THE COMPLEXITIES OF REFLECTIVE PRACTICE IN TEACHER EDUCATION: A NEW APPROACH

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Charlotte Meierdirk
Declaration Page

Whilst registered as a candidate for the above degree, I have not been registered for any other research award. The results and conclusions embodied in this thesis are the work of the named candidate and have not been submitted for any other academic award.

Charlotte Meierdirk
Acknowledgements
I would like to first say a very big thank you to my supervisor Professor Karen Johnston for all her support and encouragement. I must also thank Dr Sylvia Horton for her continual support and advice.

A heartfelt thank you to Elizabeth, who has been by my side throughout this PhD, living every single minute of it; and to my daughters, Amelia, Rosalie and Florence, for putting up with mummy spending; many years of evenings and summers reading books and writing. They can have my undivided attention now.
Abstract
This thesis presents papers based on a series of studies into the reflective practice of the student teacher at a university based initial teacher education institution. Specifically it investigates the use of reflective practice during the PGCE (Post/Professional Graduate Certificate of Education) year. Reflective practice is encouraged by Initial Teacher Educators (ITE) but manifestations and the extent of its importance to a professional teacher are the focus of this thesis. Reflective practice is interpreted widely and includes reflection, critical reflection and reflexivity.

The research approach adopted in these studies is a combination of both feminism and interpretivism. A number of methodologies are used across the papers including a survey, case study and phenomenology. The case study includes the analysis, over the PGCE year, of six student teachers’ reflective practice sheets and a series of semi-structured interviews. The interview data are analysed using Nvivo, Excel and critical discourse analysis. The questionnaire was administered to the whole PGCE cohort of 101 student teachers and was analysed using Excel software.

Conclusions drawn from the papers highlight the complex environment the student teacher occupies. Their placements consist of different social fields that impact on their agency. The external structure of Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills) and the internal social fields of competing agents influence, to varying degrees, the student teacher’s journey to professionalism. This journey includes having to construct and reconstruct a ‘teaching identity’ whilst simultaneously succumbing to the pressures of the various social structures and policies faced in an educational environment.

A significant contribution of my research is a new definition and model of reflective practice. This new definition describes reflective practice as the questioning of practice, identity and the social environment due to an increase in knowledge, self-awareness and experience. The new reflective model is spiracle rather than linear and replaces Finlay’s (2008) linear model of reflective practice. This new model embraces the changing identity of the student teacher towards professionalism and the complex social environment in which they have to function.
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### Acronyms

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<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>BERA</td>
<td>British Education Research Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTEC</td>
<td>Business and Technology Education Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>Critical Discourse Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPD</td>
<td>Continuing Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dcsf</td>
<td>Department for Children, Schools and Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DfEE</td>
<td>Department for Education and Employment</td>
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<tr>
<td>DfE</td>
<td>Department of Education</td>
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<td>DfES</td>
<td>Department for Education and Skills</td>
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<td>FHEQ</td>
<td>Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HE</td>
<td>Higher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEI</td>
<td>Higher Educational Institutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>HMC</td>
<td>Headmasters and Mistresses Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMI</td>
<td>Her Majesty’s Inspectors</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDEAL</td>
<td>Identify, Define, Explore, Assess and Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICET</td>
<td>International Council on Education for Teaching</td>
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<td>ITE</td>
<td>Initial Teacher Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEA</td>
<td>Local Education Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCTL</td>
<td>National College of Teaching and Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NQT</td>
<td>Newly Qualified Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ofsted</td>
<td>Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PGCE</td>
<td>Post/Professional Graduate Certificate in Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QDA</td>
<td>Qualitative Data Analysis</td>
</tr>
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<td>QTS</td>
<td>Qualified Teacher Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TA</td>
<td>Teaching Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TDA</td>
<td>Teacher Development Agency of Schools</td>
</tr>
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<td>TTA</td>
<td>Teacher Training Agency</td>
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<td>WRI</td>
<td>Work Related Identity</td>
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Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 Introduction
Reflective practice is seen as an important part of the journey to professionalism. On the Post/Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) course, student teachers engage in reflective practice to meet the national professional teaching standards. These standards are published by the Department of Education for student teachers to satisfy in order to pass the PGCE year (DfE, 2012a). On the course the student teachers have just over 10 months to achieve these standards and gather evidence to demonstrate them. To satisfy the teaching standard on reflective practice the student teacher must show that they are reflecting on their lessons and constantly improving their practice.

The research, presented in the enclosed papers, is designed to investigate the student teacher’s use of reflective practice and its changing nature during the PGCE year. This chapter sets the scene for the different papers. In this chapter the two research philosophies of feminism and critical realism are discussed and how their combining features provided a feminist realist philosophy. My interpretation of reflective practice is also introduced and the background to the PGCE course is presented.

1.2 Significance of this research
The papers presented here represent a significant contribution to the knowledge and understanding of reflective practice in teacher education. The research undertaken was conducted over a three year period and analysed reflective practice in a depth yet to be conducted. Reflective practice is an important aspect of teacher education, and a necessity to meet the teaching standards, however the models used in ITE either focus on reflection or a linear model of reflective practice (Ghaye, 2010, Finlay, 2008, Meierdirk, 2016a).

My research and papers go beyond the linear reflective model, often presented in literature for student teachers, and introduces the impact of the complex environment on the student teacher’s identity (Ghaye, 2010). Although my first paper was only published in May 2016 it has already being cited by other authors, and the original paper (Paper 1) has been viewed and downloaded over 1400 times. Since its publication my paper titled ‘Is reflective practice an
essential component of becoming a professional teacher’ has been the Reflective Practice journal’s most viewed article.

Maura Sellers’ (2017) most recent book on reflective practice ‘Reflective Practice for Teachers’ cites my first journal article and its importance in the debate regarding the teacher’s professional identity and the need for reflection. A number of videos have been published on my research and especially the relevance of Bourdieu’s philosophies in teacher education. My first video on Bourdieu has now been viewed over 31,000 times by people in more than 90 countries (Meierdirk, 2016b). The research on ITE (Initial Teacher Education) was presented at a number of conferences and, in Lisbon earlier this year, was awarded the Best Presentation Award. I have been interviewed for the TES on critical thinking and reflective practice (Inspiration for Teachers, 2015) and this podcast has been listened to over 600 times. Thus, the significance of the research is that it resonates with scholars and practitioners and contributes to improved understanding and knowledge of reflective learning. The original contribution to knowledge is, based on my research, a revisionist approach to conventional, long-standing wisdom of reflective learning. The research and subsequent publications question the conventional perspectives of reflective practice and provide a new framework and theoretical model for improving reflective learning and practice for professional qualifications.

1.3 Research context
The research conducted in Papers 1-8, is situated at the University of Portsmouth, specifically within the PGCE programme. The methodology for the papers is explained in Chapter 2 and consists of a case study, phenomenology and questionnaire. The participants are all part of the PGCE programme at the University of Portsmouth. At the University, the PGCE is a full time, one year course that enables a graduate student to become a newly qualified teacher (NQT). The PGCE is one of the routes into the teaching profession in England. The student can pass at Level 6 of the framework for higher education award bodies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ), and obtain a Professional Certificate in Education, or pass at Level 7, after obtaining a Postgraduate Certificate in Education. Both the postgraduate and professional routes lead to qualified teacher status (QTS).

The University of Portsmouth has a relatively small cohort of PGCE students with around 100 students enrolled every year. Seven different PGCE subjects are taught: English, Modern
Foreign Language (MFL), Mathematics, Science, Business Studies, Geography and Computer Science. All these subjects cover the 12-16 age groups except Business Studies, which is taught to the 14-19 age range. The structure of the PGCE course is the same for all the courses. Figure 1.1 illustrates how the student teacher’s time is divided between professional studies, curriculum studies and the school experience. The students arrive during the first week in September each year and study ‘professional’ and ‘curriculum’ studies. Professional studies cover areas that are important for all the PGCE students, such as the National Curriculum, government policies, learning theories and behaviour management.

![Diagram](image)

Figure 1.1: Three strands of the PGCE year (PGCE, 2017, no page number, as developed by Meierdirk)

‘Curriculum Studies’ are the subjects that are specific to the PGCE subject area. The student teacher will attend seminars on areas specific to their teaching, for example teaching the academically more able in Business Studies or applying Bloom’s (1956) taxonomy. About one third of the PGCE year is spent at the University and the rest of the time the student teacher is in their placement(s).
After the first three weeks of the PGCE course the student teacher will start at their first placement (Phase 1). After Christmas they start Phase 2, with a placement in a different school/college, and after Easter, Phase 3 in the same school as Phase 2. The student teacher stays at the same placement for the last two teaching phases, unless there is a reason to move them to another school/college.

In Phase 1 the student teacher is given substantial assistance by the school mentor during the first few weeks of their school experience. The students observe, assist in the classroom and engage in collaborative teaching with some small scale supported teaching. After the October half-term the student teacher is in school five days a week and most students are involved with eight hours a week of whole class teaching and six hours of observing and supporting other classes.

In Phase 2, the classroom teaching and learning activities are jointly planned by the mentor and student teacher. The student teacher should be maintaining a timetable that is approximately 10-12 hours of teaching per week over four days, with three hours of observing and supporting in other classes. The student teacher is expected to observe taught lessons and help within the classroom with small groups as well as with whole classes. From February half-term, when the student teachers are in school five days a week, most students are maintaining a whole class teaching timetable of approximately 12 hours with three hours of other classroom experience.

In Phase 3, student teachers will be planning their classroom and school focussed work more independently. The student teacher’s timetable will remain at 12 hours per week and more independence should be demonstrated in order to achieve the teaching standards. The mentor exercises their professional judgement as to how much autonomy a student teacher can be given while maintaining the quality of teaching. The student teacher will be expected to observe other teachers and lessons for another three hours.

The student teachers spend the majority of time in their placement schools. For a PGCE student to complete the year successfully they must pass three assignments (two at master’s level, if leading to a postgraduate certificate). The student teacher is required to produce a portfolio of evidence that satisfies all the teaching standards and pass six formal lesson observations per phase. The lesson observations are conducted by the student teacher’s subject mentor, although
one observation includes the university tutor. The school/college mentors are trained by the university tutors. University tutors use the joint lesson observations to check the grading by the subject mentors.

The lesson observation is graded using a form, ‘Document 9’ (Doc 9). There are three Document 9s: Document 9a for Phase 1, Document 9b for Phase 2 and Document 9c for Phase 3. The marking criteria for a Document 9 increases in difficulty as the year progresses. When this study was conducted the main difference between the Document 9s for the different phases was the increased requirement for differentiation. Since the introduction of the new Ofsted criteria, in September 2012, the Document 9 grading has become more demanding, reflecting the need to show ‘greater progress’ in lessons (Ofsted, 2012).

1.4 Positioning of the research
In professional practice, having a critical self-awareness, and likewise in research, an awareness of personal feelings and biases, is important to conduct objective phenomenological research (Dankoski, 2000). My epistemology is a combination of feminism and interpretivism. Both of these approaches are part of the post-structuralist movement. The interpretivist views knowledge as fluid: there is no fixed knowledge (Matta, 2015). Knowledge is seen as socially constructed, therefore it is individual to the participant and a researcher can only have a partial insight into that world.

Feminists argue in favour of the post-positivist stance and argue that subjectivity is appropriate for social research. Feminists challenge the positivist stance as being sexist. The position of the positivist researcher creates a hierarchy between the researcher and the participants. This hierarchy is often not recognised and the subjective knowledge is not examined (Jayaratne, 1991). In this research, especially in Paper 3, the participants were not treated as though they were all the same. The participants’ differences were highlighted and researched further, as these were an important part of the research.

In Reinharz’s (1992) book, Feminist methods in social research, the personal journey of the researcher is viewed as an important part of the research. By understanding the personal journey of the researcher a connection can be drawn between the ‘journey’ and the research itself:
Feminist research acknowledges that there is often a connection between the research purpose and the private life of the researcher; hence works are often framed with a preface or postscript highlighting such relevance (Probert, 2006, p.7).

I situate myself as a white, lesbian, female feminist academic. I was brought up in a working class environment in Portsmouth, where I attended secondary school. My father was a mechanic and my mother was a factory worker. I was the first person in my family to pass GCSEs and study A Levels. I went on to study economics and politics at the University of York. After university I completed a PGCE course and obtained an Economics and Business Studies teaching post at a school in Wiltshire. My experience within the education sector has enabled me to reflect on the gender inequality which exists within the sector. I therefore have adopted a feminist perspective to explain the nature of the research findings.

