PROJECT ABSTRACT:
The overall aim of this summer research project is to gain an understanding of First-year Bachelor of Teaching (MMP) students’ experiences as they transition from teacher aide (learning assistant / learning support) to student teacher. While there is emerging research focusing on the barriers and enables students experience as they begin their tertiary studies, little is known about the issues, barriers and/or enablers student teachers may experience as they transition from and often between, their work role as a teacher aide to a student teacher on their professional experience days.

The summer scholar will contribute to the investigation of the experiences of first-year Bachelor of Teaching (MMP) students who are either currently working, or have had experiences as a teacher aide. The scholar will be guided in undertaking an initial literature scan and developing a database of potential areas of focus for interview questions. The scholar will then collaborate with the researcher to develop interview questions. The scholar may be involved in the selection of research participants. The scholar will collaborate with the researcher to interview a small number of Bachelor of Teaching (MMP) students who began their studies in 2021.

STUDENT SKILLS:
- Ability to read critically and summarise articles
- Good communication skills, both orally and written
- IT skills including spreadsheet, Google docs,
- The ability to gain the trust of participants while interviewing
- The ability to maintain confidentiality of participant information
- This scholarship would ideally suit a Bachelor of Teaching student; experience with the MMP programme may be an advantage. Similarly, experience working as a teacher aide may also be an advantage.

PROJECT TASKS:
- Collaborate in the development of initial interview questions based on research findings from literature
- Assist in participant selection process
- Assist with interviewing participants
- Learn how to transcribe and analyse interview responses
- Write and present research findings as per the requirements of this scholarship

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:
- Student’s Research Poster (as per clause 6 of the Scholarship regulations)
- Highlight common, initial understandings, beliefs and experiences of First-year MMP teaching students as they transition from being a teacher aide to student teacher
- Identify potential areas of interest/concern specific to First-year MMP student teachers completing their professional experience practice in the same school they are employed as a teacher aide
- Identify potential areas of interest/concern specific to First-year MMP students completing their professional experience practice in a different school than their school of employment
- This research may assist staff involved in the ITE programme, particularly those supporting students on their weekly and block professional placement, to be aware of the range of professional experiences, knowledge and skills some students already hold.