

**STUDENT TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THEIR  
INTERPERSONAL INTERACTIONS: A  
PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY**

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## ABSTRACT

### STUDENT TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THEIR INTERPERSONAL INTERACTIONS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

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This dissertation investigates interpersonal interactions among the 2003/2005 year group of student teachers at the Valsayn Teachers' College. The exploratory study explicates the lived experiences of a purposive sample of six student teachers. The qualitative research methodology that guides the inquiry is van Manen's (1990) hermeneutic phenomenological approach which is rooted in the everyday lived experiences of people in educational situations.

The source of data was semi-structured interviews. One in-depth interview was conducted with each of the six student teachers in the sample. Analysis of the transcribed data revealed eight themes which were organised into three clusters; Interaction context, Perceptions of unpleasant experiences, and Perceptions of favourable experiences. The themes were integrated into an exhaustive description of the phenomenon, student teachers' interpersonal interaction.

The theme 'Interacting for Information' featured unexpectedly in participants' narratives as the main purpose of interactions. As surprising too was the apparent inseparable bond between participants and their stories such that the stories reflected the respective participant's perspectives and meanings. The highly competitive atmosphere that prevailed in the interactions was in keeping with the researcher's pre-understandings.

The implications of the quality of interactions reported, are discussed in the context of the capacity of student teachers to be effective in teaching students how to relate to others. Recommendations are made for the implementation of a reformed teacher education curriculum with an interpersonal relations emphasis.

**Keywords:** Phenomenology; hermeneutic phenomenology; qualitative, methodology, method, rigour, trustworthiness, student teachers, meaning, perceptions, interpersonal interactions, humanization, van Manen(1990)