It is very easy to believe that feminism is no longer relevant and often I hear female students say that they do not need to be a feminists as ‘we now have equality’. Unfortunately this is still not the case; in fact the gap in wages between males/females has widened, rather than narrowed, in recent years (UK has sixth-largest gender pay gap, 2015). As Miller and McTavish (2011, p. 689) state ‘in UK higher education, women are under-represented in senior grades, coupled with an over-representation as non-permanent, part-time staff’. At lecturer level the percentage of male/ female ratio is fairly equal being 48% female with 52% male, however at senior levels of the university hierarchy, females have less representation. Only 24% of professors and 29% of Heads of School are female and there is ‘a pay gap of median salaries between male and females of 5.7% within any given group’ (HESA, 2016, p.1). In HESA’s (2016) Gender pay gap data there is evidence that male academic members of staff are more likely to be promoted than females. This inequality is also evident in state secondary schools where only 38% of head teachers are female in contrast to 65% of the teaching workforce (Fuller, 2017, p.12).

Reinharz (1992) wrote one of the most significant books on the feminist approach to research. Her definition of feminist research is any method that is used by self-identified feminists. This position is broad, but it is expanded to include any research that has been conducted by feminist writers in journal articles and books. This definition is criticised in Dankoski’s (2000) paper What makes research feminist? Dankoski criticises using the term ‘self-identified feminists’
as it is a non-committal definition, hence leaving it up to the individual to decide what they see themselves as. Dankoski goes on to suggest several factors that need to be addressed when conducting a feminist approach: firstly, the sample should be equally comprised of men and women; secondly, the study should improve the lives of women and other marginalised groups; thirdly, the research should not exploit the participants; and fourthly, existing power differences should be challenged and uncovered.

The structure of our educational system is designed by male dominated beliefs, such as targets and accountability (Wright, 2017). Morley (1995) describes the systems, the audits and the powers, within education, as a male construct. The managerialism that has been encouraged in education by neoliberalism favours the ‘competitive male’ over the ‘caring female’ and as David (2016, p.15) argues ‘universities today remain the bastions of both the male power and privilege’. The patriarchal education system is related to gender in many ways and this will affect not only my actions but beliefs as well. My feminist perspective leads me to perceive the management of ‘the school’ as male dominated:

…masculinity is so built into the culture, techniques and practices of modern management (in this case the management of schools) that to manage is to practise a form of masculinity (Hubbard & Datnow, 2000, p.117).

The lack of dialogue between teachers and policy makers has come from a patriarchal educational system. The 1988 Education Act was the first time teaching organisations were excluded from the working parties involved and according to Mansell (2007) the start of an erosion of the teacher’s autonomy.

The research conducted focuses on reflective practice which highlights the importance of the teacher’s identity. If a teacher’s identity is being suppressed, then the patriarchal system of training and education we have in England needs to come under scrutiny (Popkewitz & Fendler, 1999). The rigidity of our educational system and the reliance on a performance culture may be suffocating the identities of teachers (Ball, 2003). If the system is suffocating the questioning that moves our society forward then this needs to be critiqued and reintroduced into the ITE curriculum (Middleton, 1993).
The feminist paradigm rejects the idea that a researcher can be independent of the study and encourages the use of reflexivity when collecting and analysing data. Reflecting on the power relationship between the researcher and ‘the researched’ is central to this reflexive approach (Reinharz, 1992). I was the student teachers’ university tutor and so being reflexive allowed a closer relationship and a greater trust with them. Bourdieu (1993) advocates epistemic reflexivity, which is constant reflection on the research and the researcher’s positioning (Maton, 2003). This constant reflexivity challenges any preconceptions the researcher may have.

In 1999, Lawson claimed the methodological approach to critical realism provides a foundation for feminists. Social structures determine daily life, with social rules and norms, but with a complex mix of human relationships. Critical realism informs feminist thinkers as it rejects the belief of one reality whilst accepting that a reality exists independent of the mind. While Peter (2003) agrees with this claim she points out that Lawson pays no attention to the relationship between the researcher and the ‘object’ whereas this is central to my feminist standpoint.

Satsangi (2013, p.200) argues that critical realism can inform the feminist researcher but the relationship between the researcher and the researched must be addressed. The methodological approach I adopt is a combination of both feminism and critical realism. This combination of methodologies is known as ‘feminist realism’ and has a number of key features. Firstly, there is a belief that knowledge does exist independent of the mind but there are different interpretations of reality. Archer (2007) argues reality can be reduced but is not limited to the interpretations of discourse. Social structures exist independent of individuals but are also created and influenced by them. There is also the central belief of empowerment of the individual and the ‘uncovering’ of suppression. This uncovering of suppression and the empowerment of the research participant is also a central feature and is discussed in Papers 1, 2, 3 and 4.
1.5 Presentation of papers (see Appendix F)

1.5.1 Published (100% authorship of all papers)

Table 1.1: Papers

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1.6 Conclusion

In this chapter the scene for the research was set with an overview of teacher education at the University of Portsmouth. All the papers are focused on the complex environment of initial
teacher education and the changing role of reflective practice in the journey to becoming a professional teacher.

My own positioning was discussed with an emphasis on feminist realism. My feminist approach has been influenced by education and its patriarchal nature. This feminist approach rejects the notion of the researched being an object and independent of the researcher and encourages reflexivity by reviewing the research at different stages. Eight papers were presented, all of which are now published. In Chapter 2 the methodologies and research design, used for the papers, will be discussed. The research analysis will be presented focusing on critical discourse analysis and the subsequent coding process adopted in a number of the papers.
Chapter 2- Methodologies

2.1 Introduction
The way this research was conducted was dependent on the research aim, objectives and my underlying research philosophy. This chapter examines my approach to this research; including my research strategies and methodology. The methodologies and research designs adopted are justified. The population for the case study is discussed and so are the qualitative methods that were chosen. In keeping with my feminist perspective, the ‘them-us’ approach is reflected upon.

The student teacher exists in a complicated educational environment with many levels of accountability to critically engage with. The student teacher will adapt to new social structures by gaining a ‘feel for the game’ (Bourdieu, 1990, p.9). The student’s habitus will embody and reflect the interactions with these ‘fields’. Habitus was discussed in Paper 7 and is interpreted here as the values, skills, habits and dispositions of an individual. It is what causes a student teacher to behave and act in a certain way and comes from an individual’s background, experiences and accumulation of capital. Bourdieu (1977) argues habitus makes the link between the social environment and the individual. The habitus will therefore influence the reflections of the student teachers during their PGCE year.

Within schools, individuals build up capital to increase their influence and control of the ‘rules of the game’. The student teacher has to learn these ‘rules’ as their influence is initially limited by their own capital accumulation. Those teachers who have the habitus that best fits the ‘legitimate modus operandi’ culture of the school will have more influence as they have the ‘right’ cultural and social capital (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 467). These ‘rules’ are not found in the teaching standards required to become a qualified teacher but they have an important role to play in teaching practice.

2.2 Research Design
Figure 2.1 illustrates the relationship between my epistemology and the research approach I have taken in Papers 1, 2, 3, 4 and 8. The feminist approach does not limit the research methods used, but there are both common and distinct features. Feminists argue in favour of the post-positivist stance and argue that subjectivity is appropriate for social research (Etherington, 2004). They challenge the positivist as being sexist because the relationship between the
researcher and the participant creates a hierarchy, which is often unrecognised and the subjective knowledge is unexamined (Jayaratne, 1991).

![Research Design Diagram](image)

**Figure 2.1: Research design (Adapted from Crotty, 1998)**

Deciding on the methodologies for Papers 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7 was only the first step in deciding on the research design. More than one type of research method was used to improve the validity of the research (Fig. 2.1). Semi-structured interviews, reflective practice documents, and a questionnaire were all used to gather data. This multi-method approach improved the construct validity of the research; due to different data being collected at different times enabling triangulation. The research design was fluid, evolving and dynamic in nature, and enabled me to engage in in-depth analysis.
2.3 The case study research methodology
In Papers 2 and 3 the aims and objectives favoured the use of the case study approach. The case study design was chosen, as this study investigates reflective practice in a real life context. It is exploratory research as an ‘in-depth’ study needed to be carried out on the phenomenon of reflective practice. Yin (2003) identifies a number of different types of case study: descriptive, explanatory and exploratory. An illustrative case study is a descriptive account of a real life event that reinforces an argument. The explanatory case study explains why certain behaviours occur and may identify the variables that cause the behaviour. The exploratory case study investigates the behaviours within a case and its surrounding context. The objectives for Papers 2 and 3 were explorative and investigative; and so were suited to an exploratory case study which would enable me to gain a greater understanding of reflective practice in its context by producing rich data from the student teachers’ responses.

One of the main critiques of case study research is that it is difficult to generalise from the results as they are unique to a given space and time. Smith (1991) identifies the significant problems a legitimate case study has to conquer. Like other research methods, a case study has to demonstrate reliability and validity. The uniqueness of a case study has the advantage of producing rich descriptions, but with the disadvantage of limited breadth. By comparison, a quantitative approach to research produces external validity, but lacks depth (Zucker, 2009).

Maxwell (1992) developed categories to judge the validity of qualitative research. These different types of validity are descriptive, interpretive, theoretical, generalisability and evaluative. Descriptive validity is the accuracy of the data itself - that is, to what extent the data reflects what the participants actually have said. In this case the interviews with the case study participants were transcribed verbatim. They were also videoed, recorded and transcribed but, even with this descriptive validity, the participants’ discourse was still open to interpretation by me as the researcher.

It is the researcher’s role to scrutinise the findings in order to validate them. Zucker (2009) points out rigour must be built into this process by focusing the strategies used to generate meaning from the qualitative data. In this case NVivo was used to help sort the data into a manageable construct. The interviews were transcribed, reviewed and categorised using the construct, as discussed later in this chapter.
2.4 Survey
In the case study analysis a relationship was found between the Ofsted grade of the placement school and the power asserted over the PGCE student. There was evidence of different social environmental factors that impacted on the student teacher and it was decided this relationship needed further research. A questionnaire was devised to investigate the power constraints illuminated by the case study interviews and to what extent they were common among all PGCE students.

The questionnaire is a common research method and can be used for large and small populations. It was used in this case to collect data from the total population of PGCE students (n=105) across all subjects on the PGCE programme at the university. The questionnaire consisted of a combination of closed and open questions and was distributed at the end of the last PGCE lecture (June), which allowed access to all the student teachers assembled together. The students were informed that the questionnaire was not compulsory, but all students present (n =101) completed it. There was, however, a disadvantage of this arrangement, as due to timetabling on the last day, the students had very little time to complete it and so the responses and data were limited.

The responses to the open ended questions were coded using descriptive coding. Descriptive coding is based on the subject area apparent in the narrative, such as talking about mentors or school policy (Saldana, 2009). As stated above the questionnaire was not planned at the start of the research process but was used to validate a number of findings from the case study. The questionnaire results were coded and then analysed. After question 2 and 4 were analysed, four categories were established: mentor constraints, school policy, facilities and personal constraints (Table 2.1).
Table 2.1: Discursive Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discursive coding</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentor constraints</td>
<td>Mc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School policy</td>
<td>sc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal constraints</td>
<td>Pc</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 1 asked the PGCE student ‘What was the name or Ofsted grade of your school?’ in each phase. The majority of students did not know the Ofsted grade of their school/college. Only six students wrote the Ofsted grade down for their first placement and only 5 knew the Ofsted grade for their second placement. It is possible some of the other respondents did know the Ofsted grade but chose not to state it. In the case of those respondents who stated an Ofsted grading, but not the name of the school/college, they were possibly protecting their own anonymity. The questionnaire was anonymous and subsequently respondents’ placements were anonymous.

In this research the questionnaire was different to the interviews as it is the participant who records the answers, whereas with the interviews the answers are recorded then transcribed. It is argued this distance reduces bias; however there may still be room for bias in the interpretation of those answers due to the subjectivity of the interpretation (Babbie, 1998). There were only a few answers to the questions which were ambiguous, for example one respondent wrote there were no constraints to their teaching but then commented: ‘I was allowed to teach the way I wanted but the school’s department was quite old fashioned and didn’t have modern teaching methods’. In this case I had to make a decision as to whether the student teacher felt constrained in their teaching or not. I decided not, as they were still allowed to teach the way they wanted.

The questionnaire was piloted. As Polit et al (2001, p.467), point out a pilot study is a ‘feasibility exercise conducted as a small scale version[s], or trial run[s], done in preparation for the major study’. At this stage any errors could be spotted before the questionnaire was
administered. The questionnaire was piloted with a small group of PGCE students. The students were provided with the pilot questionnaire and asked if there were any ambiguities or misunderstandings with the questions. It was also noted how long it took the students to complete the questionnaire. The first and third question, on the original questionnaire, were changed as a result of the feedback.

