that the pupils now understand what they are teaching them was strong among the group.

4.5.4 Improved confidence as practising teachers

All the participants also expressed strongly that they felt much more confident to teach as practising teachers, stating reasons such as the content knowledge and skills that they have gained in the TITP and the certificate that they now possess as proof of their qualification. For example, P02 stated that her self-esteem was improved and she could now teach in any other schools and could also take up any responsibility delegated to her by the school administration:

I am now very confident to teach in this school or in any other schools. I can also take up any responsibility that the school administration wants me to do because of the knowledge and skills that I have previously got have been extended when I participated in the TIT programme. (P02/F)

P03 related his new confidence as a practising teacher to two things: greater content knowledge of his teaching subject area and his satisfaction and pride in gaining a recognised teaching qualification:

I'm now so confident because of at least two things. Firstly, I have got the content knowledge in my area of teaching, and having been teaching for the last eight years as an untrained teacher. Secondly, with the qualification that I have got from the college after successfully completing the TITP, I have now patched the missing links as a practising teacher. I have now put everything together. And so when it comes to content knowledge and delivering it to students, I can do it with confidence. (P03/M)

P04 said that he now feels much more secure and confident:

By now I feel much more secure in my job as a teacher. I also feel very confident and believe in myself in whatever I do due to the knowledge and skills that I have gained in the TITP program. I can confidently teach and handle a large class. (P04/M)

P06's increased confidence meant he even felt prepared to teach in classes other than his own when required:

I am more confident than previously. Now if two teachers do not turn up for their classes on a particular day, I can confidently take care of their classes by hopping in to each class to teach and give the pupils activities to do, and regularly checking on them while taking care of my own class at the same time. (P06/M)

Increased content knowledge and the ability to ‘put it across’ featured in P07’s comment:

I would say that I am much more confident than before not only because I have a good content knowledge background of my teaching area, Science, but because I also know how to put across to students other knowledge and skills that are in my possession. (P07/F)

As for P01, she reported on her changed attitude toward a grade level she had tried to avoid as a UQT:

My confidence improved and that I was full of enthusiasm to teach Grade 6, a class that I often tried to avoid in my whole life as an untrained teacher. Grade 6 pupils have to sit an examination towards the end of an academic year in order to go on to Grade 7. I had the fear that if I taught them, they might fail and would not go on to Grade 7. But the TIT programme changed all that. I am now teaching Grade 6. (P01/F)

She went on to say:

I can now freely share ideas with the children because of my closeness to them. Those are some of the kinds of attitudes that I now have as a result of my experiences in the TITP. (P01/F)

In summary, the above findings show that the participants’ attitudes about teaching and teaching practices appear to have changed considerably as a result of their participation in formal teacher education, the TITP. They now feel more confident, committed, and competent than when they were still UQTs.

4.6 Participants’ perceptions of their preparedness to teach in Solomon Islands schools as fully qualified professionals

The participants’ responses reported in this section relate to the question on the “*effectiveness of the TITP in preparing the teachers to teach in Solomon Islands schools*”. There was a narrow range of responses on this issue so the findings are presented under just one sub-theme heading in this section.

4.6.1 The effectiveness of the TITP in preparing the participants

Most participants said that the TITP as a formal teacher education programme was highly effective. They considered that it had prepared them well even though it was a short and intensive programme. Some of them even recommended that the programme should be continuously offered as there are many UQTs still teaching

in Solomon Islands schools. For example, P01 noted that the programme was really effective even though she was not given the opportunity of attending a full two years of teacher education at the SOE of SICHE. The TITP had prepared her well to the extent that she now felt she could teach anywhere in the Solomon Islands:

The TIT programme was really effective. It really helped me a lot even though I missed the opportunity of attending two years of teacher training at the college of higher education. The four blocks of six weeks of training was quite effective. The programme had prepared me well to the extent that I am confident to teach in any primary schools in the Solomon Islands . . . It had really played a very important part in my teaching career as a former untrained teacher . . . even though it was a very short and intensive programme. (P01/F)

P02 also expressed the opinion that the programme was very effective, and should be continuously offered:

To me the programme should be continuously offered because it was a very helpful programme to those of us who have gone through it . . . The programme has been very effective in that it has given me much confidence to teach in schools. I am also creative in what I am doing as a professional teacher. The programme has given me more knowledge and skills to use in my teaching career. (P02/F)

Similarly, P03 commented that the programme was very good and effective in developing the UQTs to become FQPs:

As for myself, I socialised with the other students very well so I was able to get a couple of their views, and a lot of them had spoken highly of being selected to undertake the course. So like if my colleagues and I have felt the positive effects of the programme, it all meant that the programme was good in developing the untrained teachers to become fully trained professionals. (P03/M)

In addition, P03 further expressed that the TITP had helped him to be a better educationist. It had also boosted his morale to aspire to further studies as some other Solomon Islanders are doing (referring to the researcher as an example). To him now “The sky is the limit”. He further commented that the programme had been effective because it was well organised and delivered.

P06 also felt the effectiveness of the programme. It had prepared him and the other UTQs well, well enough to teach not only in the Solomon Islands but also elsewhere:

It was an effective programme in preparing us to teach in the schools in the Solomon Islands and elsewhere in the Pacific region or in the world. (P06/M)

P06 expressed his feeling about the programme in quite an emotional way:

Before I participated in the programme, I could feel that I was not fully equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to teach in schools. I was like feeling emptiness in me that something was missing. After I graduated, the feeling of preparedness was all over me. (P06/M)

On another note, P07 commented that the TITP as a teacher education programme had opened up her mind to see where she had gone wrong in the past, and what she needed to do in future:

Apart from the knowledge and skills that I gained when I was an untrained teacher through the workshops that were organised by the school administration, and what my Head of Department used to teach me, the TIT programme had really opened up my mind to realise where I went wrong, what I needed to know and the best ways to do them. (P07/F)

P07 continued by saying that she felt in a good position to pass on what she had learned to other teachers. She also noted that her colleagues also thought that the programme was very effective in preparing UQTs to return as fully qualified teachers:

I was able to learn many things which I am sure I can pass on to teachers who did not have the opportunity to take part in the programme. My other colleagues also think that the programme was very effective. It had prepared us well to teach in schools in the Solomon Islands. (P07/F)

4.7 Summary

In summary, this chapter's objective was to present the findings of the perceptions of seven teacher participants in Solomon Islands of their experiences in making the transition from being UQTs to their participation in formal teacher education, and their perceptions of their preparedness to teach in Solomon Islands schools as fully qualified professionals. These experiences and perceptions were revealed

through the semi-structured interviews and emerged from the analysis of the interview transcripts as common themes. The four major themes were focused around the main research and interview questions. These four themes were further sub-divided into thirteen sub-themes as set out in *Table 5*. The most important findings from the analysis are that the participants:

- experienced many challenges as UQTs
- needed much more help as UQTs than they actually received
- gained considerable knowledge and skills when they participated in the TITP
- became much more confident in themselves and their ability to teach in schools in Solomon Islands and elsewhere through the TITP.

Further discussion of the main findings and their significance will be the main focus of the next chapter, Chapter 5.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter critically analyses the findings of the study outlined in Chapter 4. In the course of the discussion, some of the issues raised and reported in the introductory chapter (Chapter 1) and the literature review (Chapter 2) will be used to link them with the new knowledge created as the result of this study of what the participants had perceived and experienced along the journey from being former secondary and tertiary students, through being unqualified teachers (UQTs), their participation in the Teachers in Training Programme (TITP), to their experiences in schools as fully qualified professionals (FQPs).

In order to investigate and re-tell the stories of the seven teacher participants' perceptions and experiences, this study was guided by the following focus questions:

1. What are the participants' perceptions and experiences that they had gone through in making the transition to become unqualified teachers (UQTs)?
2. What are the participants' perceptions of the knowledge and skills gained through their participation in the Teachers in Training Programme (TITP)?
3. How have the participants' attitudes about teaching and their teaching practices changed as a result of the experiences in the TITP?
4. How effective has the TITP been in preparing the teachers to teach in Solomon Islands schools?

My literature search suggested there were no studies examining the transition experiences and perceptions of former UQTs now teaching in Solomon Islands schools as fully qualified professionals (FQPs). This is significant when increasing numbers of UQTs are being recruited to teach in schools, especially in the rural areas where schools often experience teacher shortages. This situation is made even more serious when schools are by and large inadequately prepared to help and support UQTs. They meet unfamiliar, and in many cases quite traumatic

experiences in their transition from student to unqualified teacher. Similarly those who then move into a teacher education programme and finally return to schools as qualified teachers (QTs) also experience a wide array of important changes and challenges. As it seems that this study is the first of its kind to be done in the Solomon Islands, the intention of the researcher is to make it available to people responsible for recruiting UQTs and then assisting them through the process of transition to become FQPs in the Solomon Islands and the Pacific Island countries. Knowing more about the changes and challenges involved they will be better prepared to accommodate and support UQTs as they move towards full professional qualification.

This chapter of the thesis sets out to discuss these challenges in a way that highlights the importance of the many issues involved and their complexity. Using work done earlier in the thesis, I also seek to identify the implications of my findings and offer some ideas on what might be done to improve this aspect of the Solomon Islands education system. Thus the framework adopted in this chapter is to return to each of the major findings and to critically review its theoretical and practical implications, with some speculations regarding what might need to happen next in relation to each of the themes.

5.2 Narrative of the transition from former student to unqualified teacher

In the Solomon Islands as well as in other countries, UQTs are playing an important role in the education of the pupils. The participants in this study were initially employed in schools as a way of filling the gaps created when qualified teachers left or when new positions remained vacant due to the acute shortage of trained qualified teachers (TQTs). There are a variety of reasons why it is difficult to fill such vacancies, as outlined by Aqorau (2008); Lai & Grossman (2008); Thaman (2007); and UNESCO (2007), and discussed in Chapter 2.