2.5 Phenomenology
The phenomenological study, presented in Paper 3, consisted of three female student teachers who were interviewed in total 12 times during the year. The phenomenological study allowed me to focus on the female student teachers’ perspectives on training to teach and revealed a deeper understanding of what participants were experiencing (Pilten, 2016, p.1425). The interviews were semi-structured and were analysed using critical discourse analysis (CDA); the process is described further in Section 2.12. Phenomenology views participants as individuals and part of this methodological approach is to understand what each person is experiencing. Nicholls (2017, p.73) ascertains that the researcher: ‘approaches each participant in a study as a unique entity, distinct and pronounced in their individuality’. Paper 3 presents the journey of three distinct female student teachers by exploring their individual journeys on the PGCE course.

2.6 Position of the researcher
Self-reflexivity was part of my feminist realist approach to the research. I rejected the claim that I could distance myself from my research, as I was part of the world I was researching. Bourdieu, himself, believed:

The important thing is to be able to objectivify one’s relation to the object so that discourse on the object is not the simple projection of an unconscious relation to the object (Bourdieu, 1984, p.53).

My habitus was intimately tied up with the methodology of this research and the methods I chose to use. Throughout the research process I engaged in reflexivity. I wrote a reflective journal that contained ideas, worries and general ‘rants’ as the feminist approach to research encourages the researcher to take a greater ‘insider’ role (Corbin-Dwyer, 2009). The journal contained ideas which led to my constructive framework but also addressed my own struggles.
over the last six years. Ideas that were generated during the coding and analytical phase were written in *Nvivo* memos. Memos were written during the first and second stage of the coding process (Fig 2.2). These memos recorded any thoughts and ideas that I had while completing the analytical process.

![Figure 2.2: Memo created within the reflective practice node](image)

These memos were often initial ideas that sprang to mind about the coding, categories and relationships. The memos were reread and reflected upon at different stages of the research. Patton (2002) describes field notes as any ideas, reflections, insights, observations and occurrences in the life of the research. During the research design and collection stage the field notes were written in my research note book, but during the analysis stage the field notes took the form of memos. The memos and field notes helped me compare the analysis between the
different data and meant that links and trends could be established. This helped improve the convergent validity of the findings.

An ‘insider’ positioning refers to the extent to which a researcher shares the characteristics, role and experience that the student teachers are going through (Corbin-Dwyer, 2009). As opposed to an ‘outsider’ position of being external to the commonality the student teachers had and their experiences, I place myself between the two extremes. I certainly was not an external researcher investigating and researching at a distance. It can be difficult to get the right balance between the insider/outsider positions. A more positivist approach to research would favour an ‘outsider’ position ensuring distance from the participants but this was not possible as I was part of the student teacher’s world. When the student teacher was at university I was part of their experience; I taught them and had tutorials with them. Whilst the student was at their placement I visited them and conducted observations. I became part of their classes, during the formal teaching observations, and was part of their peer reflections. My internal position meant I understood their world and experiences and gave me greater understanding (Toffoli & Rudge, 2006).

Because of my past role, as a school teacher, the student teachers also saw me as an ‘insider’ as I understood what they were experiencing. When the students were teaching in schools, and physically separate from me, I was more of an ‘outsider’. I moved along the ‘insider – outsider’ continuum during the year but consider that occupying a position closer to the ‘insider’ was not a disadvantage. Etherington (2004) asserts it is an advantage to be an ‘insider’, as the students were more likely to confide in me. On many occasions the student teachers did so and I believe some of the student teachers’ narratives were more ‘open’ due to my relationship with them. Some of the narratives were very personal, but as discussed in the ethics section later in this chapter, I made it quite clear at the beginning of all the interviews that the student teacher could ask me to delete anything from the recording if they did not want me to use it.

The case study research included multiple methods of data collection which helped to improve the validity of the research. However, because the research is conducted by a human, myself, it will never be completely without subjectivity. As Foucault (1972) points out there is power everywhere and so there were power relations at work during the interviews. The students may
answer truthfully, but there will be reasons why those answers may be influenced by my relationship with them.

When I invited the student teachers to participate in the research I made it quite clear it was voluntary. I also made it clear the participants could say what they wanted about their placements as the schools/colleges and mentors would be made anonymous. As there were sensitive statements about both it was important the schools could not be identified. The schools/colleges and mentors were given alphabetical identities.

2.7 Ethical issues
The ethical consequences of the research had to be deliberated prior to starting the research. Even though there are ‘checklists’ of ethical codes of practice for researchers, there will always be some degree of subjectivity as Wellington (2000, p. 54) states: ‘…an ethic is a moral principle’ and moral principles will vary among researchers. Gallagher (2005) defines morals as what is right or wrong but this may differ according to the researcher’s views. Nixon and Clough (2003) opine that a researcher should engage in reflexivity to make sure the research is not only viewed through his/her eyes but also through those of the participants. It was therefore important that I put myself ‘in the shoes’ of the interviewees to decide whether the research was ethical.

I was, as stated above, in a position of power over the student teachers. This power relationship needed to be thought through in terms of whether the students felt threatened or influenced by it. The researcher is generally in the dominant position and this may not only affect the research findings but also the interpretation. The participants, in this case, were my students and they needed to be aware of the impact of this relationship. The impact is not always negative, as familiarity can build more trust between the researcher and participants and this may lead to richer data.

My research proposal was approved by the University of Portsmouth’s Research Ethics Committee and I followed their guidelines.
2.7.1 Respect

It was important that the research was done with respect for the participants whose ‘self – purpose and self-determination’ should not be discredited (Evans & Jakupec, 1996, p.73). In other words the agency of the individual should not be affected. Evans and Jakupec present four questions that need to be asked as to whether this agency is maintained:

1. Are the persons treated as free and self-conscious individuals?
2. Is the research, conducted, in the interest of the participant?
3. Do the participants understand the purpose of the research?
4. Is the participant an instrument of the research?

These questions were addressed at all stages of the research. Too often researchers systematically answer the above questions, as the research methods are being planned, but it is important to address the question of ethical practice all through the research. As Wellington (2000, p.3) points out: ‘Ethical concerns should be at the forefront of any research project and should continue through to the write-up and dissemination stages’. It is not enough to consider ethics at the start of the project, as ethics come into question in the empirical evidence, interpretation of results and their dissemination.

All universities have drawn up their own detailed codes of practice and the University of Portsmouth is no exception. The University of Portsmouth (2013, no page number) ethical code of practice states the following principles should govern research:

- respect the rights and interests of participants in the research, and to take account of the consequences for them.
- respect individuals as autonomous agents with rights regarding decision and choice, and to conduct research on the basis of informed consent.
- reflect on the broader social and cultural implications of the research.

It was important the participants had the right to their own destiny and the right of self-determination. I achieved this through considering the participant’s right of informed consent, beneficence, privacy and confidentiality, right to fair treatment and the right to be informed of any benefits.
2.7.2 Beneficence

Beneficence is to make sure the participants are not exposed to any harm and the welfare of the participants is put first. I made every effort to ensure that the participants understood the process. All the students received a letter explaining the purpose of the research (Appendix E).

2.7.3 The right to informed consent

The student teachers were approached individually and asked whether they wanted to participate in the research. Each student was given an information sheet concerning the research and each gave me their written consent (Appendix E). Each student was told they had the right to withdraw at any time during the research and this was also stated in their information sheet.

2.7.4 Privacy and confidentiality

The University of Portsmouth’s ethical code states:

…to respect confidentiality and to ensure the security of personal and sensitive information, adhering to the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 (University of Portsmouth, 2013, no page number).

Privacy is the right of an individual to determine the circumstances, time, and extent, type of information to share or withhold from others (Polit & Beck, 2006). All the data collected were kept securely on one laptop. They were not transferred to any other hardware and were ‘backed up’ with a memory stick that was kept at home. All the students agreed to their interview comments being used in the research. When the research was disseminated the students’ names were not used. It was explained to the students that their interviews may be shown and they all agreed to this (Appendix E). At the end of the interviews the students were again asked whether they were happy for their interviews to be used and they all agreed.

2.7.5 Right to fair treatment

According to Burns and Grove (2001) rights are the claims that must be met in order to maintain respect and treat individuals with dignity. All the students were above the age of 21 and none were vulnerable adults, therefore Articles 3 and 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Young People and Vulnerable Adults did not apply in this case. The rights
of the participants needed to be respected through the right to informed consent which is detailed above and the right to be treated with dignity.

It was important to make the participant feel comfortable and, every effort was made to achieve power equilibrium by the use of mutual disclosure and a caring attitude. This too was aimed at achieving more openness. The responses the students gave could be quite personal and sensitive so it was important I was sensitive to these responses (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003).

2.7.6 Benefits
The University of Portsmouth’s ethics committee requires that all researchers (2013, no page number):

…to assess the risks of harm and potential benefits to participants and researchers.

…to embrace the obligation to maximise possible benefits and to avoid or to minimise possible harms resulting from the research.

In this research the participants were informed that there were no immediate benefits in terms of money or any other reward associated with participation in the study. The future benefit of the research would be the improvement of teacher education courses.

2.7.7 Involvement
I debriefed participants at the conclusion of the research and provided them with copies of publications arising from their participation.

2.8 Critical Discourse Analysis
Student teachers will construct their own interpretation of reflective practice as they interact with the different social environments. My choice of using critical discourse analysis (CDA) reflects a desire to gain insight into the student teachers’ understanding of reflective practice and the context of their journey to professionalism (Papers 2, 3 and 8). I interpret the meaning the student attaches to reflective practice and the sense they make of that experience. The methods used are ones more suited to the complexities and heterogeneity of the social world. There is a focus in the research on how reflective practice is used and described by the students over time.
Discourse analysis can be viewed from a number of perspectives. Discourse may be viewed critically where the analysis focuses on the dynamics of power and the ideology behind the discourse (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). As a feminist realist researcher, I am drawn to critical discourse analysis (CDA) as it analyses the powers that create the discourse within its social context. CDA can be used to show unequal power distribution which then leads to a greater understanding of the social context (Fairclough, 2010). In the case of this research CDA helped to increase my understanding of the effects of power on the student teacher and their reflective practice.

Social life is made up of social events, some of which are more important than others. These social events are determined by social structures and practices. Social agents (individuals) are part of these practices but are not free to do whatever they want. Some actions are predetermined and others are not (Archer, 2007). To understand social reality, the discourse on that reality needs to be interpreted. CDA is not only used to interpret an individual’s life, but also the social world that an individual exists in and interacts with. Discourse analysis does not rely on one particular method of analysis but encompasses methods found across all practices and disciplines. In this research a number of analytical methods were used.

In Papers 3 and 4 the interviews were a formal interaction but, as seen from some of the interactions in the narratives, the ‘turn taking’ took a more informal nature. ‘Discourse’ is the way macro-level ideas are represented in the narratives. These narratives illustrate the student teacher’s ideological stance or competing ideologies. An example would be Student C’s belief on what schools would be like in contrast to the target driven environment that she found (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2: Extract from Student C’s May interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>I think at the beginning I thought that teachers, I thought the whole environment would be much more… it wouldn’t be as target driven and so egotistical as I thought the business environment was, and I’m starting to realise that may not be the case.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Critical discourse analysis highlighted the dynamics of micro and macro power relationships between the student teacher, myself and the social environment. The data from the interviews
were analysed specifically for narratives on the role and identity of the teacher. The student teachers use their narratives to orientate themselves in the world and they will adapt themselves to different social situations. The students’ narratives and, according to Butler, their identities are a social construction (Butler, 2006). This identity is what Gee (2000) refers to as an institutional identity. It is the identity that reflects the expectations of the ‘influential’ agents in the school.

Critical discourse analysis is consistent with the feminist realist philosophy adopted for the positioning of the research. This stance focuses on social practice and the influence of social institutions (Quinn, 2012). It discovers the meaning given to phenomena within a social setting. Within the critical realist paradigm the divide between quantitative and qualitative research is seen as limiting. Research into discourse needs to focus on the individual and their situated practices and so often critical realists favour multi-method approaches. Only using one method may be seen as leading to incomplete insight and so a multi-method approach was used.

2.9 Approaches to data analysis

In Papers 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 Finlay’s (2008) reflective practice continuum is explained. This continuum was used as the analytical framework for the data analysis (Fig 2.3).
The first stage of the reflective practice continuum is reflection, also known as technical reflective practice. Reflection is the reflectivity that occurs during and after the student teacher’s lesson and encompasses the evaluative process the students go through to improve their lessons (Zeichner & Liston, 1996).