The shift from a secondary school or tertiary institution to a classroom to teach with no formal teaching qualification is a landmark transition period for UQTs, often punctuated with powerful and unforgettable experiences. It is a movement from the known to the unknown in terms of the pupils and teachers that they are going to interact with and the lessons that they are going to prepare and teach. They meet new people (teachers, principals/deputy principals and those who are

part of the school administration, and parents and stakeholders who are part of the wider school community); pupils and the school curriculum, and topics to teach; and the knowledge and skills required to plan learning and then deliver it effectively in the classroom. As they do all this without any formal training, UQTs have to make major adjustments in order to adapt to the new environment under very difficult circumstances. The responsibility for making this difficult transition manageable rests with the leadership of the schools affected. Ideally, schools should be prepared to accommodate UQTs so that the transitions they will go through may be as smooth as possible, giving them the opportunity of a good head start. However, this is often not the case as some of the experiences of the participants in this study have shown. The leading teachers and professionals in the schools where they were teaching often had no formal preparation to play such a role effectively.

The participants' stories in this study revealed that all the participants had "powerful" experiences during their time working as UQTs in schools. In many cases these were very difficult and had a major impact on individuals' perceptions of teaching. This does not come as a surprise. As a person undergoes a major transition in life, especially one that is very complex, and for which they have had no real preparation, there are major challenges (Pearsall, 1998; Goldblatt & Smith, 2005) that can be encountered. The participants in this study were no exception. For UQTs in the Solomon Islands, "becoming a teacher involves a transition" (Feiman-Nemeser, 2000, cited in Wanzare, 2007, p. 343) from being a former secondary school student or a graduate of a tertiary institution to teaching in a primary or secondary school that involves confronting the daily challenges of the school and classroom environments with no teaching qualification. The obvious serious challenge involved in this raises an important question: Why do unqualified people want to become teachers under such potentially trying circumstances?

5.2.1 Reasons for choosing teaching

This study identified a variety of reasons why UQTs choose "teaching as a profession" (Groundwater-Smith, Ewing, & Cornu, 2006, p. 40), even though they would have known that in the Solomon Islands, teachers' pay is low compared to

other professions (Malasa, 2007) and that teaching is a demanding and hard job (Ayers, 1993; Borich, 1995; Johnson, Musial, Johnson, Cooper, Lockard, O'Neill, Pierce, Stratton & Strickland, 2009).

However, despite the “challenges of teaching” (Danielson, 2009, p. 7) the participants chose to start teaching as UQTs. These reasons were often community or family-minded ones (Phillips & Hatch, 2000; Yong, 1995). For example, their choices were often influenced by their concern for the education of the children in the communities where they lived and served during their time as UQTs; by the way their former teachers had taught them; by their own conviction that they would do the job properly; and by the need to work to earn some money because of the non-availability of the jobs that they had previously intended to do. I discuss these carefully reasoned out motives for becoming teachers next.

To begin with, it is evident from the findings of this study that the participants like P01, P02, and P05 saw the need to develop children academically and intellectually. The participants' desire was to look after the children in schools so that they would have the opportunity for the proper formal education that they deserved. This came at a time when there was a shortage of teachers. For some participants, like P05, their intention was to make the children good citizens in the future. Fito'o (2009), citing Heater's (1999) work, stresses that “citizens are people who are furnished with knowledge of public affairs, instilled with attitudes of civic virtue, and equipped with skills to participate in the public arena” (p. 17). The participants in this study know that through taking part in formal education in schools, the children will be guided and supported to attain the above important characteristics of a citizen.

Furthermore, when the participants perceived the need of the children to have proper formal education, it seems that they were embracing the notion of the love for children (Papanastasiou & Papanastasiou, 1997). This was a revelation of their innermost emotional feeling, bringing to light what Hargreaves (1998) and Wilson (2004) assert, that teaching is an emotional profession and practice. The participants were responding from the heart in their belief that education is important because it provides children with the necessary knowledge and skills to enable them to develop into what John et al. (2009) call “well-functional adults (p.

7) and to become good citizens, as P05 stated and is supported by Yong (1995). This in turn corresponds well to what Wilson (2004) contends teachers are doing: “preparing the young for life in an increasingly complex and changing world” (p. 3). Although the Solomon Islands is an independent nation, it is not living in isolation. It is part of the complex and continuously changing world that Wilson (2004) is referring to. It is teachers like the participants in this study who are responsible to prepare the young people in the schools to meet the challenges that can be encountered in life in this complex and changing world.

The second reason why people become teachers revealed by this study is to do with people being fascinated and inspired by other people’s actions, in a way that may have an effect on what they want to do or may become in the foreseeable future. This study found that three of the seven participants, P01, P04, and P05, decided to become teachers because of the “effects of certain teachers” that inspired and motivated them (Phillips, & Hatch, 2000, p. 376). During their time as students the participants had had good experiences with their former teachers and ways in which they taught (Younger, Brindley, Pedder & Hagger, 2004). It seems that the participants had experienced a lot of interesting and motivating teaching approaches that had attracted them to working as UQTs. In such a scenario, it can be said that there are teachers in schools that can teach in ways that can inspire and motivate pupils to see teaching as a worthwhile career to pursue.

The third reason that this study found that motivated people to take up teaching is to do with self-confidence. If people have self-confidence, it means that they have the feeling and belief in themselves that they have the ability to do things successfully, even if there is an obstacle or a challenge that lies ahead (Davidhizar, 1993). Self-confidence is an important feature “in any walk of life” (Leaman, 2008, (p. 25), as people may have to face certain upheavals in life as individuals, and rely on their own judgment and willpower to make things happen. With regards to teaching, a person has to have confidence prior to becoming a teacher and once they are practising as a teacher. Self-confidence gives teachers the ability to face whatever the environment in the classroom is, as teachers will be on their own (Leaman, 2008). This study found that the participants’ initial

decision to become UQTs demonstrated that they were confident they had the ability, judgment and willpower to be able to teach, despite the numerous obstacles and challenges that they would face. Two of the participants, P04, and P07, were exactly in this situation. Individual prior experience had given them the confidence to teach; P04 relied on his leadership role when he was a student, while P07 relied on her content knowledge of her teaching subject, Science.

Finally, the fourth reason for people becoming teachers that this study found is the lack of other job opportunities (Yong, 1995). In a developing country such as the Solomon Islands, job opportunities for secondary school leavers as well as university graduates are often scarce. This can be attributed to the many different aspects of the political and economic background of a country. For example, in industrialised countries, there can be more job opportunities available compared to a developing country where the economy is agriculturally based. It is even worse if disturbances like wars disrupt a country socially and economically. Overseas investors may withdraw from the country, leaving workers jobless and exacerbating the non-availability of job opportunities.

This study found that when P03 and P07 returned to the Solomon Islands after completing their studies in overseas universities, they found themselves in a situation in which there were no jobs available for them, but they needed to work to put into practice what they had learned and to earn a living. For the participants, the specific cause for being unable to find the jobs that each of them wished to do was the social unrest resulting from the tension between two rival ethnic groups that affected the Solomon Islands between 1998 and 2003 (Bennett, 2002; Kabutaulaka, 2001; Kabutaulaka, 2004; Ki'i, 2001; McDougall, 2009; Moore, 2008). During this period most local and foreign industries closed down. In fact, P03 and P07 were not intending to teach after completing their tertiary studies. P03 had hoped to work as an economist, while P07 was intending to work in the mining industry. The situation faced by these two participants provided them with what is sometimes referred to as an extrinsic motive (Yong, 1995). In a country like Solomon Islands where employment is quite hard to find because of the non-availability of a good number of businesses and industries that can provide job opportunities, graduates are likely to “drift” away from what they

initially wanted to do (Osborn & Broadfoot, 1993). This is exactly what happened to P03 and P07. They became UQTs because what each of them was qualified to do was not providing job openings, while teaching vacancies were available; so they “drifted” into teaching.

The stories about the transitions in teaching in this study that the participants told revealed that making the decision to become a UQT resulted in a series of unavoidable difficulties. The participants’ stories of the nature of these difficulties are discussed next.

5.2.2 Nature of difficulties experienced

Sometimes difficulties are hard to avoid as people face the realities of the world that surrounds them. This study found that all seven participants experienced difficulties while working in schools as UQTs due to their lack of initial teacher preparation and the lack of preparation by their schools to accommodate and support them. The difficulties that the participants experienced were twofold: those that were related to teaching as a profession; and personal difficulties that they had to encounter as individuals.

5.2.2.1 Professional difficulties experienced

The professional difficulties that the participants experienced as UQTs seemed unavoidable as they navigated their way through the world of teaching with no prior teaching qualifications. A lack of knowledge and skills in lesson planning and preparation, preparing a scheme of work and classroom management were the professional difficulties that five of the participants experienced. For example, P02 and P04 found that they lacked the knowledge and skills to prepare lessons and schemes of work. This can undermine an important aspect of pedagogical content knowledge, which is knowing how to teach (Sherin, 2002; Shulman, 1987, cited in Killen, 2003; Whitton et al., 2004). Lesson plans are teachers’ guides (Killen, 2003) and help them to organise their teaching in the classroom and be more focused so that they will be effective (Leaman, 2008). Therefore, it is important for a teacher to have the knowledge and skill to plan and prepare a lesson, to guide them in their classroom. Being ignorant of these skills thus may have a negative effect on the teacher’s performance and their students’ achievements.

As lesson planning is an indication of a teacher's knowledge and understanding of the curriculum, the pupils, and the teaching methods that will be used to implement a prepared lesson, a teacher needs time to learn it, preferably in teacher education institutions or through alternative teacher education routes (Feistritzer, 2005; Lai & Grossman, 2008) and of course with the help of responsible people in the schools. It was evident in this study that the participants were not in a good position to plan and prepare their lessons well as they needed a mentor within the school to assist them with this. However, most reported this was not often provided; therefore they depended on the teachers whom they worked with and staff in the departments for assistance, as expressed by P02, P03, P04, and P07.

Classroom management was another professional difficulty that the participants experienced. Three participants, P05, P06, and P07, explained that they were not able to manage and control their classes for various reasons, such as their lack of understanding of how the students should behave and the different behaviours and attitudes that the students displayed in class. This indicates that they lacked the knowledge and skills not only to manage and control the students, they may also have lacked the knowledge of planning and preparing lessons that would keep the pupils interested (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2006), thus avoiding unwanted behaviours and attitudes in the classroom.

5.2.2.2 Personal difficulties experienced

Teachers, whether qualified or not, face personal difficulties as well as professional difficulties. Such difficulties can be a natural part of people's transitions from one stage of life to the next and may require some kind of support, help and guidance to ease them. This study found that four of the seven participants, P01, P03, P05 and P06, faced and experienced a number of personal difficulties such as poor salary, lack of accommodation, and poor transportation. In addition, some experienced emotional challenges such as feeling unsure about what to do in the classroom, and not being comfortable about standing in front of the students in the first weeks of schooling. These indicate that the participants were probably not being properly inducted, helped and supported right from the beginning of their journey as UQTs. Although these difficulties were personal to each participant, some of them, such as problems with salary and accommodation,

were not of their making. Possibly they could have been resolved if schools and the education authorities (EAs) had been quick to respond to them. On the other hand, transportation was beyond the control of the participants, schools, the EAs, and the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD).

It has been stated in the literature that, although teachers are in high demand, teaching is a lowly paid profession in the Solomon Islands (Malasa, 2007) compared to other professions like law and medicine. In the Solomon Islands, teachers' salaries are usually paid by the MEHRD. *Table 6* shows a summary of salary scales for teachers in the Solomon Islands.

Table 6. Teachers' salary scale

Academic Level	Salary Scale	Basic Salary (SBD)
<u>Unqualified Teachers</u>		
Form 5	Level 2.1	350.01
Form 6	Level 2.2	353.45
Form 7	Level 2.3	356.90
Certificate without Education	Level 4.1	578.66
Diploma without Education	Level 5.1	743.39
Bachelor without Education	Level 6.1	940.09
<u>Qualified Teachers</u>		
Certificate in Teaching/Education	Level 4.5	608.16
Diploma in Teaching/Education	Level 5.5	772.89
Bachelor in Teaching/Education	Level 6.8	991.71

Source: Information taken from the Solomon Islands Teaching Service Handbook, 2006, MEHRD.

During their time as UQTs, the participants were in a very difficult situation. Their salaries were paid by the schools and so some of them received much smaller amounts each fortnight, similar to other developing countries as Pandey (2009) has noted. For some, their salaries were not paid consistently. For example, P01 said that sometimes she would go without pay for a month or even longer. This was unfair for the participants as UQTs. As there are still many UQTs in the Solomon Islands teaching on equal terms with qualified and experienced teachers, it is more than likely that some of them will leave the profession if responsible school authorities in the country continue to pay UQTs meager salaries. It is also highly likely that teaching as a profession will lose its

attraction, especially for UQTs, who are expected to fill in the gaps because of teacher shortages (Lai & Grossman, 2008). This in turn could cause an enormous increase in the shortage of teachers which will be detrimental to the education of the young people in the Solomon Islands.

Accommodation in terms of a good residential dwelling is one of the basic human needs. It is therefore essential that a person is properly accommodated because basically a house provides not only shelter, but security and privacy as well for the occupant(s). It is also a site where teachers plan and prepare lessons and other school related activities like marking pupils' work and evaluating pupils' performances during off hours. This study found that some of the participants were not being provided with accommodation during their time as UQTs. For example, P01, teaching in a village school, was not being provided with any accommodation by her school, and at times this affected her work as a teacher. It was very fortunate for her that her wantoks gave her a place to stay. In village communities in the Solomon Islands, schools frequently do not have enough houses for teachers, for a variety of reasons. It may be because of the lack of money to purchase appropriate building materials. Another reason can be the absence of strong community leadership to organise the community to use local (bush) materials to build teachers' houses. This may not help in uplifting and maintaining the Melanesian notion of "All is for one".

In Honiara, the capital of the Solomon Islands, housing shortages are causing a surge in the demand for accommodation and increases in rents. One Honiara participant, P05, was fortunate to be provided with accommodation by the school's EA. This displays the EA's commitment to help and support its teachers in a caring manner to make the teachers feel welcome and secure in the school community.

This study has shown that the provision of good accommodation for new teachers such as UQTs will help them in their transition into teaching as newcomers to the profession. Being properly housed can be a motivational factor for a teacher to stay on in a particular school. Poor accommodation provision may result in a teacher moving to another school, or to another profession altogether.

As the Solomon Islands is a country with many scattered islands (Akao, 2008; Malasa, 2007; Ruqebatu, 2008), transportation by boat from one island to another is crucial; however, it is neither efficient nor adequate. For teachers who teach in another province, getting to a school is very difficult at times because boats may not often go to their home islands, or teachers may not have spaces in the boats. This is typical in the Solomon Islands, especially at the beginning of each year when everybody rushes back to their places of work. This often affects teachers' movements. Some teachers often arrive late at their schools. This study found that one participant, P03, was stranded for a while in Honiara because there was no boat immediately available that would be going to the province where he supposed to be teaching. In such a scenario, it would be very difficult for UQTs as they need to arrive in the schools well before the starting date so that they can prepare for the tough task of teaching that lies ahead of them. While transport difficulties are beyond the control of the teachers, schools, EAs and the MEHRD they can cause really difficult situations to teachers and schools.

Another personal difficulty that beginning teachers typically face is the fear of students, that is, shyness and un-confidence when put in front of a class. For UQTs that can be a particularly traumatic experience as they often have had no preparation for it. In this study, P03 and P05 reported this as an experience that caused them real difficulties as newcomers to the world of teaching. This indicates that UQTs generally could be in a very difficult position as they moved from being students or from their previous non-teaching jobs to the classrooms to teach without any practical teaching experiences. There is clearly a need for schools to be aware of such difficulties and assist UQTs with this challenging aspect of their transition to classroom teaching.

5.2.3 Inadequate professional and personal help and support for UQTs

In most instances when people face difficulties, there is some form of assistance and support available for them. In the case of teaching, responsible people in the schools where UQTs are working could be expected to fill this role. The discussion in this section is centered on the nature of the help UQTs received in the professional and personal difficulties they experienced.

This study found that the form of help and support the participants received from the leading professionals in their UQT schools included attending formal courses, participating in department discussions, monitoring of their classroom teaching, being members of school committees and writing and compiling of exam questions, but not their basic needs, such as lesson planning and preparation and classroom management. For example, P02 mentioned that the principal sent her to the Solomon Islands Campus of the University of the South Pacific in Honiara to do a literacy course as part of her professional development. P06 noted that as part of his professional development the headmistress assigned him to a school committee to help with the overall running and management of the school's programmes.

This study has also found that while participants usually received significant help and support from the leading professionals in their UQT schools often the nature of support received was inadequate.

Two of the seven participants, P03 and P07, noted that there was no real induction process in place for them as UQTs beginning work in a school. In fact they reported that they were not even introduced to the staff and students of the schools nor given a basic tour of the schools. Reflecting on why this happened, they thought that the reason could be that they were first degree graduates and so the schools might not consider it needed to organise any inductions for them. Another reason could be that they might have been known already to most staff of their respective schools, so there was no need for an induction session to be done for each of them. Also, it could be that some degree of trust was bestowed on them, as P03 had noted, so they were left alone to do whatever they could do.

If this was the case, it was an unwarranted assumption. It is true that the two participants, P03, and P07, had degree qualifications, but they lacked pedagogical content knowledge (Eggen, & Kauchak, 2006, cited in Lubbers et al., 2008; Killen, 2003; Sherin, 2002) to effectively teach the subject content knowledge (Bianco, 2006; Creemers, 1994; Elliott, 2005; Fox, 2005; Johnson et. al., 2009; Leaman, 2008; Kerry, & Wilding, 2004; Rowan, Chiang, & Miller, 1997; Sherin, 2002; Stones, 1992) that they possessed. Therefore, they too needed proper inductions.

In any workplace, employees should be inducted so that they can meet their colleagues and learn about the nature of their jobs and the equipments and resources that they will be using. This would help them in their transitions in the workplace. The employees should also be given ongoing support through professional development programmes and the provision of mentors to look after their ongoing development. All of this applies to UQTs as well.

This study found that five of the seven participants did receive some induction when they started teaching. However, it appeared to have been limited to being introduced to the whole school during school assemblies in the first week of school and given instruction on the classes that they would teach and what to teach. The schools may have limited knowledge of how to properly induct UQTs using an induction process made up of a range of activities to support and provide basic trainings for teachers entering classrooms for the first time (Veenman, Gerrits & Kenter, 1999).

Specific guidance from a designated mentor to guide, support and develop teachers including UQTs through the initial weeks in their schools would be a valuable form of induction (Veenman, Delaat & Staring, 1998; Wilson, 2004). However, all seven participants in this study reported that they had had no mentors officially assigned to them by the schools. Nonetheless, the participants themselves regarded the teachers they worked with as their immediate helpers, and thus regarded them unofficially as mentors.

It appears the leadership of the participants' schools did not see the importance of assigning experienced teachers to be mentors for UQTs. Some of the schools may not have experienced teachers to provide mentoring support to their colleagues. In such a case, the principals and their deputies as the leading figures in schools should definitely play a leading role in helping and supporting UQTs. In the literature, it is stipulated that the primary role of a principal with regards to leadership is centered on instructional leadership (DiPola & Hoy, 2008). DiPola and Hoy (2008). DiPola and Hoy (2008) further argue that the main tasks of "instructional leadership are supervision of instruction, evaluation of instruction, and professional development of teachers" (p. 1).

One participant however, did have some good assistance as a UQT in her school. This is discussed in the next section. However, the other six participants seem to have received limited help. This may be due to a lack of the initiative on the part of the school leadership to allocate selected people in the schools to help out in the development of the participants as UQTs. It may be due to a lack of knowledge about and experience in providing useful guidance in teaching practice to new teachers.