Reflection constitutes five different types of reflection: Schon’s (1987) ‘knowing in action’, ‘reflection in action’, ‘reflection on action’ and Ghaye’s (2010) ‘reflection for action’ and ‘reflection with action’. These types of reflection build on one another. Knowing in action occurs sub-consciously, within the classroom, as the student teacher instantly reacts to situations. Reflection in action also occurs in the classroom as the student ‘thinks on their feet’. Reflection on action takes place after the lesson, as the student reflects on what has gone right or wrong with the lesson. It is Ghaye who promotes the cyclical continuous improvement of reflection for action and the interaction with others for reflection with action.

Technical reflection does not include the student’s reflections on ‘social fields’ (Bourdieu, 1977). The five layers of technical reflective practice do not consider the external constraints on a student teacher. Critical reflection, however, is when the student teacher reflects on the social environment. The role the agent plays in the social field, in this case the field of schools and departments, will have an effect on the reflexivity of the student teacher. There will be rules of being a student teacher, both written and unwritten. These rules may differ depending on the school or college the student teacher is placed in. Reflective practice does not occur within a vacuum; it occurs within a complex social field involving high levels of accountability and performance, and needs to be analysed in order to investigate the power behind the discourse (Mansell, 2007, Ball, 2004, Wetherell, 2010). Critical reflection is reflecting on that environment. The ‘social’ takes numerous forms, such as school and home environments and these social ‘fields’ impact the way student teachers reflect and the types of teacher they become.

Reflexivity is the last stage of Finlay’s (2003) reflective practice continuum (Fig 2.3). Finlay distinguished reflection and reflexivity in the following way:

Reflection can be understood as ‘thinking about’ something (an object). The process is a more distanced one and takes place after the event. Reflexivity, by contrast,
involves a more immediate, continuing, dynamic and subjective self-awareness (Finlay, 2003, p.108).

Reflexivity is becoming ‘subjectively self-aware’ and involves an engagement with the ‘self’, beliefs and knowledge, whereas critical reflection is simply an engagement with the social (Finlay, 2008; Bourdieu, 1990).

Different research methods were used to explore the different types of reflective practice: reflective practice sheets to analyse reflection; questionnaires and interviews to analyse both critical reflection and reflexivity. The primary data on the participants’ reflective practice were recorded on their reflective practice sheets (Appendix A) and were first analysed using coding. The codes and categories were then analysed using quantitative methods of frequency. The interviews were also coded using a priori coding to establish categories important for the research aims.

2.10 Reflective practice sheets

Table 2.3 shows how many reflective practice sheets the students completed during their PGCE year.
Table 2.3: Frequency of reflective practice sheets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student:</th>
<th>Phase 1</th>
<th>Phase 2</th>
<th>Phase 3</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student A</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student B</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student C</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student D</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student E</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student F</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>42</strong></td>
<td><strong>43</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>102</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Female | 20 | 24 | 8 | 52

Male | 22 | 19 | 9 | 50

In total, 102 sheets were collected: 42 sheets in Phase 1, 43 in Phase 2 and 17 in Phase 3. The majority of reflective practice sheets were completed in Phase 2. The small number in Phase 3 was, in part, because it only consisted of eight weeks of teaching. The 102 reflective practice sheets, with over 1,000 reflective comments, were coded and categorised. All the reflective comments on strengths, weaknesses and strategies were coded. The sheets were analysed using first and second cycle coding.

A code is a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing or evocative attribute to a portion of language-based or visual data (Saldana, 2009, p.3). The ‘portion of language’ that is coded can be as long as a page or as short as a single word. The data can consist of transcripts, videos, artefacts and numerous other forms of data. In this instance (critical reflection sheets) the data took the written form. There is a personal approach to coding, known as ‘the coding filter’, as one researcher’s interpretation may be different to another (Adler & Goodman, 1987). As Sipe (2004, pp.482-3) argues all coding is
a judgment call since we all bring “our subjectivities, our personalities, our predispositions, [and] our quirks” to the processes.

There were two cycles of coding in analysing the sheets. The first cycle involved a mixture of *in vivo*, evaluative, descriptive and simultaneous coding. *In vivo* coding is when the code is based on a word or a series of words used within the text. An example of *in vivo* from the first cycle of coding was ‘differentiation’. Student D reflected: ‘Good initial differentiation developed through well targeted question and answers’ (Phase 1). This comment was coded as ‘differentiation’ as that word appears in the text. It is also an example of descriptive coding, as differentiation is what the comment was about.

Some of the text was coded using evaluative coding. If the student reflections were not about a certain topic area the text’s meaning had to be interpreted. An example of this is shown by this reflective comment by Student B: ‘(The) majority of students were on task and not using games/mobiles especially pupil A. This was his first lesson he was not playing games’ (Phase 2). This reflection was coded with a D for ‘disruption’. The word ‘disruption’ is not written in the utterance but it was interpreted as such, and this is evaluative coding. Simultaneous coding was also used throughout the first cycle. Simultaneous coding is when a text is read and given more than one code. The following reflection by Student D was coded with ‘resources’, ‘differentiation’ and ‘group work’:

Group task to summarise the findings of the video clip worked well, but to achieve greater depth of answering, greater evaluations and (the) facilitation of peer learning, the groups need more differentiation in members (Phase 2).

The first cycle of coding was also based on the subject area the student was reflecting on. This is exemplified by Student A whilst reflecting on a lesson:

(I) tried a more student centred approach using knowledge centres and splitting the class into groups. They worked well in their groups and understood the task (Phase 2).

Using descriptive coding the utterance was given the code ‘group work’ and given the code ‘Gr’. The ‘Gr’ coding was given to all other comments on group work that appeared in the
reflective sheets. This method of coding was appropriate, as it enabled students’ responses to be grouped and the first cycle of coding formed.

With all coding, especially evaluative coding, the text is interpreted and so it is open to the ‘predisposition’ of the researcher (Sipe, 2004, p.482). One way to improve the consistency of the coding was to engage in reflexivity during the coding process. ‘Constant comparison’ was used to check the coding process and its validity. Constant comparison has greater validity when *in vivo* coding is used, as an actual word is taken from the text to name the code. However, the word may still have different interpretations to different people. An example of constant comparison was when comparing two reflections with the same code. Student E reflected (Phase 2): ‘Net result was that a couple of students made good progress while the majority did not achieve to the same extent.’ This was coded as ‘outcomes’ which was compared to another reflection by Student B which was also interpreted as ‘outcomes’ (Phase 2): ‘Students made progress on planned activity. Pupil E and Pupil N especially although they didn’t like being given extra work.’

The codes and frequencies were recorded on spreadsheets. From the spreadsheets further quantitative analysis was undertaken. As Saldana (2009, p.8) points out: ‘Coding is not labelling it is linking’, and this linking was completed in the second cycle of coding. All the coding frequencies were worked out for each individual student and accumulatively.

**2.11 Second cycle of coding**

After the initial primary codes were identified they were analysed again to establish relationships. Figure 2.4 shows the coding process for the reflective practice sheets. After the initial cycle of coding there were a number of primary codes that overlapped topic areas, for example lesson planning and lesson timings. Because of this overlap, five new categories were created (Table 2.4).
Figure 2.4: The coding process for analysing the reflective practice sheets

Table 2.4: Categories established from the secondary cycle of coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories:</th>
<th>First cycle codes:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson planning</td>
<td>Starter activity, plenary, lesson plan and timings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour</td>
<td>Engagement of pupils, disruption, lateness, classroom control, classroom layout,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>external interruptions, gender and rules of the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance indicators</td>
<td>Targets, assessment, outcomes and lesson objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom activities</td>
<td>Resources, group work, differentiation, extension work, computers and note taking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher’s role</td>
<td>Instructions, teaching assistant, questioning, pupils’ names, teacher led, support,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>speech, relationship, teacher error, teacher’s role, subject knowledge and teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>presence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These new categories were analysed and frequencies were calculated. The frequency calculations were calculated per phase for each student teacher and then accumulatively. A further nine worksheets were created for further analysis of the data.

2.12 Interview analysis

In Papers 3, 4 and 6 twenty-one interviews were conducted during the PGCE year. This analytical process started by transcribing the interviews which had been digitally recorded and downloaded on to *Microsoft Media Player*. There was nearly six hours of digital recordings, producing over 100 pages of transcriptions. With the coding of the interview transcripts a different type of coding was initially used, to the coding of the reflective practice sheets. The first cycle of the interview coding looked for utterances on the three aims of the research: reflection, critical reflection and reflexivity. This type of coding is known as *a priori* and refers to when a theoretical framework is used to complete the initial coding (Guest, 2007).

Table 2.5: Summary of data analysis process using *NVivo*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Detailed Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><em>A priori</em> coding of the three main research areas: reflective practice, critical reflection and reflexivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>First cycle of coding of each of the transcripts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Three main nodes established as a tree node</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Second cycle of coding of each of the scripts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Revising and merging of any codes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Categories from the second cycle of coding created</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Second cycle of coding**

As stated above, each student’s scripts were read and coded into the three main codes for the first cycle: reflection, critical reflection and reflexivity. These codes became the three categories for the tree nodes on *NVivo*. Once these nodes/codes were established, a second
cycle of coding was completed to establish the categories within these codes. Table 2.6 shows the initial coding of the first cycle of analysis and the subsequent categories that were established.

Table 2.6: Coding of interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial coding:</th>
<th>Categories after second cycle of coding:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>• Reflective practice in a lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reflective practice after a lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Changing reflective practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Classroom layout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical reflection</td>
<td>• Exams</td>
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<td>• Behavioural issues</td>
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<td>• Ownership</td>
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<td>• Mentor</td>
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<td>• Targets</td>
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<td>• Culture</td>
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<td>Reflexivity</td>
<td>• Changing teacher identity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Changing personal identity</td>
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<td>• Conflict</td>
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<td>• Journals</td>
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<td>• Personal reflection</td>
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2.13 Conclusion
This chapter has explained my approach to the research methodology, my research philosophy and why feminist realism was favoured. A case study permitted an in-depth examination of the role and use of reflective practice amongst student teachers over a whole year, using a variety of methods including the analysis of their reflective practice sheets and reflective journals, a series of longitudinal semi-structured interviews and finally a survey of the whole cohort of student teachers designed to improve the validity of the findings.

The methods used were qualitative, enabling rich data to be collected. Finlay’s (2008) reflective continuum was the overarching constructive framework used to analyse the data. The technical
approach to reflective practice ‘reflection’ was investigated using the student teacher’s reflective practice sheets. This enabled Schon’s (1987) different types of reflective practice to be analysed: knowing in action, reflection in action, reflection on action, and Ghaye’s (2010) reflection for action and reflection with action. The reflective practice sheets were analysed using *in vivo*, evaluative, descriptive and simultaneous coding techniques.

Critical reflection and reflexivity, the second and third stages of Finlay’s (2008) reflective practice continuum involved the analysis of the student teacher’s identities and habitus, drawing here on the theory of Bourdieu (1977). This practice required a research method that could capture the narratives of the student teachers. And this was achieved with semi-structured interviews which gained an insight into the student teachers’ practice. The interview data were initially coded using *a priori* coding and Fairclough’s (2003) order of discourse. The different interpretations of identity were explored and analysed using Bourdieu’s (1977) social theory and Conroy’s and O’Leary-Kelly (2014) WRI.
Chapter 3 - Conclusion and contribution to knowledge

3.1 Introduction

Papers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8 investigated the reflective practice of the student teacher. The papers were built on a discussion of the debate surrounding reflective practice and its different interpretations. In this concluding chapter the overall findings, contributions to knowledge, theory and policy, in the area of reflective practice, are presented and discussed. Finally there is a section on policy contributions, impact and significance of the research and future research.

Reflective practice has various interpretations, but for this research Finlay’s (2008) reflective practice continuum was used to build the analytical framework (Figure 3.1). The continuum contains a three stage definition of reflective practice. The first stage is reflection, which is when the student teacher reflects on their own lessons and evaluates them. The second stage is critical reflection, when the student teacher reflects on the impact of the social world that surrounds them, on their role and practice of teaching. Reflexivity is the last stage of the reflective practice continuum, and is when the student teacher reflects on their own identity and the need to reconstruct it due to the changing environment.

Figure 3.1: Finlay’s (2008) reflective practice continuum

In Paper 5, literature on identities and specifically teacher identities was explored. My own philosophical framework emphasised the importance of the social environment on practice; consequently there was a need to explore the social environment of the student teacher.
3.2 Contribution to theory and knowledge

Finlay’s (2008) model of reflective practice was originally used as the analytical framework because it encapsulated all the different definitions of reflective practice that existed and had been the dominant paradigm. Finlay’s (2008) model was used extensively in scholarly research, textbooks and student teacher training. The reflective model displayed a continuum of reflection, critical reflection and reflexivity illustrating a linear movement. My research findings, however, led me to question Finlay’s (2008) model which has dominated teacher education literature in the last 10 years.

First, evidence from my research suggests that reflective practice is not in fact a linear progression. In Finlay’s (2008) model the student teacher starts off engaging in reflection, then moves on to critical reflection and subsequently reflexivity. This progression is not borne out by the different studies’ empirical findings. The evidence from this research suggests that student teachers engage in reflection throughout the PGCE year. The form the reflection takes changes but the students carry on reflecting upon their lessons up to the end of the course. Critical reflection and the act of reflecting on external structures only happens when there is a need to. In other words when an event occurs that causes the student teacher to question those external forces. This ‘event’ may take the form of a disagreement with the subject mentor’s preferred pedagogy, school’s management policy or a requirement by Ofsted. The student teacher questions those external forces when they conflict with their own values or perceptions.

Critical reflection, then, occurs when the student teacher comes up against agents that are trying to determine their practice and they themselves disagree. This ‘clash’ is what then triggers the student teacher to engage in reflexivity. The student does not continually question their own identity, but does so when confronted with a situation that challenges their teaching. Reflexivity occurs then in a social field which may itself have a desired teaching identity. This institutional identity will be projected onto the student teacher and become part of their reflexive process as the student decides how much of the institutional identity they subsume. This process is not just reflexive but also critically reflective. Both of these reflective practices happen in parallel as opposed to Finlay’s (2008) model which argues they happen sequentially. Finlay also does not give a reason for their occurrence, when in fact critical reflection and reflexivity appear to occur after a conflict of ideologies with another agent.
This research evidences reflective practice to be spiracle rather than linear. During the PGCE year the student teachers continually reflect on their lessons; as they engage in reflection they evaluate their lessons and set targets for the next lesson. This process continues throughout the year as the student gains experience. All the student teachers need to reflect on their lessons to meet the teaching standards; however, the way the reflection develops is different for individual students. Student D (February interview), who was familiar with reflecting from years of experience in industry, found he was reflecting ‘in his head by February’:

Yeah, even if it’s not on… written down on paper. There are times when I will be constantly thinking about that and … and I’d say I’m not a very self-critical.

With other student teachers this did not occur until after Easter and Student F still felt the need to write his reflections down in the last phase:

…actually reflective on, on what I do and write, you know, and, and committing that to, to writing. I think it’s been really useful and there’s cert, you know the, especially the circular stuff has been, has been really useful in identifying what I’ve done.

Student F was the lowest graded student teacher and there is a possible link here between the ability of the student teacher and how far their reflections have progressed from ‘fully thought out’ strategies on paper to ones that occur quickly in the mind. According to the student teachers there was also a need to reflect quickly because there was so much pressure on them:

I just think I got distracted by everything else that I then saw that was a priority rather than reflective practice; such as your lesson planning, any other duties that come within being a teacher etc….

Therefore the evidence suggests that reflective cycles are much quicker once the student gains experience and knowledge. This enables them to become quicker at reflecting on lessons and moves reflection from a written activity to a thinking one. As the student’s experience increases they draw upon more knowledge and practice thus allowing the reflections to be quicker. This extra knowledge base grows with every reflection and so creates a spiral of reflection rather than linearity.
This spiral of reflection does not occur within a vacuum but a complex set of social fields, and competing social structures (Fig 3.2). The interview analysis found there were a number of factors that impacted on the student teacher. Power is not interpreted just as ‘top down’ and hierarchical, although this type of power is present, but as a strategic power that exists in day to day interactions. As Foucault (1980) believed, power is ever present in all of an individual’s actions. Narrative analysis can investigate the connection between language and power. As Fairclough (1995, p. 222) points out:

...educational practices themselves constitute a core domain of linguistic and discursive power and of engineering of discursive practices. Much training in education is orientated to a significant degree towards the use and inculcation of particular
discursive practices in educational organisations... explicitly interpreted as an important facet of the inculcation of particular cultural meanings and values, social relationships and identities, and pedagogies.

Fairclough (1995) is implying discourses may belong to a specific social environment that the individual belongs to. There will be hidden powers influencing the discourse of the student teacher which need to be uncovered. Often:

...ideologies permeate society by disguising themselves as common sense; the way to resist them is to unmask them (Trappes-Lomax, 2004, p.158).

This view aligns itself with Bourdieu’s (1989) interpretation of the social field, in that there are many powers influencing the behaviour and discourse of the student teacher. Only by reflecting on the social context can these hidden powers be unmasked.

The day to day interactions with other teachers and mentors will present moments of conflicts when ideologies clash. Due to the greater experience of some teachers, and therefore more social capital, the student will generally surrender to the dominant belief. The external factors, identified in the questionnaires, impact the agency of the student teacher and their reflective ability. Reflexivity is an important part of initial teacher education, because of the need to reflect on these complex social pressures.

The reflective practice spiral (Fig 3.2) emanated from the research analysis in Papers 2 and 8. It not only contains the action of reflection but also critical reflection and reflexivity. Reflexivity takes the form of a spiral as the student teacher moves in and out of identity equilibrium as their identity develops, but again identity is fluid and changes depending on the impact of the social structures and the different agents within the social fields.

The questionnaire responses in Paper 8 illustrated some of the constraining factors, including Ofsted, ITE requirements, school policy, school management and subject mentors. As argued earlier, reflexivity and critical reflection may be occurring simultaneously as the student teachers never seemed to question their own identity without also questioning either a dominant agent’s actions or a social structure’s power. Student A illustrates this finding when in Phase 2 she found her belief about what kind of teacher she wanted to be did not match those of her
school placement:

I knew that, that I felt very constrained, almost strangled by the teaching there and how I had to be because I’m not, I just don’t care about lots of stuff. That sounds really awful but I’m not a disciplinarian, I care about the important things I, as I see them and I don’t feel I could be bothered with uniforms and with, you know, telling people to have an ear, one earing, or you’ve got nail varnish on, you know these things to me are miniscule and unimportant and it’s the main boundary rules that you know I use. And so I think those things when I was at School A stopped me being what I wanted to be, I felt very constrained about how everything had to be.

This statement, amongst others, led me to the development of the reflective practice spiral model to include critical reflection and reflexivity overlapping (Fig 3.3).

![Fig 3.3: Reflective practice spirals](image-url)
Knowledge is constructed from social interaction and this is reflected in the discourse of the student teachers. The role of the social environment and its impact became an important part of the research, as presented in Papers 2, 3, 4 and 8, as individuals do not act in isolation. The student teachers’ narratives were a product of the social environment, and this was reflected in the students’ discourse. Analysis of the reflective practice sheets and the interviews revealed that the students became more concerned with performance targets as they gained more experience. Reflections on topics such as targets, objectives, outcomes and assessment became more frequent (Paper 2). In Phase 1 the student teachers still talked about their feelings about education and their role, but by the end of the year they had stopped reflecting on their educational ideologies; instead, performance discourse gained more presence. There are numerous accountability structures in the social structure of education and the discourse of these structures is reflected in the discourse of the teacher. Theorists, such as Mansell (2007) and Ball (2003), have argued that this greater accountability has led to greater control of teachers. It is suggested that, since the 1980s, schools have undergone ‘transformational leadership’ that relies on:

A battery of regulatory and performance management mechanisms put in place to ensure that the compliance of teachers is for theorising whether or not their commitment has been won (Hatcher, 2005, p.253).

Ofsted has ensured the increased accountability of results, and standards of teaching, at all levels. The inspectorate body was created in 1992; prior to this time Her Majesty’s Inspectorate (HMI) was in charge of school inspections, but it was a less formal role. Ofsted has a much stricter inspection regime, which has brought with it greater accountability (Hatcher, 2005, Alexander, 2004, Thrupp, 2003).

As concluded from Papers 1 – 6 and 8 the student teachers encountered a conflict of identity during the PGCE course. As the student teachers became more experienced, there were a number of conflicts in identity. The first conflict was between the professional identity and the institutional identity (Conroy & O’Leary-Kelly, 2014, Gee, 2000). Conroy and O’Leary-Kelly’s model of WRI (Work Related Identity) loss theorised that as an individual works they will experience events that change their professional identity. The individual will enter into the liminal period as their identity goes into disequilibrium. As the individual discusses the
event with others, and relives the initial ‘event’, they will reconstruct their new identity known as the post loss identity.

There have been numerous interpretations as to what exactly reflective practice is. These interpretations have ranged from the more technical to the more holistic. The majority of research papers have focused on ‘research with others’. This was illustrated in research conducted by Parkinson (1999), Freese (1999) and Harford (2008). These three investigations were based on student teachers reflecting on their own ability with either another student or a mentor. The same scaffolding process was used to develop the reflective cycles used in this research. There is no doubt that reflecting with an ‘other’ is extremely important to the student teacher but this is only with reflections, which is suggested by Parkinson, Freese and Harford. The students can progress their own practice by reflecting with other student teachers, school mentors and university tutors but these ‘others’ have another important role; they are also important when the student teacher engages in reflectivity and critical reflection.

When the student teacher is reflexive, questioning and recreating their own teaching identity; this period of liminality occurs in a social context (Paper 3 and 5). The student uses discourse to recreate their new identity and confirmation from an ‘other’. This ‘other’ ranges from friends, partners, parents and grandparents. This support and ‘sounding board’ was an important part in the student teacher’s PGCE year and in some cases the key to completing the year. Due to the ‘micro politics’ of critical reflecting with mentors or university tutors this reflexivity often occurred outside the inner circle of support.

The student teachers found it important to talk through issues with people outside of the course. This support was invaluable in enabling them to complete the year (Fig. 3.4). Student E highlighted the need for this support when reflecting on his wife’s role and that it was important ‘just to have somebody to talk to about things ..cause I would say, sort of, being in a placement in the school is quite a lonely place’ (May, 2011). Equally, Student F’s wife was a teacher and he frequently talked to her about the course. He also had a lot of friends, who were teachers and understood what he was going through (Feb, 2011).
Figure 3.4: Outer reflective practice communities

Figure 3.4 illustrates the people the student teachers reflected with outside the PGCE course. Being able to reflect with others outside the inner community, of the PGCE, was important for the students because, as stated:

…you’re very conscious that you’re being assessed and appraised all the time and you, you might not necessarily want to be as open within that process as you might be if you were a permanent fixture within the department, so you’re sort of trying to… faking it good to keep… manage your own PR within the situation...(Student E)

Student E explained that reflecting within the inner circle was limited, due to social constraints (Fig. 3.5). These constraints reflect the nature of the ‘social fields’ the students find themselves part of (Bourdieu, 1977). All the agents in the ‘inner fields’ have power over the student teacher and contribute to his/her grading and assessment.
Figure 3.5: Inner reflective practice communities

Dang (2013) wrote about the importance of student teachers reflecting on their preconceptions and what it means to be a teacher. There is evidence from the research in Papers 2, 5 and 8 that the students reflected on these preconceptions when engaging in reflexivity and critical reflection. The student teachers questioned their own teaching identity, but in light of events of determinism caused by agents in their social fields. For Dang (2013), reflective practice included the questioning of pre-conceived ideas. For Zeichner and Liston (1996, p.1), a student has not engaged in reflective practice unless they have ‘questioned the goals and values that guide his or her work, the context in which he or she teaches, or never examines his or her assumption’. Again Zeichner and Liston’s definition of reflective practice is slanted towards critical reflection and the engagement with the social environment. There is much evidence from the research that points to the student teacher questioning the structures they found themselves part of, from the school’s management to the NCTL’s teaching standards. The reflective practice of the student also includes the student’s own reflections on their lessons; the very reflective practice that Schon (1983) was first accredited with. Reflection has a very important role in the professionalization of the student teacher as they question their own teaching styles and try new ideas.
All three types of reflective practice presented in Finlay’s (2008) model are important and almost equally so for the progression of the student teacher. Finlay’s definition of reflective practice is the ‘process of learning through and from experience towards greater insights of self or practice’ (Finlay, 2008, p.1). This definition is certainly valid but there is so much more happening to the student teacher’s reflective practice during their PGCE year. They are not just gaining ‘greater insights of self’; they are redeveloping and questioning their self and their social environment. They are recreating their own practice almost daily by changing and improving that practice. Finlay’s definition of reflective practice is a belief that there is a greater insight into the ‘self’ but it does not recognise that the student’s teaching identity is constantly changing and has not fully developed yet. The significance of this research is a new definition of reflective practice which more accurately describes it as the questioning of practice, identity and the social environment due to an increase in knowledge, self-awareness and experience.

3.3 Policy contributions
Evans (2011) identified four states of professionalism. Firstly, ‘professionalism that is demand focused’ on the service level demands of teaching that are demanded by the state. With teacher education those demands come from two main agents: the NCTL, in the form of the teaching standards; and Ofsted, in the form of inspection criteria.