5.2.4 UQTs' experiences on quality professional and personal support

On the other hand, some participants in this study reported that quality help with planning and teaching lessons effectively came from colleagues in subject departments, as P07 noted. She suggested that the hints, advice, and suggestions on lesson planning and teaching effective lessons that her colleagues used to give her were a great help to her. This example displays a sense of a good departmental teamwork that should be more common in schools. Furthermore, P07 mentioned that the discussions that she and her HOD in the Science department held on a regular basis really helped her as well. Departmental discussions either formal or informal, allows ideas and thoughts on how best to teach the pupils and run the department can be thrown around and discussed collectively and collaboratively. This will help teachers in the department to be more focused on teaching and pupils' learning.

In addition, the deputy principal (DP) in P07's school was very helpful in observing and monitoring the teachers' lessons, including hers. According to P07, the DP's actions had helped her to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the lessons that she taught. Here, P07 may have been thinking of the importance of teachers making self-evaluation of the lessons after they teach them. According to Moore (2009) an evaluation is simply "the process of making judgment" (p. 249). Through the process of making judgment, teachers will be able to make amendments on the parts of the lessons that they judge as needing modification so that if the same lessons are taught again they will be much improved.

People entering teaching as UQTs can gain some basic knowledge and skills from those within the school. UQTs in schools do not work in total isolation because as they are a part of a school's teaching team, informal interactions often take place

between the teachers. Some of the participants in this study felt they had gained some basic teaching knowledge and skills in this way. Such knowledge and skills are mentioned in the literature as including subject content knowledge (Bianco, 2006; Creemers, 1994; Elliott, 2005; Fox, 2005; Johnson et. al., 2009; Leaman, 2008; Kerry, & Wilding, 2004; Rowan, Chiang, & Miller, 1997; Sherin, 2002; Stones, 1992); pedagogical content knowledge (Lubbers, Repetto, & McGorray (2008) citing Eggen's and Kauchak's, 2006); and lesson planning (Whitton et al., 2004). All seven participants in this study found that they had benefitted in this way while practising as UQTs, but their view on this was that it was nonetheless insufficient. The participants clearly expressed that they should have been given more help and support; and some of the participants did not mention any specific knowledge or skill that they gained while teaching as UQTs.

It is clear from the stories discussed above that where the principal, DP, experienced teachers, and others in schools acting as "learning communities" (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2006; Wilson, 2007) they provided quality help to UQTs. This appears to have been the case for P07. Teachers in such schools do not work in isolation, but work together to help each other as a team for the common goal of helping pupils to learn. Where a professional learning community (PLC) culture is operating, UQTs can gain a form of on-the-job training as part of the school's PLC. Unfortunately, this had happened for only one of the seven participants, indicating that such an experience is exceptional rather than the rule for most UQTs. While others did acquire some professional knowledge and skill while working as UQTs this was usually haphazard, informal and in the participants' views quite inadequate.

On the other hand, some participants felt that they had received worthwhile help from the school administration staff (including principals, secretaries, and bursars) with practical personal issues. For example, some urban schools provided the materials and resources that the participants would need to prepare lessons for the classes. P07 specifically mentioned that the materials and resources that she used were provided by the school's administration. Her school was situated in Honiara and was well supported by the school's EA. I would assume that some UQTs like P01 in rural schools would not be so lucky as to have access to school materials

and resources for at least two basic reasons: the shortage of money; and the remoteness of some of the schools, which made it difficult to transport materials and resources to them.

This study suggests that UQTs are more likely to receive help with personal difficulties such as accommodation and salary than they are with professional teaching issues. In the case of P01, the headmaster continued to pay her meager salary. Likewise, P03 mentioned that the principal paid him some money on fortnightly basis to buy basic necessities like soap. The principal also tried to put him on the government payroll to receive a fortnightly pay like the other teachers in that school where he was a UQT before moving to S02 community high school after the TITP. Similarly, the EA of P05's school paid her salary, gave her bus fare, and provided her with accommodation.

In the next section, the discussion will focus on the participants' perceptions of the knowledge and skills gained when they participated in formal teacher education programme, the TITP.

5.3 Participants' perceptions of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes gained through the TITP as a formal teacher education programme

The problems and issues that the participants faced as UQTs and which were discussed in the previous section have been recognized and indeed acted on. The participants in this study were part of the TITP briefly outlined earlier in Chapters 1 and 2. Teaching knowledge and skills are of vital importance if teachers are to teach the pupils effectively. The usual places to learn the knowledge and skills of teaching formally are either the colleges and universities that traditionally offer formal teacher education (Feistritzer, 2005; Lai & Grossman, 2008) or a number of alternative routes (Feistritzer, 2005; Lai & Grossman, 2008; Mitchell & Romero, 2010) such as the school-based teacher training programmes (Kumasi 1994) that are offered in many countries such as the 'Untrained Teachers Training Diploma in Basic Education (UTTDBE) in Ghana which trains UQTs without them having to leave their schools (Kumasi, 1994). It is through such training, sometimes lengthy in nature, that a person becomes a professional (Bell, 1992).

This study found that the participants' participation in the TITP as an intensive formal teacher education programme had provided an opportunity for them to

obtain the knowledge and skills that they felt had been developed in only a partial and inadequate way when they were working as UQTs. It was an opportunity for them to gain a teaching qualification and become FQPs.

This development was timely as the expectations of communities for teacher quality are increasing (Pantic, & Wubbels, 2010). Various governments have established policies and legislations like the ‘No Child Left Behind’ legislation in the US that require teachers to be qualified to teach (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003; Feistritz, 2005; Heine and Emesiochl, 2007; Lubbers, Repetto, & McGorray, 2008; Moore, 2005, 2009). In the case of the Solomon Islands, the MEHRD’s paper *Teacher Education and Development Policy* noted in Chapter 2 supports and upholds teacher quality. Policy makers value the quality of teachers as an essential ingredient to impart knowledge “to a variety of situations within their [teachers’] professional setting” (Pantic, & Wubbels, 2010, p. 695). This has led Voigt-Graf (2003) to argue that the effectiveness of an education system depends very much on teacher quality. As noted in Chapter 1, the education system of the Solomon Islands sits on a hierarchical level of examinations. For example, towards the end of Year 6 and 9, the education system “weeds” out pupils who do not get the required minimum score to move over to the next year level in the following year. Therefore it is necessary for the teachers to be qualified so that they may compete on equal terms with teachers in other schools. In the literature, Ogawa, Huston, and Stine (1999) state that the knowledge and skills that teachers have got can have a positive impact on the academic performance of pupils.

The following sections discuss those aspects of this formal teacher education phase (the TITP) that the participants in this study considered to be particularly valuable to them in their journey toward becoming fully qualified primary and secondary school teachers.

5.3.1 Greater understanding of pupils

The first major impact of the TITP that the participants identified in this study was the greater understanding of their pupils they gained. Understanding how pupils learn and how and why they behave as they do is important for teachers. For example, P07 reported that the TITP enabled her to realise and understand that

there were several ways that could influence pupils learning that she had not previously been aware of. One of the ways could be the student-centred type of learning that some participants noted. It is through such understanding that teachers will be able to plan and prepare lessons and classroom activities that will help their pupils to learn effectively.

UQTs teaching for the first time may not have a clear understanding of how pupils behave in the classroom. They may regard noisy pupils as being naughty. This was exactly the situation that P06 was in as a UQT. However, all that changed. He reported that the TITP had made him to change his thoughts about noisy pupils in the classroom. He came to know that a child acting in an unacceptable manner in the classroom may have got a family problem back at home. Therefore, according to P06's view, it is good to know and understand a child's personal background before jumping onto the assumption that if a child is noisy in the classroom, he or she is naughty as well.

5.3.2 Improved knowledge about teaching

Obtaining extensive knowledge through teacher education is an important aspect of teacher preparation. In this respect, teacher education programmes are there to prepare teachers to get teaching qualification certificates (Oduolowu, 2009) and be regarded as FQPs. This study found that the second major impact that the participants identified by the end of the TITP was that they had learned a lot about teaching, especially in the areas of lesson planning and the various strategies that teachers can use in class in order for the pupils to learn effectively. Most of them highlighted the student-centred learning in the form of group work as something new that they had learned. This can lead to better understanding and more enjoyment of learning for students. Participants P01, P03, P05, and P07 all considered that their knowledge of teaching meant that pupils were better able to understand what they were teaching them. When pupils understand what the teachers are teaching them they are more likely to achieve good academic results. According to Kiewra (2002) this is because the teachers are able to “present information so effectively that students are compelled to learn in effective ways” (p. 78).

Participants also claimed that student-centred teaching increased the variety and interest of their lessons. This in turn can result in greater engagement of pupils and more motivation to learn. Thus a teacher's performance can have a profound effect on the pupils' knowledge and skills, and result in improved academic achievement. In this regard, Wilson (2004) states that "If pupils seem to be enjoying the teacher's lesson and learning from it, the teacher feels good about him or her and his or her commitment to teaching is reinforced" (p. 31).

The next section will be on the participants' changes in attitudes about teaching and teaching practices as a result of their participation in the TITP.

5.4 Changes in the participants' attitudes toward teaching and teaching practices

UQTs who have moved into a formal teacher education programme will meet a wide range of new information and ideas. Over time, this process is likely to have an impact on their attitudes and views about teaching and what constitute quality teaching practices. The participants in this study noted a number of changes in this affective realm. They included attitudes and feelings about teaching; the need for preparation and commitment to teaching; and their confidence as practising teachers.