As discussed in Papers 1, 2 and 4 student teachers are required to satisfy the teaching standards. These standards are grouped into: ‘professional attributes’, ‘professional knowledge and understanding’, and ‘professional skills’ (TDA, 2007, No page numbers). Both the 2007 and 2012 teaching standards focused on the ‘craft of teaching’ and the practices needed to be a teacher (Evans, 2011). These teaching standards, however, do not cover all the skills and knowledge needed to become a professional teacher.

Secondly, ‘professionalism that is prescribed’; these expectations are performance focused and based on the expectations of the educational institutions the teachers work in (Evans, 2011). The performance culture that is embedded into the current education system in England is seen as the norm and it is the way things are done (Ball, 2004). All the systems and agencies that are manufactured to support the education system can be taken for granted.
ITE conveyors exist in the same performance-driven culture that dominates the school system. Clegg (2008, p. 222) refers to academics as being ‘hemmed in by bureaucratic rules, academic conventions, the demands of external agencies and confusing and conflicting agencies’. It is not just the schools that have a culture of performativity and accountability; universities have them as well, and the student teacher is bridging both worlds. The student teacher belongs to hierarchies of accountability, leading to their teaching identity facing continual pressure to meet different expectations. This performance driven focus is an institutional expectation of the student teachers.

Teacher educators, who are themselves part of this performance driven culture, may help replicate this culture. Schon’s (1991) reflection in action is a process embraced by ITE providers everywhere, but it is mechanical, and lacks a critical perspective. It is a reflective process that no longer requires reflexivity into the teacher’s own views on education and identity. The reflective process only occurs when examining teaching skills and there seems to be limited questioning of the education structure itself.

This process of reflection ignores the role of the external environment and how this affects the identity of the student teacher. Every person the student teacher is reflecting with - the mentor, the university tutor and other teachers - is being influenced by their own position and accountability. This research suggests that some of these external influences are hindering innovations in the classroom.

Bourdieu (1989, p.4) believed that, unless individuals questioned the structures that limit them, they were more likely to be ‘the apparent subjects of actions’. Reflexivity enables the individual to become aware of these structures that inhibit them. As Beck and Giddens (1994, p.78) state: ‘individualism is not based on the free decisions of individuals’. It may be an illusion that people are free to pursue the life and goals they want. In reality, student teachers are subject to rules and regulations that influence what they do – some written, some unwritten. Critical reflection makes the student teacher aware of these structures and their impact.

Critical reflectivity is not just thinking critically about education and education policies. There is much more to consider when becoming a critical thinker in education. Critical thinking is an emancipator. It frees your mind from what you see as the norm and allows you to question
those social structures taken for granted. In the last few years there has been a shift in the ideology of teacher education, with a movement away from teacher education run by universities in favour of school-based training.

A major overhaul of teacher training is being introduced next year. It will cause “huge disruption” and put long-established university departments with “tremendous expertise” at risk of closure, experts have warned. The government’s radical changes will encourage schools to take responsibility for training thousands of new recruits who would previously have studied undergraduate and PGCE courses (Maddern, 2012, p.164).

School Direct student teachers (school based teacher education) are based mainly in one school, with perhaps a few weeks in a partner institution (DfE, 2013a). The research conducted and presented in Paper 8 suggests that having one mentor could have a limiting effect on the development of the student teachers resulting in less freedom to develop their own teaching style. School led teacher education is favoured by the present government but this research suggests it will cease to be teacher education but teacher training.

Reflection with practice, and being able to reflect with different people, is an important aspect of the student teacher’s reflective practice. The research presented in Paper 3 revealed an inner and outer circle of reflecting with others. The inner circle was when the student teacher reflected with those who were associated with the PGCE course. The outer circle was when the student teacher reflected with those outside the PGCE course: parents, partners, spouses and friends. Both circles of reflective agents were important to the student teacher, but the students found there were some issues that could not be discussed with the inner circle, for fear of being seen as weak. As Foucault (1980) believed, power is ever present in all of an individual’s actions. The PGCE students were aware of this ‘power play’ and found there were some issues they reflected on with the outer circle of people. The support, from both circles, was equally important to the student teacher. The more people the students have to reflect with, the more ideas and strategies they will develop and apply in their lessons and their placements.

Since 2012 there has been a shift in the ideology of teacher education. The teaching standards, introduced in 2012, are focussed on the craft of teaching. Winch (2012, p. 316) argues there
has been a move away from the philosophy of education and it has been replaced with ‘prescriptions of attitudes, values and practices with which teachers are expected to comply’. Discussions about the meaning of education and why teachers teach have been replaced with competencies. Reflective practice still plays a part in these new standards, but only in the technical sense. It is needed to evaluate lessons and improve practice. However the teaching standards do not present a ‘full picture’ of what makes a professional teacher. The 8 main teaching standards (34 sub-standards) of the 2012 teaching standards (there are two parts to the 2012 teaching standards: teaching and personal and professional conduct) do not tell the whole story as to what is needed to become a professional teacher. Student teachers also go through a process of continual reflection and reflexivity during the PGCE year.

Critical reflection does not exist in, and certainly would not be encouraged by, the new ideology of teacher education. As Winch (2012) argues, student teachers are judged by how well they comply to the new competencies, rather than their critical reflectivity. Encouragement of critical reflection is, however, needed to encourage new ways of thinking. If the teachers are just judged on how well they meet a ‘standard’, then they are less likely to think ‘outside the box’ and create new ways of seeing, teaching and improving the education of pupils.

3.4 Impact of my research on practice
The results of the research allowed me to reflect upon the PGCE course and ways to improve it. The reflective practice cycles still remain in the course structure and reflection is used to improve the student teacher’s practice. However, the course is now designed to include critical reflection and reflexivity, because of my research. I give a lecture at the beginning of the PGCE year that focuses on reflexivity and critical reflection. Critical reflection has become an underlying theme of the PGCE course. The student teacher’s reading list has changed from subject focus to include the works of Paulo Freire (2006), Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1984, 1989, 1990, 1992 & 1993) and Stephen Ball (1994, 2003 & 2004). The University sessions are no longer focused solely on subject knowledge and the ‘craft’ of teaching; they now contain debates about educational philosophy and critical thinking.

The student ends the year by giving a presentation on reflexivity and how they have changed and developed as a person. Although critical reflection and reflexivity are not in the teaching standards, they are encouraged. The way I choose the school placements has also changed. I
no longer place students by their different qualifications, although this is important for Ofsted. I think about the school’s culture and how much freedom the student will have to try out innovative teaching.

3.5 Future research
This research has raised a number of themes that warrant further research. The constraints that student teachers are under while in teacher education would be an area for investigation; and a study of whether academies and free schools, have different effects on the development of the student teacher’s identity. More research could also be completed on changes to the NQT’s teaching identity and the impact of the social environment on their identity.

The newly qualified teachers are aware of the constraints they are under from management and other members of staff. It would be interesting to know how, if at all, this critical awareness of the NQT is still there after a few years of teaching, or to what extent they have become institutionalised.

The teachers in the case study have now completed their third year of teaching. Research on their views on reflective practice, during their training, could now be undertaken to assess to what extent they are still engaging in reflective practice and in what forms it manifests itself.

Research into other professions and the use of reflective practice would be worthy of investigating. Teachers are not alone in the erosion of their profession; there is evidence that neo-liberalism may also be impacting various other state sectors, such as healthcare (Bair, 2016). Reflective practice plays a key role in the training/education of nurses, doctors and healthcare and social workers. It would be valuable to explore to what extent the spiral of reflective practice, presented here, can be applied to the other complex environments.
3.6 Commissioned research
Meierdirk, C. (2016-18). Approaches to teaching and learning by student teachers during their training and QTS years. FHSS Project Funded.

3.7 Publications and conference papers


Meierdirk, C. (2016). Action research project on improving and encouraging Student teachers to complete at M level. *FHSS Celebration Day*, University of Portsmouth.


3.8 Reviewer

3.9 Awards
(2017). Awarded Best Paper Presenter for 14th International Conference on Teaching, Education and Learning (ICTEL). University of Lisbon. Growth or a fixed mindset? What difference does it make to the success of a student teacher?
References


Finlay, L. (2003), Negotiating the swamp: the opportunity and challenge of reflexivity in research practice. *Qualitative Research, 2,* 209-230.


Meierdirk, C. (2016b). Bourdieu for beginners. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UW8vq3InOCg&t=130s


Appendix A - Reflective practice sheet

Reflective Practice in the Classroom

This form is to be used when reflecting on a series of lessons (minimum of 3 lessons). At the end of the first lesson you need to reflect and identify any problems/difficulties that you experienced during teaching the class. Once you have identified these issues identify strategies to work on these problems/issues for the next class. Finally set targets for the following lesson. We expect you to complete at least 5 series of Reflective practice cycles per phase.
# Reflective Practice

**Lesson Subject area:**

**Date:**

**Year Group:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Targets for this next lesson (these will be the same as the targets set from the previous lesson’s reflectivity):</th>
<th>Reflect on this lesson. What went well and why do you think this was?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identify Strategies to address the problems/issuses:</th>
<th>Identify any problems/issuses in the lesson. Why you think they occurred?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Appendix B - An example of reflective practice sheet from case 1-6

### Reflective Practice

**Lesson Subject area:** Marketing Mix - Product  
**Date:** 05.03.2011  
**Year Group:** AS Business Studies (AQA Level)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Targets for this next lesson (these will be the same as the targets set from the previous lesson's reflectivity):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• More group activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be aware of timing or use stop watch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Create starter activity to reinforce Boston Matrix to ensure pupils totally understand each section of it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflect on this lesson. What went well and why do you think this was?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• At the beginning of my lesson, I decided to give a general outline as we went through objectives to inform pupils of what was going to be covered throughout today’s lesson, this worked really well and give structure to the pupils.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Throughout the lesson I also had a slide identifying when each objective was achieved and I then question pupils understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• At the end of the lesson, I asked them to write down what the objectives of the lesson were and if we covered each one. All pupils got the three objectives correct and this showed me that pupils were listening and understood everything we done in class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Throughout the lesson I had a lot of activities however, through my own discretion I had to decide not to use some of them as time was going so fast, the activities were omitted to ensure all objectives were achieved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I have cut gapped handouts and this worked really well as pupils needed to be alert as to what they need to fill in and to add additional notes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identify Strategies to address the problems/issues:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• For future lesson I need to rehearse my lesson planned to ensure I have completed the content within one hour or to ensure I have enough to split it over two lessons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I also need to create more group activities to keep pupils alert and so they don’t</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identify any problems/issues in the lesson. Why you think they occurred?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• My timing was completely out as I had a two hour lesson and I had planned to cover too much material for just one hour. Due to the amount of content of the topic I should have split the lesson into two one hour sessions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Reflective Practice

**Lesson Subject area:** Functions and Areas  
**Date:** 3/2/11  
**Year Group:** 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Targets for this next lesson (these will be the same as the targets set from the previous lesson's reflectivity):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Separate work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Keep close eye on students to ensure he is keeping up as he becomes disruptive/unsettled easily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Reinforce standards/expectations in the classroom &amp; relate to the next assignment being set.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflect on this lesson. What went well and why do you think this was?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Able to talk to individual students &amp; assess their progress and give praise where due.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Students worked well to bring in usable visuals to see what they were and what could be ‘signed off’ as being complete.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identify Strategies to address the problems/issues:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Separate work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Reiterate the procedures of coming into the room &amp; removing electronics found on games.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Inform students of assignment 2.3 being set &amp; that their work needs to increase to ensure they don’t fail.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identify any problems/issues in the lesson. Why you think they occurred?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Students not completing work on time due to using inappropriate websites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Issued detention for lunchtime for this reason.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Students not working in pairs in class, rather than focusing on their work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Slow progress in completing tests.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

*Pupil's names blanked.*
### Reflective Practice

**Lesson Subject area:** Market Segmentation  
**Date:** 09.05.2011  
**Year Group:** BTEC Assignment Three

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Targets for this next lesson (these will be the same as the targets set from the previous lesson’s reflectivity):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Watch questioning on activity sheets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Keeping certain pupils focused</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflect on this lesson. What went well and why do you think this was?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Today’s lesson had good pace, the pupils helped as they were more alert than normal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The variety of activities helped keep the lesson going with good pace, students got involved but I put the pupils in pairs rather than groups and this works a lot better with this group of level 3 BTEC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I went in with the attitude today firm but fair, and nipped the chatting of certain pupils that were always disrupting the lesson. I comprised with them and kept a good sense of humour rather than getting annoyed and giving out.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identify Strategies to address the problems/issues:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• In future, I will re write the information and assign questions to be answered for certain pupils as it will keep them more focused.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Less questions on activity sheets to allow for more discussions and questions.</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identify any problems/issues in the lesson. Why you think they occurred?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Again, I need to really watch the timing and try to stick to the activities, however when pupils want to know more it can be quite difficult to cut them short, however maybe less questions on activity sheet will allow that extra time for discussions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• One of the activities today, I wanted the pupils to read and take the information from it however over 70% of the pupils did carry this out but 30% needed to be controlled.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reflective Practice

Lesson Subject area: National Diploma in Business – Business Ethics – Nokia social implications
Date: 1/12/10
Year Group: Level 3 – Year 2

Targets for this next lesson (these will be the same as the targets set from the previous lesson’s reflectivity):

Keep explanations shorter so tasks do not over run.
If using extensive PowerPoint, complement with selected hand out slides rather than giving them all of them and relating back to wordy slides.