5.4.1 Attitudes and feelings about teaching

People may have different approaches toward what they do, and these may change over time. Their beliefs, attitudes, and feelings about certain things in life may change as well due to what they may experience. This study found that the TITP changed the participants' attitudes and feelings about teaching. For example, during his time as an UQT, P06 used to give work to his pupils as individuals and did not check on what they were doing. This had all changed. He now checked his pupils while they work and also regularly divided them into groups to do and complete their work as a group. P07 reported she now included a wide range of the student-centred learning activities in all her lessons. P04 now felt he was part of the community of teachers as practitioners. For the participants to have experienced such changes in attitude about teaching is a real achievement. It means the participants have new approaches and new vision about how best to teach the pupils in their care. These changes of attitude are likely to bring the

participants into closer relationship with their pupils and enable them to learn more about them. In turn, the pupils will know more about their teachers. This may result in the pupils' growing confidence and trust in their teachers.

5.4.2 Greater appreciation for the need for preparation and commitment to teaching

Preparation and commitment to teaching must be in teachers' minds, subconsciously at least, all the time. Teachers have to be well prepared prior to going into the classroom to teach. The experience of UQTs is often such that the importance of detailed planning and a strong commitment to the "hard-work" aspect of teaching is not always well developed. It is what teachers prepare that helps to influence pupils' learning and achievement. But this requires a certain degree of commitment to teaching. The study found that some participants' appreciation of this point was enhanced by their TITP experience. For example, P01 noted that she was much more aware of the need to prepare in depth and to be fully committed to teaching after participating in the TITP.

5.4.3 Greater confidence as practising teachers

Teachers who practise their profession with confidence have the belief and experience to know that what they transmit to their pupils will be done in a manner that will bring success to pupils' academic achievement (Davidhizar, 1993). This confidence may be influenced by what the teachers know they can do well. This study found that the confidence of six of the seven participants increased as practising teachers due to several factors. In particular, they considered the greater content knowledge of their teaching areas, the wider range of their teaching skills, and their certificates in teaching all gave them much greater teaching confidence. This meant they felt much more comfortable in their role as teachers and learning facilitators in their classrooms. This was in direct contrast to the feeling they had had as UQTs. The participants' increased confidence was not confined to teaching alone, but also to other school related matters such as school administration. It is interesting to note that some participants felt confident to teach other classes apart from their own if designated teachers did not turn up for work.

The discussion in the last section of this chapter will focus on the participants' perceptions of their preparedness to teach in Solomon Islands schools as FQPs.

5.5 Participants' perceptions of their preparedness to teach in Solomon Islands schools as fully qualified professionals

The discussion in this section is centered on the effectiveness of the TITP for the participants with regards to their preparedness to teach in Solomon Islands schools as FQPs. At this point, the participants were asked to reflect on how they considered their TITP experiences were assisting them in their new role as FQPs.

5.5.1 The effectiveness of the TITP in preparing the participants

The successful completion of teacher preparation through a formal teacher education programme to obtain a "teaching certificate" (Oduolowu, 2009, p. 331) indicates those teachers desire to become trained and qualified professionals, and a beginning of a career that will see them equipped not only to teach confidently in classrooms but also to take up other responsibilities that may be delegated to them by their superiors. This study found that five of the seven participants considered the TITP programme had been very effective in preparing them to teach in Solomon Islands schools as FQPs. The programme is relatively short and intensive but most of the teachers saw and felt considerable benefits in the programme. The participants identified four main areas of real benefit.

Firstly, the participants considered the programme had enabled them to teach in any school in the Solomon Islands, or elsewhere in the Pacific, and perhaps even globally. This corresponds with what the *School of Education Teacher Education Handbook* (2009) states. This study found that three participants, P01, P06, and P07, claimed that they had been well prepared to teach in a variety of school types. It can be said that such a claim reveals the participants' beliefs that they can take up the challenges of teaching, wherever the place of teaching may be, and whoever the pupils are, and the communities which they will serve as FQPs.

Secondly, the participants reported that the programme had been good in developing their knowledge and skills on a whole range of aspects of teaching. For example, this study found that P06 clearly identified this as a benefit. As outlined earlier, a confident teacher is armed with the knowledge and skills included in the TITP as a new range of tools to use in the classroom and will

know what they have to focus on as FQPs. P07 even stated that due to her preparation as a teacher she could now pass on to other teachers what she had learned. As noted earlier, P07 had had good UQT experiences and with the increased knowledge and skills obtained in the TITP felt confident enough to be a mentor to other teachers. This participant had already experienced a PLC culture in her UQT days. Her reflections in this study indicate that she now wanted to take a more active part in her community of practice to help share knowledge and expertise in teaching in a collaborative manner.

Thirdly, the participants suggested that the TITP experience had boosted not only their morale as confident educationists but had also inspired them to do further study in the future. P03 was a good example of that, and had firm aspirations to do further study. This is a reflection of how enthusiastic some of the participants were to strive to achieve higher academic levels of achievements for their own personal gains as well as to help to educate young Solomon Islanders.

Lastly, for some participants, the TITP had “opened their minds” to the extent that they could now see where they had gone wrong when they were UQTs. P07 was such a teacher. The TITP had given her the opportunity to recognise the mistakes she had made while teaching as a UQT. It is when teachers have clear and open minds about what they are supposed to do that they will commit themselves to their work as teachers to teach the pupils properly.

These strongly developed reflections were spread across a range of the participants. While the other participants were not so specific, there is definitely evidence in the data assembled and reported in this study to suggest that these benefits are probably reasonably and widely distributed among those who complete the TITP.

5.6 Summary

This study found that all the participants had experienced a wide range of transition experiences over the three stages they reported on in this study, that is, as UQTs, TITP students and finally as FQPs. They gave their perceptions of what they learned and felt as UQTs. They expressed their opinions about what should be happening for UQTs in Solomon Islands schools. They explained how what

they experienced as participants in the TITP had changed the cognitive (knowledge/thinking), psychomotor (skills) and affective (values and beliefs) domains. They also reflected on their prior experiences as UQTs and TITP students to comment on how the TITP experience was now contributing to their work as FQPs teaching in Solomon Islands schools. Some of the experiences shared by the participants are congruent with what the literature says in several areas, including: the shortage of teachers; what motivates people to become teachers; and the importance of participating in teacher education programmes to become qualified teachers. This study found that teacher education and preparation are vital as they will change the attitudes of teachers about teaching and teaching practices.

The findings of this study revealed that UQTs definitely need induction programmes to properly integrate them into the teaching force in a way that makes them feel they are being supported, helped, and developed right from the beginning of their teaching career. Ongoing support for teachers with the help of assigned mentors is also important for the teachers' improvement and development in teaching. It does not mean that when teachers are qualified to teach through a teacher education programme their learning stops. Teachers' learning should be an ongoing process, either internally done in schools or externally done in some other institutions or recognised bodies within a country and in overseas tertiary institutions.

This study has also shown that the TITP initiative appears to have been very beneficial in building on earlier UQT experiences and extending the range of knowledge, skill and attitudes of the participants in a way that has given them a much wider repertoire of understandings and tools for effective teaching and, importantly, has increased the way they feel about themselves as teachers who know what they are about and are there to teach and lead with confidence.

The next chapter, Chapter 6, concludes this study by summarising briefly the main findings that have emerged and been discussed. The chapter also provides some recommendations and describes limitations of this study. It ends with a number of suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study has been to investigate the experiences and perceptions of seven former UQTs through their transition from totally unqualified teachers to fully qualified professionals (FQPs). The whole thesis has been focused on this purpose and chapter 5 discussed in full the stories of this transition for the participants involved in this study. It is the aim of this final chapter to briefly outline the main conclusions of the study, and to suggest recommendations that might address some of the issues the study has raised. This chapter will also discuss the study's limitations, and conclude by making some suggestions for future research which could build on the outcomes of this research project.

6.2 Conclusion

This study has focused most strongly on three main aspects of the transition of seven Solomon Islanders from former secondary school or university students without teaching qualifications to fully qualified teaching professionals. The study has reported on and analyzed the experiences and perceptions of these seven people through three major stages:

- As UQTs teaching in Solomon Islands schools
- As formal teacher education students in the Teachers in Training Programme (TITP)
- As FQPs teaching in Solomon Islands schools.

The issues faced by the individuals who are involved in this major transition are important to consider as they can have an impact on the schools they work in, the pupils that they teach, the communities that they serve, and indeed on Solomon Islands as a nation. The issues reported in this study are also important for the individuals involved and for future individuals who will make this same transition.

Firstly, this study is the first to examine the motivations, perceptions, and experiences of UQTs working in Solomon Island schools. While this was not the main purpose of the study some very important findings have emerged regarding the transition from former student to qualified teacher. The picture that emerges is one of people who are aware of the considerable difficulties involved in being a UQT and yet for a range of community-centred altruistic reasons and personal motivations accept the challenge of this demanding role. The altruistic motives centred on a desire to help young people to obtain a good education and improve their personal life chances, upholding the tradition of love and care for children, and a sense of duty to assist the nation in the development of its citizens. The participants were often inspired by former teachers and also felt that they had the ability to do the job and help with the altruistic aspects of the mission of teachers. On the other hand, there were also more self-centred personal reasons why they became UQTs. These were often associated with the difficulty of getting a paid job in other areas of the economy.

As expected, for the participants in this study working as a UQT resulted in a range of professional and personal difficulties. Interestingly this study found that participants were more likely to receive help with personal problems related to pay, accommodation and travel than they were with professional issues. It was disturbing to find that not all of the participants had been offered a formal induction process when starting out as UQTs and in particular that none appeared to have had a formally appointed mentor to assist and advise them. While one participant did receive substantial help and guidance from her senior managers, her teaching department and from the professional learning community culture in her school, she was the exception. Most of the participants in this study appear to have been left to “pick up” what they could rather than undergo any “training” for the difficult role they were being asked to fulfill. In particular, most felt quite unsupported in areas where they had significant felt needs such as basic planning skills, knowledge of curriculum requirements and classroom management techniques. Clearly there is a need to ensure UQTs are better supported in future.