Reflect on this lesson. What went well and why do you think this was?

When working on computer research task and eventual assignment work I had a seating plan in place which helped dramatically with behaviour and general productiveness of the tasks.

Good variety of activities to engage all learners and keep the lesson interesting and I ran it at fairly quick pace which they responded to well.

Formed a very good rapport with the students which when challenged by a student about something I had said in relation to CSR, I managed to handle this well and got the other class members to essentially justify what I had said.

Identify Strategies to address the problems/issues:

Improve timing – make timing in lesson plan more realistic.
Ensure PowerPoint slides do not contain too much text.

Identify any problems/issues in the lesson. Why you think they occurred?

The timing and pace of the lesson was correct, but this was reflected in my original lesson plan as this was out with the timing by a considerable amount.
The lesson itself works well, but this was not supported by the timings in the lesson plan.

A little too much on some of the PowerPoint slides at times. Leading to the pupils switching off at some points.
Appendix C - Samples from coding of interviews on Nvivo

Student A - Coding from June interview

Student A - Coding from June interview

constrained, almost strangled by the teaching there and how I had to be because I'm not, I just don't care about lots of stuff. That sounds really awful but I'm not a disciplinarian, I care about the important things I see them and I don't feel I could be bothered with uniforms and with you know, telling people to have an ear, one earing, if you've got nail varnish on, you know these things to me are miniscule and unimportant and it's the main boundary rules that you know I use. And so I think those things when I was at Kings stopped me being what I wanted to be. I felt very constrained about how everything had to be. I also prefer the longer lessons because I feel you can really go into depth. I found when you only have an hour lesson or a 55 minute lesson you can't go into the depth you can ever, even just an hour-and-a-half you can do so much more and you can allow the students to really start working and getting onto tasks and actually do a proper activity and I like that so...

P: How do you think your view on education has changed throughout the year?

I think it's falttered at points <smiles> but <shuffles> I think I'm probably back to the positive. I think that I still do believe the same things and actually looking earlier at what we'd written before I... I believe that education is still vital and it's still something, it's an opportunity and we're lucky that everybody gets it but it's making the most of that opportunity and it's helping students. And I think it's been
Student B - Coding from May interview

I: And when you go back to Ireland do you think you’ll maintain the same type, type of teacher that you are now?

P: Yeah definitely, I’ll still create lesson plans – I know it sounds stupid for every lesson but I think if you have that you have a structure, you know where you’re going with your lesson, you know what the students are taking away from it. I’ll definitely bring in the reflective activities as well. I mean especially the, like [1.5] cards, they are so simple. They only take about a minute to fill out, you can see what the students have learned. I know it’s different when you’re on a full timetable and everything else, but I think if you try and do it in some way from the beginning I think it’ll be better for you anyway in the long run, I mean you learn more from it as well.

I: Good. Right now important I mean I was discussing with you last time and the time before about your different roles cause you’re a teacher, you’re a mummy, you’re a woman...
Appendix D - Planned interview questions

January interview

1. What does education mean to you?
2. What do you think you need to do to pass the PGCE course?
3. How many different roles do you think you play as a person?
4. How many different identities do you think you might have?
5. Do you find that you are a different person in those different roles, do you act differently?
6. How do you manage those different roles?
7. Was there anything that surprised you in your first placement?
8. Would you change anything in education if you could?
9. Do you think there’s anything that stopped you from being the teacher you wanted to be or the type of teacher you wanted to be?
10. What kind of teacher would you like to be?
11. What do you think reflective practice is, what do you think it is to you?
12. Are you finding it easy to write a reflective journal?
13. And do you write in very different things in your reflective journal than what you do on your reflective sheet?

February interview

1. What does education now mean to you?
2. How do you manage those different roles?
3. Is there anything that’s surprised you about your second placement compared to your first?
4. Is there anything that stops you from being the teacher you want to be?
5. Do you think you’ve changed as a person since you started this course?
6. What do you think reflective practice is then? And what does it mean to you?
May interview
1. Has your view on education, do you think, changed since the last time I interviewed you?
2. How have you changed this year?
3. Is the teaching in placement 2 different from 1?
4. What do you think reflective practice is?
5. How have you juggled your different roles this year?
6. In what ways do you think you’ve engaged your reflective practice then?

June interview
1. What role do you think reflective practice has had on your teaching this year and do you think it’s changed as the year has progressed?
2. Do you think anything has stopped you throughout the year teaching the way you wanted to teach? Being the teacher you want to be?
3. How do you think your view on education has changed throughout the year?
4. Do you think you’ve changed as a person this year?
5. You’ve made it, a lot don’t make it through the year, why do you think you’ve made it?
6. What do you think you’re good at as a teacher?
Participant Information Sheet

Title: How does the transition between the PGCE and the QTS year affect the ability of the student teacher to engage in reflective practice?

My name is Charlotte Meierdirk, and you will know me as your Course Leader for PGCE Business Studies, however I am conducting this research as a student of the University of Sussex undertaking research for my thesis. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully:

Purpose of the study The study will investigate the changing identity of a student teacher through the Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) year and into the Newly Qualified Status (NQS) year. It will study the impact of the PGCE year on the different identities and roles of the PGCE student and the changing interpretation of reflective practice. The study will start February and continue until April.

Why have you been chosen? You have been chosen, as you have been identified to have many different identities and roles, such as mother, wife, husband, father, teacher and religious identity etc.

Do I have to take part? You do not have to take part in this study and if you decline this will not affect your PGCE grade or studies in any way. Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time, up to the point the data are analysed and incorporated in my thesis.

What will happen to me if I take part? You will be interviewed at a number of intervals throughout the PGCE course. There will be 3 semi-structured interviews that will be videoed but there may be extra interviews if a critical incident occurs. You will also be interviewed after the first few weeks and after a term in your NQT year. You will be asked to submit your reflective practice sheets from your lessons and reflective journal to be analysed in the course of this research. This data may be used for future journal articles and conferences.
**What are the possible benefits of taking part?** By taking part you are furthering the understanding of student teacher identities and their changing nature throughout their PGCE year and into the NQT year. It is very unlikely that you will benefit personally.

**Will what I say in this study be kept confidential?** The findings for this study will contribute to my Professional Doctorate thesis and may be published in journals. Extracts from the video recordings could be used as part of a conference presentation. This research is being conducted as an academic staff member of the University of Portsmouth but also as a Professional Doctorate student at the University of Sussex. Only I will have access to the data. It will be stored on a laptop with passwords.

**Who has reviewed the study?** This study has been reviewed and given a favourable opinion by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee.

**Concluding statement**
Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet. If you decide to participate then you will be given a copy of this sheet and a consent form to sign.

Contact Information: Charlotte Meierdirk, School of Education and Continuing Studies, University of Portsmouth, St. George’s Building, 141 High St, Portsmouth, charlotte.meierdirk@port.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Charlotte Meierdirk

Course Leader PGCE Business Studies
CONSENT FORM

Full title of Project: How does the transition between the PGCE and the QTS year affect the agency of the student teacher?

Name, position and contact address of Researcher:

Charlotte Meierdirk, Course Leader ITT Business Studies, School of Education and Continuing Studies, St. George’s Building, 141 High St, Portsmouth, PO1 2HY. Tel: 07867502902

Please Initial Box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.

3. I agree to take part in the above study.

(Include if appropriate or delete):

4. I agree to the interview / focus group / consultation being audio/video recorded

5. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications

____________________________________  ______________________  ______________________
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Participant</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Signature</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Researcher</th>
<th>Date</th>
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Appendix G – Form UPR16

**FORM UPR16**

Research Ethics Review Checklist

Please include this completed form as an appendix to your thesis (see the Postgraduate Research Student Handbook for more information)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Postgraduate Research Student (PGRS) Information</th>
<th>Student ID: 634345</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PGRS Name: Charlotte Meledink</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department: Portsmouth Business School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Supervisor: Professor Karen Johnston</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start Date: 02/17</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(or progression date for Prof Doc students)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Study Mode and Route:</td>
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<td>Part-time</td>
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<td>Full-time</td>
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<td>MPhil</td>
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<td>MD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Doctorate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title of Thesis: The Complexities of Reflective Practice in Teacher Education: A New Approach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis Word Count: PhD by publication N/A</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

If you are unsure about any of the following, please contact the local representative on your Faculty Ethics Committee for advice. Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the University’s Ethics Policy and any relevant University, academic or professional guidelines in the conduct of your study.

Although the Ethics Committee may have given your study a favourable opinion, the final responsibility for the ethical conduct of this work lies with the researcher(s).

**UKRIOR Finished Research Checklist:**
(If you would like to know more about the checklist, please see your Faculty or Departmental Ethics Committee rep or see the online version of the full checklist at: http://www.ukri.org/what-we-do/code-of-practice-for-research/)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td>Have all of your research and findings been reported accurately, honestly and within a reasonable time frame?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>Have all contributions to knowledge been acknowledged?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td>Have you complied with all agreements relating to intellectual property, publication and authorship?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d)</td>
<td>Has your research data been retained in a secure and accessible form and will it remain so for the required duration?</td>
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<tr>
<td>e)</td>
<td>Does your research comply with all legal, ethical, and contractual requirements?</td>
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**Candidate Statement:**

I have considered the ethical dimensions of the above named research project, and have successfully obtained the necessary ethical approval(s)

Ethical review number(s) from Faculty Ethics Committee (or from NRES/SCREC): N/A, PhD by publication

If you have not submitted your work for ethical review, and/or you have answered ‘No’ to one or more of questions a) to e), please explain below why this is so:

Signed (PGRS): ____________________________  Date: 19/2/18

JPR16 – August 2015

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## Appendix H – Papers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paper</th>
<th>Title</th>
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</table>
Is reflective practice an essential component of becoming a professional teacher?

Charlotte Meierdink
School of Education and Continuing Studies, University of Portsmouth, Portsmouth, UK

ABSTRACT
This paper explores the concept of reflective practice and its role in the professionalisation of student teachers. There is an examination of the requirements to become a qualified teacher and how these requirements have determined practice. After looking at the recent evolution of state requirements for initial teacher education in England, it investigates the place of reflective practice within that process and to what extent reflective practice is still needed to become a teacher. It presents the different interpretations of reflective practice and the role of professionalism in the journey to qualified teaching status (QTS).

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 11 November 2015
Accepted 18 March 2016

KEYWORDS
Reflective practice; teacher education; student teacher; professionalism; critical reflection; reflexivity; teaching standards

Introduction

When studying the history of initial teacher education, Robinson (2006, p. 19) argues that teacher education is fraught with tensions. These manifest themselves within a number of ongoing debates about the skills and professional knowledge needed to become an effective teacher: the balance between theory and practice in the training process; the diversity of routes into teaching and their associated training; and the increasing government control of teacher education. Reflective practice is encouraged and often held up as an essential part of being a professional, but what it is, what forms it can take and what is its purpose are core questions to be answered in this paper. It is currently both implicit and explicit in the current teacher training standards and therefore features in the training elements of initial teacher education programmes. These programmes do or should go beyond explaining how to reflect on and evaluate lesson planning and performance, to developing an awareness of the context within which teachers are teaching, and the hidden agendas and power relationships within which they are operating.

There are many theories which explore the different dimensions and complexities of reflective practice which are addressed here. What follows is first a discussion of theories of reflective practice, followed by a discussion of the role of reflective practice in the teaching standards. The conclusions reached in the paper are that reflective practice, in its various guises, is needed to become a professional teacher, but that recent government policy changes to teacher training may threaten that.
Different manifestations of reflective practice

Interpretations of reflective practice vary between different professions and even within the same professional field, such as education. There are some areas of agreement and these are that reflective practice is the ‘process of learning through and from experience towards greater insights of self or practice’ (Finlay, 2008, p. 1). The process of learning is the basis for all interpretations of the contentious term, and whatever form reflective practice takes, the reflective practitioner should learn and grow from engaging with it. Reflective practice is therefore used within teacher education to enable the student teacher to learn. The contention occurs when discussing what it is exactly the student should be learning from when engaging in reflective practice.