Secondly, this study also revealed that teacher education programmes such as the TITP appear to have a strong impact on UQTs. In particular the participants in

this study felt that they gained greater understanding of pupils' learning and behaviour, and gained new and deeper knowledge about teaching, especially in the crucial areas of lesson planning and teaching strategies. This study shows that the enhanced knowledge about teaching and learning provided by such programmes had an important impact on the attitudes and values of the participants. They reported that they were now much more aware of and committed to student-centred learning, establishing quality relationships with pupils and comprehensive planning and preparation. One of the most important findings of this study is that the TITP experience appears to have markedly improved the confidence of the participants as teachers. This is a very important finding which can be related to the constructs of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997 & 2001) and teacher efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). It would appear that the TITP enhanced the participants' "beliefs in . . . [their] capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p.3). They appeared much more confident to teach in their own classes, and to cover other classes when required, and indeed, in some cases, to pass on their new knowledge, skills and attitudes to other teachers in their schools. For former UQTs to have such confidence in themselves is a remarkable achievement.

Lastly, this study also shows that the participants' perceptions from the perspective of being back teaching in schools following their TITP experience were very positive. They felt that the TITP had prepared them well in terms of giving them the confidence and courage not only to teach in the Solomon Islands but elsewhere in the Pacific region and the world. The participants knew that they had been well prepared with the provision of more subject matter knowledge and teaching skills, and acknowledged that this enhanced their morale and enthusiasm. Some spoke positively about going on to further studies in future as other Solomon Islanders who have pursued, and are pursuing, higher academic qualifications have done.

6.3 Recommendations

The findings summarised above lead naturally to the consideration of what should be done as a result of this study. I therefore present the following recommendations.

6.3.1 Supporting UQTs

High quality support is vital to UQTs in their transition from former students to teachers in schools. This should include the provision of properly programmed and organised induction sessions, especially on aspects of ‘pedagogical content knowledge’ (PCK). These sessions should include planning and preparing lessons, classroom management, teaching skills and strategies, and any other aspects of teacher preparation needed to support the UQTs’ transition. The provision of mentors for their ongoing guidance, support, and help as developing teachers should also be considered. The Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD) should take a leading role in this by establishing training programmes to train mentors so that they will be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to provide proper mentoring support. In addition, individual schools should be encouraged to draw up professional development programmes for UQTs and indeed for other teachers as well. The school leadership should take a leading role on this.

6.3.2 Supporting schools to accommodate UQTs

This study found that most schools do not provide much support to UQTs when working as teachers. This may be due to the school leadership simply not knowing how to help their UQTs. It is recommended that the MEHRD organise workshops for principals and deputy principals on how to deal with UQTs in their schools as part of the UQTs’ transition process so that they can quickly become better and more helpful members of the teaching staff in the schools.

6.3.3 Expanding and extending the Teachers in Training programme

As the TITP has been successful in the training of former UQTs, including the seven participants in this study, to become FQPs, it should be continually offered on campus at the SOE of SICHE and should also be extended by means of distance education to train as many UQTs as possible locally. This may also attract interested international teacher candidates.

6.4 Limitations of the study

Any study conducted within a limited budget and a relatively short timeframe will inevitably have a number of shortcomings. In a research context it is important to acknowledge these. Upon reflecting on this study in its entirety, I regard the following issues as limitations of this particular piece of research.

6.4.1 Population size of the participants

The involvement of just seven participants in the semi-structured interviews points to the fact that this study is very small in nature therefore does not claim to represent the voices of the more than two hundred former UQTs in the Solomon Islands that had taken part in the TITP. A wider range of data could have been collected if more participants had taken part in the study. It was my intention to include more participants but the time available for field work was reduced due to bereavement and resulting family duties, as outlined below. This meant my sample was about half the size hoped for.

6.4.2 Unbalanced school participation

The seven participants in this study were selected from four schools; three were from Honiara and only one represented rural Solomon Islands. There should have been more schools and participants in both the urban and the rural areas to provide good knowledge and understanding of the participants' views of their experiences and perceptions during their time working as UQTs; as TITP students; and as FQPs. In particular, I would have liked to include more participants from rural schools across a range of provinces. Again, this was prevented by unforeseen circumstances, as outlined below.

6.4.3 A personal problem for me as researcher

It is important for me to explain that a significant setback for this study that was of quite personal in nature, was the death of my father in the second week of my data collection. It was an awful event to experience "double pressure" at that time. I had to call off my data collection to be with the remaining members of my family and my people. Because of that, I had to extend my time in the Solomon Islands in order to successfully complete the data collection from the seven participants I was able to interview.

6.4.4 Participants use of *Pidgin*

The participants' use of the *Pidgin* language and a little bit of English to respond to the questions asked during the interviews made it quite difficult to transcribe and translate the data. It has been a challenge to express in English as closely as possible what the participants said. It is important to acknowledge there will be some "loss in translation"; but as a person who is literate in both languages I believe the findings are valid.

6.4.5 Reflecting on the limitations

However, I consider the above limitations as "tools" that have helped to boost my morale to press on to complete my study the fruits of which are visible in the creation and completion of this thesis. While the size of the sample is small, clear trends and findings have emerged, even though a larger sample with a greater geographic spread could have produced some additional findings. In my professional opinion as a longtime practising educator in the Solomon Islands, I am confident that the main findings of this study are accurate and valid.

6.5 Suggestions for future research

The shortage of trained and qualified teachers will continue in the Solomon Islands and therefore the employment of UQTs will also continue. This study set out to investigate the transition experiences and perceptions of seven participants while working as UQTs in schools; their participation in the TITP as a teacher education programme at the SOE of SICHE; the subsequent changes in their attitudes to and beliefs about teaching and teaching practices; and their perceptions of their preparedness to teach in Solomon Islands schools as FQPs. As this study is the first of its kind to be done in the Solomon Islands, I offer here two groups of possible further studies:

1. Suggestions for further study on UQTs in the Solomon Islands education system:

- The transition experiences and perceptions of UQTs that have not gone through any teacher education programmes.
- The perceptions of school leaders of the performance and effectiveness of UQTs.

- The perceptions of parents and the communities of the performance of pupils that UQTs teach.
- The perceptions of parents and the communities of the performance of UQTs.
- Comparing and contrasting the effectiveness of qualified and unqualified teachers.
- What it means to be an UQT in a Solomon Islands urban and rural setting.

2. Suggestions for further study on Teacher Education programmes in the Solomon Islands education system:

- The transition experiences and perceptions of a larger sample of teacher education graduates across a range of programmes (ECE, primary, and secondary schools).
- The nature of in-service teacher education programmes in relation to increasing teacher efficacy.

6.6 A final comment

This study has provided clear evidence of some considerable challenges in relation to UQTs in Solomon Island schools. In particular it would appear that, as a whole, UQTs feel relatively unsupported by schools. As a result they appear to lack confidence and self-belief. This means they are probably being a lot less effective as a category of school staff in the Solomon Islands education system than they might be.

It is also clear that the TITP appears to have been highly successful in addressing the needs of UQTs in a relatively short space of time and has been able to return former UQTs to the system with a new-found sense of teacher efficacy. This research points to the value of a programme of this type in assisting in the task of producing many more effective teachers from the existing and future pool of UQTs in the Solomon Islands.

An implication of this research is that efforts should be made to extend the reach of the TITP by increasing the number of students in the programme at the SOE of

SICHE. Furthermore, it is suggested that the possibility of offering similar programmes to other UQTs preferably in partnership with selected schools should be urgently considered.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Approval letter from the Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee

Dean's Office
Faculty of Education
Te Kura Toi Tangata
The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton, New Zealand

Phone +64 7 838 4466
Ext 8283
pgiles@waikato.ac.nz
www.waikato.ac.nz



MEMORANDUM

To: Edward Maelagi
cc: Dr Paul Keown; Dr Margaret Franken

From: Dr Rosemary De Luca
Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee

Date: 7 April 2010

Subject: Supervised Postgraduate Research – Ethical Approval

Thank you for submitting the amendments to your research proposal:

Teachers in Training: their transition experiences and their perceptions of preparedness to teach in Solomon Islands schools

I am pleased to advise that your application has received ethical approval.

Please note that researchers are asked to consult with the Faculty's Research Ethics Committee in the first instance if any changes to the approved research design are proposed.

The Committee wishes you all the best with your research.



Dr Rosemary De Luca
Chairperson
Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee

Appendix 2 Interview guiding questions for the research

1. What are the participants' perceptions of the knowledge and skills they gained during their time of working in a school(s) as an untrained teacher?

- What made you to become an untrained teacher?
- What made you confident enough to take the challenge of being an untrained teacher?
- What were the difficulties that you experienced?
- Who helped you with those? What did they do that helped?
- What role did the school administration in your school play in your development as a teacher at that time?
- What roles did other teachers in your school play in your development as a teacher while you were working as an untrained teacher? Do you think they were sufficient?

2. What are the participants' perceptions of the knowledge and skills gained through their participation in the Teachers in Training Programme (TITP)?

- How would you describe your knowledge of teaching prior to your participation in the TITP?
- What new knowledge about teaching did you gain by the end of your TITP?
- What is your opinion about the mode of delivery of the TITP? What aspects of the way you were taught make this clearer?

3. How have the participants' attitudes about teaching and their teaching practices changed as a result of the experiences in TITP?

- Do you think your pupils understand you better now than when you were an untrained teacher?

- How confident do you feel about practicing as a teacher now? Could you explain the reasons for your answer?
- Has the experience you have gained changed your attitude towards teaching? Could you explain how and why your attitudes have or have not changed?
- What were some of the changes you experienced when you undergo formal teacher training? Could you explain them?

4. How effective has the TITP been in preparing the teachers to teach in Solomon Islands schools?

- Taking all you have told me in this interview, how well did the TITP programme prepare you to teach as a fully qualified professional?
- Have you continued to gain new teaching knowledge and skills as a fully qualified teacher working in a school? Could you tell me about your experiences in this area since you began work as a fully qualified teacher?

Appendix 3 Invitation letter to the teacher participants

C/- Matt Sinton
Waikato International
University of Waikato
Hamilton
New Zealand
January 13, 2010

Teacher Participant

School: _____

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Invitation to participate in an Educational Research

I am Edward Maelagi, a lecturer at the School of Education (SOE), Solomon Islands College of High Education (SICHE), but currently on study leave doing a Master of Education degree at the University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand. As part of the requirement to fulfil the Master of Education degree, I am completing a research project. Therefore, this letter is to formally invite you to participate in the research project. You have been invited because the main focus of the research project is on the *former teachers in training (TITs) at SICHE and their perceptions of the experiences they have gone through in making the transition from unqualified teachers (UQTs), to participating in the Teachers in Training Programme (TITP) and their perceptions of their teaching now as trained teachers.*

Your involvement and participation in the research project:

- The interviews will take place at some point between the last week of April to the end of May, 2010
- The interviews will be recorded using a digital recorder and backup notes will be written down. All individual details will remain confidential. Only overall trends will be reported in my research.
- You can use English or *pidgin* or both to answer the questions during the interview
- Your participation in the interview will be 40 – 60 minutes
- You will receive a copy of your recorded interview
- You will be asked to verify that the recording has captured what you wished to say accordingly.

- If you will like to delete or amend parts of your interview, you will be able to do so provided that you advise the researcher within a week after you have been interviewed.
- You are free to decline or withdraw from taking part in the research at any time you want.
- An electronic copy of the thesis will become widely available in the Australian Digital Thesis (ADT) database as Master's thesis are required to be lodged in the database.

Seeking for your consent to participate:

This research project upholds the University of Waikato Ethical Conduct in Human Research and Related Activities Regulation (2008) and is guided by the Education Research Act (1982) of the Solomon Islands. After you have given your consent to participate and if you think that you cannot continue to participate in the research, you can withdraw from participating. You also have the right to decline to answer any questions asked by the researcher and to withdraw any of your statements from the recorded interview after the interview has been conducted. If the need arises, the recorded information can be deleted or you will be asked to make further clarifications so that your true views can be further reflected.

Your name as a participant in the research project will be kept anonymous in the research write up. Pseudonyms will be used instead of given names. Similarly, the name of the school will not be identified. The collected information will be treated as confidential and anonymous, and only be used for the research project and any related academic publications.

I will take your busy schedule as a full time class teacher into consideration, and minimise any inconvenience that this invitation may cause. I hope that you will be able to spare some of your time to assist me to collect valuable data for my thesis. Your participation in this research project will be helpful in improving the quality of teachers and teaching in the Solomon Islands. This research project is being supervised by a senior lecturer, Dr. Paul Keown of the Social Studies Department in the Faculty of Education, University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand.

Please take your time to read through the Participants' Information Sheet attached.

If you wish to take part, please sign and return the consent form attached no later than April 21, 2010 by airmail in the envelope provided, or if you have access to e-mail, you can send your response as an attachment to my email address found below. I will then ask you to provide a signed permission when I interview you. If for any reason you require further information about the research project, do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor on email: paulk@waikato.ac.nz.

Thank you very much for your professional understanding and consideration. I am looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Edward Maelagi
Master of Education student
Cell Phone No: (07) 02102981927
Email: eenm1@students.waikato.ac.nz or edmaelagi@gmail.com

Cut.....

Approval consent for carrying out research

Please write your name and sign here to indicate that you have fully understood this letter and give approval to your participation in the research.

Name:

Sign:

Date:

NB: Please return this form by airmail as soon as possible.

Thank you.

Cut

Appendix 4 Statement to brief participants

Hello. Greetings to you,

My name is Edward Maelagi. I come from Munda, Western Province. I have been a teacher for more than 20 years. The last secondary school where I taught was Goldie College National Secondary School. Currently, I am a Social Studies lecturer at the School of Education at SICHE, but on study leave to undertake a Master of Education degree at the University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand. As part of the requirement to fulfil the Master of Education degree, I need to complete a research project. My area of interest for my Master's thesis is to find out about the *former teachers in training (TITs) at SICHE and their perceptions of the experiences they have gone through in making the transition from being unqualified teachers (UQTs), to participating in the Teachers in Training Programme (TITP) and perceptions of their teaching now as qualified teachers*. I believe that the outcome of the research will be useful to policy makers in making decisions to continue to support and train more UQTs and improve the quality of teachers in the Solomon Islands.

To begin, I would like to inform you that our conversation will be recorded using a digital recorder. Please do not worry about this, just sit down, relax and treat this session as a normal face to face conversation. However, if you are not comfortable to answer any of the questions, just let me know, so that we can go on to the next question. I want to be assured that you have understood:

- The purpose and nature of this research project, and its potential harm and benefits to you as a participant in this research project; and
- You can raise with me any issues or matters of concern or general questions concerning your participation in this research project before we start.

Once you are comfortable about what I have told you and ready to answer the questions, we will begin our conversation.

Appendix 5 Participants information sheet

Researcher:

Name: Edward Maelagi

Qualifications: PgDip. Education (University of Waikato, 2010)
Bachelor of Art (University of the South Pacific, 1995)
Diploma in Education (University of the South Pacific, 1981)

Programme of Study: Master of Education

Research Project title:

Teachers in training: their transition experiences and perceptions of preparedness to teach in Solomon Islands schools.

Purpose:

The research project is carried out as part of my Master of Education thesis to explore what teachers in training (previously unqualified teachers) think about their transition to being trained teachers, with a view to informing policy development in the Solomon Islands.

What is the research project about?

This research is to explore and investigate the former teachers in training experiences and perceptions of their transitions from being unqualified teachers to now being qualified teachers.

What your tasks will be and how long will they take?

The participants who have agreed to take part in this research project will involve:

- In recorded interviews that will take about 40 – 60 minutes in venues they are familiar with and comfortable for them to use.
- In reading their own recorded and transcribed interviews to confirm them within a week after the interviews are conducted.

Participants' informed consent

The participants will be required to sign the consent forms voluntarily before the interviews commence.

- 1 The participants will be told right from the beginning their rights to decline and withdraw from the research project if they cannot continue to participate.
- 2 Participants may withdraw in the period of time after signing the consent forms and before listening to their recorded interviews.
- 3 Participants are going to be given a week to listen to their individual recorded interviews and to make changes if they wish and to confirm that those are what they said.
- 4 Pseudonyms are going to be used and not the participants' or the schools' names when the research is written.

What happens to the information collected?

- 1 The data collected from the interviews will be used to write up the Master's of Education thesis.
- 2 The findings from the research are to be documented for future in research.
- 3 The recorded interview data will become the property of each participant, but the analysed data, the thesis and any publication done will be owned by the researcher.
- 4 Each of the participants, and the schools involved, the Education Authorities and the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development will be provided with a copy of the thesis.

Declaration to participants

If you agree to take part in the research project, you have the right to:

- 1 Sign the consent form.
- 2 Withdraw from the research if you cannot continue to take part.
- 3 Decline to respond to any particular question which you are not comfortable enough to respond to.
- 4 Ask any questions relating to the research during your 40 – 60 minutes of interview.

Data collection will start at the end of April, 2010, and completed at the end of

May, 2010.

Who is responsible?

If there are queries or concerns about the research project now or in future, you are most welcome to relate them to me through my email address below or to contact my supervisor, Dr. Paul Keown of the Social Studies Department, Faculty of Education, University of Waikato, New Zealand through his email address: paulk@waikato.ac.nz.

Current address:

Physical

4/42 York Street
Hamilton East
Hamilton 3216
New Zealand

Student

C/- Matt Sinton
Waikato International
University of Waikato
Hamilton
New Zealand

Appendix 6 Participants informed consent form (for semi-structured interview).

I _____ (full official name) **agree to/do not agree to** (circle your choice) consent to voluntarily participate in the research project. I am satisfied with the information given and fully understand the nature of harm and benefits of the research project.

My involvement in the research project

I understand that:

- I will participate in the semi-structured interview as an individual.
- The duration of the interview is 40 – 60 minutes.
- I can listen to my own recorded interview for a period of one hour to confirm my responses and to give my consent for it to be used.
- At the end of this, I can request that Edward Maelagi the researcher can delete any recorded information, or to include any other views that I consider important to the research, or to clarify any other views.
- The recorded information is my property. Any other use of it in the future will require my consent.
- The recorded data will be stored in a safe place and used only for Edward Maelagi's thesis research and in any other related activities such as publication, seminar presentation or conference.
- The compiled research findings and the final thesis will be owned by Edward Maelagi.
- I have the right to withdraw from the interview process and to decline to answer any questions that I am not comfortable to response to.
- Pseudonyms will be used in place of my given name(s) and my school's name.
- The information given to the researcher by me will not be given to any other persons or institutions.
- Any matters or issues that may arise and cannot be resolved by the researcher and his supervisor can be given to the chairperson of the Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee, University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand.

Signed: Teacher: Date:

Appendix 7 Letter to school principals

C/- Matt Sinton
Waikato International
University of Waikato
Hamilton
New Zealand

January 13, 2010

Principal

School: _____

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Seeking your permission to carry out research in your school

I am Edward Maelagi, a lecturer at the School of Education (SOE), Solomon Islands College of High Education (SICHE), but currently on study leave doing a Master of Education degree at the University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand. As part of the requirement to fulfil the Master of Education degree, I am completing a research project. Therefore, this letter is to formally seek for your permission and approval to do my research in your community high school. The research project is on the *former teachers in training (TITs) at SICHE and their perceptions of the experiences they have gone through in making the transition from unqualified teachers (UQTs), to participating in the Teachers in Training Programme (TITP) and perceptions of their teaching now as trained teachers*. I will require former UQTs in your school to participate in interviews to find out about their perceptions and experiences.

Once your approval is granted to carry out the research, I will send invitation letters to the participants and to seek their consent to participate in the research project. I can assure you that the participants will be shown the highest respect throughout the research. From the very beginning, they will be informed of the ethical issues concerning the conduct of research as well as their right to withdraw if they feel that they cannot continue to participate. The participants' identities and the school's name will not be revealed in any way when the research report is written.

The teachers will take part as individuals in a semi-structured interview which will be conducted at some point between the last week of April to the end of May

2010. These interviews will be recorded using a digital recording machine with backup notes that I will write during the course of the interviews. The recorded interviews will then be transcribed, and given back to each of the participants to make comments and to confirm the accuracy of what they said. All the interviews will be conducted when the participants are free from academic duties. This is to avoid disturbing them in their normal school timetables. Basically, the interviews will take 40 – 60 minutes per participant. Each of them will have full ownership of the recorded interviews, but the findings of the research will be mine as the researcher. A report of the main findings will be sent to the participants, you as the principal, your Education Authority and the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development for reference purposes. I believe that the outcome of the research will be useful to policy makers in making decisions to continue to support and train more untrained teachers and improve the quality of teachers in Solomon Islands schools.

Currently, I am being supervised by Dr. Paul Keown of the Social Science Department, Faculty of Education, University of Waikato. The research project will be guided by the University of Waikato Ethical Conduct in Human Research and Related Activities Regulation (2008), and the Solomon Islands Research Act, 1982.

I am looking forward to your professional decision. Should you require further information, do not hesitate to contact me through my email address below or my supervisor's email address: paulk@waikato.ac.nz.

Thank you very much for your professional consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Edward Maelagi
Master of Education student
Cell Phone No: (07) 02102981927
Email: eenm1@students.waikato.ac.nz or edmaelagi@gmail.com

Cut.....

Approval consent for carrying out research

Please write your name and sign here to indicate that you have fully understood this letter and give approval for the research.

Name:

Sign:

Date:

NB: Please return this form by airmail as soon as possible.

Thank you.

Cut

Appendix 8 Letter to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development

C/- Matt Sinton

Waikato International

University of Waikato

Hamilton

New Zealand

January 13, 2010

**The Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development
PO Box G28
Honiara
Solomon Islands**

Attention: Under Secretary

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Re: Seeking your permission to carry out research in Solomon Islands
Community High Schools**

I am Edward Maelagi, a lecturer at the School of Education (SOE), Solomon Islands College of High Education (SICHE), but currently on study leave doing a Master of Education degree at the University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand. As part of the requirement to fulfil the Master of Education degree, I am completing a research project. Therefore, this letter is to formally seek for your permission and approval to do my research in the community high schools in Honiara, and Munda. The research project is on the *former teachers in training (TITs) at SOE of SICHE and their perceptions of the experiences they have gone through in making the transition from unqualified teachers (UQTs), to participating in the Teachers in Training Programme (TITP) and perceptions of their teaching now as trained teachers*. I will require a total of ten to fifteen former UQTs in selected schools to participate in interviews to find out about their perceptions and experiences.

Once your approval is granted to carry out the research, I will send letters to the principals of the schools to seek for their permission and approval for their teachers to participate in the research project. I will also send invitation letters to

the teacher participants and to seek their consent to participate in the research project. I can assure you that the participants will be shown the highest respect throughout the research. From the very beginning, they will be informed of the ethical issues concerning the conduct of research as well as their right to withdraw if they feel that they cannot continue to participate. The participants' identities and the school's name will not be revealed in any way when the research report is written.

The teachers will take part as individuals in a semi-structured interview which will be conducted at some point between the last week of April to the end of May, 2010. These interviews will be recorded using a digital recorder with backup notes that I will write during the course of the interviews. The recorded interviews will then be transcribed, and given back to each of the participants to make comments and to confirm the accuracy of what they said. All the interviews will be conducted when the participants are free from academic duties. This is to avoid disturbing them in their normal school timetables. Basically, the interviews will take 40 – 60 minutes per participant. Each of them will have full ownership of the recorded interviews, but the findings of the research will be mine as the researcher. A report of my findings will be sent to the participants, Education Authorities, Principals of Community High Schools where the research will be conducted and the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development for reference purposes. I believe that the outcome of the research will be useful to policy makers in making decisions to continue to support and train more UQTs and improve the quality of teachers and teaching in Solomon Islands schools. Currently, I am being supervised by Dr. Paul Keown of the Social Science Department, Faculty of Education, University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand. The research project will be guided by the University of Waikato Ethical Conduct in Human Research and Related Activities Regulation (2008), and the Solomon Islands Research Act, 1982.

I am looking forward to your professional decision. Should you require further information, do not hesitate to contact me through my email address below or my supervisor's email address: paulk@waikato.ac.nz.

Thank you very much for your professional consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Edward Maelagi
Master of Education student
Cell Phone No: (07) 02102981927
Email: eenm1@students.waikato.ac.nz or edmaelagi@gmail.com

Cut.....

Approval consent for carrying out research

Please write your name and sign here to indicate that you have fully understood this letter and give approval for the research.

Name:

Sign:

Date:

NB: Please return this form by airmail as soon as possible.

Thank you.

Cut

Appendix 9 Solomon Islands Research Application Form

1. **NAME** Edward Maelagi

2. **ADDRESS(es) (if more than one give all)**

C/- Matt Sinton, Waikato International, University of Waikato, Private
Bag 3105, Hamilton, New Zealand

3. **Curriculum Vitae – (attach separately and include previous research work)**

4. **Subject(s) to be studied. (brief synopsis, detail should be on the research proposal)**

Teachers in Training: Their transition experiences and perceptions of
preparedness to teach in Solomon Islands schools.

5. **Areas/locality where research work is to be conducted.**

Honiara and Munda

6. **Funding**
 - (a) **Who is funding this Research?**

NZAID, my sponsor

 - (b) **What is the level of funding?**

Cost of travel, accommodation, food, and stationery

7. **Method of Research**

Semi-structured interviews

8. **My Research will involve Please tick**

Filming		Collecting Sample/Specimen	✓
Recording	✓		
Photographing		Others (Please specify)	

Others:

9. Arrangements for Accommodation in the place(s) of Research

I will be staying at Kukum while in Honiara. I also have accommodation in Munda.

10. How will the Research results be used? List

The results of the Research will only be used for:

- Writing my thesis
- Presentation in seminars and conferences
- Publication in educational journals
- Reporting to institutions like SICHE, Education Authorities, Schools, and the MEHRD

11. List benefits of Research to Solomon Islands.

- Help school administrations/education authorities to devise support for unqualified teachers (UQTs).
- To help in the development of informed policy for UQTs.
- Contribute in the development of unqualified teachers in schools.

12. Name and address of any person/organisation/institution who is willing to assist you while you are doing your research. (A letter from local host will be useful).

The Head of School, School of Education (SOE), Solomon Islands College of Higher Education (SICHE)

13. How long will the research take? Specify dates if possible.

The research will take 6 weeks, starting from the 19th of April to the 28th of May, 2010.

14. Any additional specific information you consider useful for our perusal of your application may be described below.

The quicker you respond to this application, the better as I will be going down to Munda in the Western Province.

15. Give us two referees certifying your research application and background. (Two separate statements expected).

Name Dr. Rosemary De Luca

Address Chairperson, Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee, University of Waikato, Private Bag 3105, Hamilton, New Zealand

Name Dr. Paul Keown (My Supervisor)

Address Social Science Department, Faculty of Education, University of Waikato, Private Bag 3105, Hamilton, New Zealand

16. Applicant's signature Date: April 19, 2010

Appendix 10 Letter to education authorities

C/- Matt Sinton
Waikato International
University of Waikato
Hamilton
New Zealand

April 7, 2010

Education Secretary: _____

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Seeking your permission to carry out research in your school

I am Edward Maelagi, a lecturer at the School of Education (SOE), Solomon Islands College of High Education (SICHE), but currently on study leave doing a Master of Education degree at the University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand. As part of the requirement to fulfil the Master of Education degree, I am completing a research project. Therefore, this letter is to formally seek for your permission and approval to do my research in your community high school. The research project is on the *former teachers in training (TITs) at SICHE and their perceptions of the experiences they have gone through in making the transition from unqualified teachers (UQTs), to participating in the Teachers in Training Programme (TITP) and perceptions of their teaching now as trained teachers*. I will require former UQTs in your school to participate in interviews to find out about their perceptions and experiences.

Once your approval is granted to carry out the research, I will send invitation letters to the participants and to seek their consent to participate in the research project. I can assure you that the participants will be shown the highest respect throughout the research. From the very beginning, they will be informed of the ethical issues concerning the conduct of research as well as their right to withdraw if they feel that they cannot continue to participate. The participants' identities and the school's name will not be revealed in any way when the research report is written.

The teachers will take part as individuals in a semi-structured interview which will be conducted at some point between the last week of April to the end of May 2010. These interviews will be recorded using a digital recording machine with

backup notes that I will write during the course of the interviews. The recorded interviews will then be transcribed, and given back to each of the participants to make comments and to confirm the accuracy of what they said. All the interviews will be conducted when the participants are free from academic duties. This is to avoid disturbing them in their normal school timetables. Basically, the interviews will take 40 – 60 minutes per participant. Each of them will have full ownership of the recorded interviews, but the findings of the research will be mine as the researcher. A report of the main findings will be sent to the participants, the principal, you as the Education Authority and the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development for reference purposes. I believe that the outcome of the research will be useful to policy makers in making decisions to continue to support and train more UQTs and improve the quality of teachers in Solomon Islands schools.

Currently, I am being supervised by Dr. Paul Keown of the Social Science Department, Faculty of Education, University of Waikato. The research project will be guided by the University of Waikato Ethical Conduct in Human Research and Related Activities Regulation (2008), and the Solomon Islands Research Act, 1982.

I am looking forward to your professional decision. Should you require further information, do not hesitate to contact me through my email address below or my supervisor's email address: paulk@waikato.ac.nz.

Thank you very much for your professional consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Edward Maelagi
Master of Education student
Cell Phone No: (07) 02102981927
Email: eenm1@students.waikato.ac.nz or edmaelagi@gmail.com

Cut.....

Approval consent for carrying out research

Please write your name and sign here to indicate that you have fully understood this letter and give approval for the research

Name:

Sign:

Date:

NB: Please return this form by airmail as soon as possible.

Thank you.

Cut