A technical approach to reflective practice advocates learning from actual teaching – how well did a lesson go, was it well-planned, did it achieve its objective, how could it be done better – whereas a more holistic interpretation of reflective practice may encourage a critical reflection on what is the purpose of teaching that lesson in the way it is required and who decides and has power to control and determine what is done. This reflection on the role of power and the social field(s) the students finds themselves in (Bourdieu, 1990; Schön, 1987). There are also advocates of reflexivity or personal reflection and the ‘turning of the lens’ on oneself (Loughran, 1996).

Reflective practice has grown in significance over the last 30 years. It gathered pace after Schön’s first book on reflective practice: Theory in practice: Increasing professional effectiveness (in collaboration with Argyris), in 1974, and continued with subsequent writings, including the use of reflective practice in education, with: The reflective turn: Case studies in and on educational practice in 1991. Schön, a prominent theorist in reflective practice, explored types of knowledge and how we require it. Schön’s ‘knowing-in-action’ is the unconscious practice that occurs when a person’s acts are based on prior experience. The person does not actively reflect on the event but uses tacit knowledge before engaging in action. Tacit knowledge is the knowledge the professional has built up from different experiences they have had. As the student teacher moves to becoming a professional, their tacit knowledge increases and influences their actions. This knowledge is in the action and is unconscious, whereas Schön’s (1995) reflection-in-action is the conscious reflection that is undertaken ‘on the spot’; it is a reaction to what is occurring at the time, rather than an instant reaction using tacit knowledge. Schön’s last type of reflection is reflection-on-action. Reflection-on-action occurs after the event and is a continual process of review and improvement; this is illustrated by a three-stage model:

(1) Providing students with technical training.
(2) Helping the students think like a professional.
(3) Enabling the students to develop a new form of understanding and action.

The practitioner is encouraged to use ‘reflection-on-action’ by continuously reflecting on a problem to generate new knowledge and using the new knowledge to solve a problem or dilemma. According to Schön (1987), this cyclical process would improve the standard of the professional in their field. Schön’s ‘reflection-on-action’ is present in the teaching standards demanded by the state (The Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA), 2007). Student teachers need to evidence how they reflect and improve their practice during their training.
Schön's (1987) technical approach to reflection has been questioned by Reynolds (1998) who advocates the use of critical reflective practice. Again, this term is not without challenge, as interpretations range from reflecting on the social environment to a more inward-looking interpretation of engaging in personal reflection. Zeichner (1996, p. 1) believes that a practitioner has not engaged in reflective practice unless they have questioned the 'context in which they teach'... and their own individual's beliefs'. Critical reflection encourages reflections on the practitioner's past experiences, ideological beliefs and the social context in which he/she is operating. This definition is more holistic and moves away from the technical reflective practice advocated by Schön (1987). Fook expands Zeichner's definition and says the practice of reflection:

... enables an understanding of the way (socially dominant) assumptions may be socially restrictive, and thus enables new, more empowering ideas and practices. Critical reflection thus enables social change beginning at individual levels. Once individuals become aware of the hidden power of ideas they have absorbed unwittingly from their social contexts, they are then freed to make choices on their own terms. (Fook, 2006, p. 53)

The use of critical reflective practice is a questioning of the norm and the emancipation of the practitioner from the social constraints and practices that are taken for granted. Critical reflective practice is not part of the current teaching standards and if it does occur, it is because it is advocated by the higher educational institution (HEI) the student teacher belongs to.

Reflective practice also includes the action of reflexivity. Reflexivity is interpreted from the extremity of holistic reflexivity at one end of a spectrum and deep recollection, by oneself, at the other. For Bleakley (1999) ethical considerations are an important strand in reflexivity and how we concern ourselves with 'otherness'. There are numerous authors who agree with Bleakley's need for reflexivity to navigate the modern world and its ever-changing being.

Archer (2007, p. 94) emphasises the importance of reflexivity in navigating our way through the world, and defines it as 'the regular exercise of the mental ability, shared by all normal people, to consider themselves in relation to their social context and vice versa'. Archer stresses how we need to realise and reflect on the influence of social context, structure and human agency. Reflexivity, for her, is considering the external influences in terms of agencies. Archer's (2007) social theory sheds light on this need for reflexivity. In the teaching profession, by analysing the contextual structures that form and are formed by the practices of 'the teacher'. Her beliefs concur with critical realism that structures and agents are intertwined and action is what connects these two. According to Archer (2007, p. 209) the actions that connect structure and agent take two forms: that of transformation (morphogenetic) and reproduction (morphostatic). Morphogenetic is when the agents' actions transform the social structures and cultural systems in which they operate, and morphostatic is the reproduction of those systems.

In the instance of teachers, it would be their practice influenced by their subjective concerns, such as values, and their objective considerations, such as the curriculum and different assessments, that influence their actions. These actions may reproduce the same structure or may transform it. The teacher may deliberate over their own actions given their own concerns, beliefs and whether the action is context-dependent. This deliberation is an internal conversation the teacher has which encapsulates Archer's (2007) interpretation of reflexivity. Reflexivity involves the teacher's own subjective and objective concerns in a given context before action is taken. The context may be such that deliberation leads to a
reproduction of the status quo but reflexivity is needed in case it leads to necessary morphogenetic. Student teachers who are placed in one placement for the majority of their initial teacher education (ITE) are less likely to question the status quo, due to their limited experience. The knowledge gained from being part of an HEI, and the breadth of experience, would contribute to an increase in critical reflection and reflexivity.

Some authors interchange reflexivity and critical reflective practice, but Finlay (2002, 2008) sees these concepts more as a continuum. Firstly, there is 'reflection' and the engagement of technical reflective practice; next, there is an engagement with 'critical reflection'; and the last stage of the continuum is 'reflexivity' and the practice of continual self-awareness of changing identity. Finlay separates reflection on the social structures (critical reflection) and reflection on oneself (reflexivity), whereas Archer (2007) regards both types of reflective practice as reflexivity. By applying Finlay’s theory, the student teacher moves along the continuum as they gain more experience, engaging in reflection, critical reflection and then reflexivity, indicating that reflexivity is the ultimate form of reflective practice. Reflection and the technical approach to reflective practice is only the first step towards reflective practice. The reflective practice, that is advocated by the teaching standards (Department for Education (DfE), 2012), only allows the student teacher to reach the first step of the continuum, as critical reflection and reflexivity are not mentioned or advocated.

The history of reflective practice in teacher education

In most professional groups, reflective practice has a significant part to play in professional development. The practice of reflection has been adopted in teacher education and has now become a defining feature of teacher professionalism. However, reflective practice has not always been prominent in teacher education. In England, prior to the late 1980s, teacher educators had significant freedom in deciding their own curriculum but this changed during the 1980s and 1990s with the increase in state control of ITE (Emery, 1998). The Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE) was established in 1984 to regulate ITE. To begin with, regulation started with the development of student teacher competencies. Initially these competences were: ‘applied loosely and on a voluntary basis by accredited institutions’ (Robinson, 2006, p. 29). They were neither a legal requirement nor enforced. It was after the creation of Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) in 1992, and the subsequent inspection arrangements for ITE, that consistency, in terms of competencies and grading, was introduced (DfE, 1992). Once Ofsted started to inspect teacher education, teacher educators became accountable for their performance.

In 1998 a ‘national curriculum’ for teacher education was published in England. This curriculum was an 85-page document containing very detailed requirements of teacher educators. The curriculum, however, was seen as unworkable (Whitty, 2006). It contained 800 standards, which were listed under four broad headings: Subject Knowledge; Planning; Teaching and Classroom Management, Monitoring and Assessment, Recording and Reporting; and other Professional Requirements (Department for Education and Employment (DfEE), 1998). There were also subject-specific standards for maths, English and science.

Ofsted was required to inspect ITE providers and their compliance with the new curriculum. The latter was seen by many as a restriction for HEIs. Furlong, Miles, Whiting, and Whitty (2000) argue that the 1998 curriculum was purposely prescriptive in order to restrict the influence of the HEIs over ITE. According to Pollard and Newman (2010), the 1998 curriculum
focused on the skills of the teacher rather than their professional attributes, such as reflective practice. Reflective practice was not mentioned at all in the 1998 curriculum.

In 2002, there was a change in focus by the government from a curriculum, for teacher educators, to a required standard for student teachers. In the 2002 Teaching Standards (Teacher Training Agency (TTA), 2002), there was no specific reference to reflective practice but Standard 1.8 implied reflective practice as it requires student teachers to be:

... able to improve their own teaching, by evaluating it, by learning from the effective practice of others and by using research, inspection and other evidence.

This standard can be seen as an example of Finlay (2008) reflection and demonstrates what Schön (1987) refers to as ‘reflecting on practice’ which is the process of reviewing a lesson after it occurs. The teaching standards were revised again in 2007 by the newly formed Teaching and Development Agency for schools (TDA). This new framework covered the whole of a teacher’s career rather than just the initial period of teacher education. It is in these standards that for the first time reflective practice appears by name. Reflective practice was needed to satisfy Teaching Standard 7 (TDA, 2007). The student teacher had to show they could:

... reflect on and improve their practice, and take responsibility for identifying and meeting their developing professional needs.

The 2007 Teaching Standards became the basis of the teacher’s performance management system replacing the ad hoc appraisal system that preceded it. These new standards were used as a ‘yard stick’ to appraise teachers assessing them on whether they had met their own professional development targets (Rewards and Incentives Group, 2006). These standards and targets shaped teacher professionalism. The standards were a requirement by the government and made teaching into, what Evans (2011, p. 862) refers to as, a ‘professionalism that is demanded’.

In 2012, the teaching standards were reviewed and changed again by the Conservative–Liberal Democrat Coalition. Reflective practice was reaffirmed as an important part of being a professional teacher (DfE, 2012):

... [a teacher must] reflect systematically on the effectiveness of lessons and approaches to teaching.

To what extent and how this standard is met is dependent on the approach taken by the teacher educator, but it is clear from these new standards that there is greater emphasis on the key elements of teaching (DfE, 2010, Para. 2.35). After the Coalition’s 2010 White Paper: The Importance of Teaching, there was a shift in the government’s approach to teacher education and what it means to be a teacher. There has been an ongoing debate over whether teaching is a profession rather than a craft; it can be argued this debate is illustrated in different government stances towards teacher education.

In the last two publications of teaching standards, the main thrust was on what teachers should be able to do. The 2007 Teaching Standards can be divided into three elements: behaviour, attitudinal and intellectual (Kolsaker, 2008). Behaviour standards state what teachers physically apply at school, attitudinal are the attitudes they hold and believe and the intellectual relate to their knowledge and understanding. Evans (2011) used this framework to deconstruct the 2007 Teaching Standards. She exposed the prescriptive nature of the key components of the standards, namely, what teachers should do and how they should do it. She points out that: ‘the extent to which they analyse and rationalise their practice scarcely
features' (Evans, 2011, p. 861). The emphasis on what teachers should be able to do continues to dominate the new 2012 standards. Reflective practice did appear in both the 2007 and 2012 Teaching Standards (see above) but was not central. The standards were mostly dominated by teacher's behaviour and action rather than critique or analysis.

**Is reflective practice a necessity for the teaching profession and teacher professionalism?**

There is a well-documented debate over whether teaching is a profession or not. This is not the same debate as the matter of teaching professionalism, although, of course, there are links. According to Beck and Young (2005, p. 188) there are a number of traits that describe a profession. Firstly, a profession has a 'collective autonomy' over its professional training and it controls the entrance requirements. Secondly, there is a body of knowledge that is specific to that profession and one needs that knowledge to be a 'member' of that profession. Thirdly, there is a code of practice, ethics and behaviour, and if this code of practice is not upheld, then a member will be excluded. By analysing these characteristics of a profession, it is difficult to uphold teaching as a full profession (Gamble, 2010). Beck (2008) argues that no modern 'profession' any longer meets all these traits. Most professions are now controlled by the state rather than being a corporate body of independent practitioners and this is true for teaching. However, most theorists argue one of the defining traits of a profession is the existence of a required body of knowledge (Kerchner & Cauffman, 1995).

In both the 2010 White Paper: *The Importance of Teaching* (DfE, 2010) and the 2010 White Paper: *The Case for Change*, teaching is repeatedly referred to as a 'craft'. Michael Gove, then Secretary of State for Education, in a speech to the National College Annual Conference in June, 2010 stated:

> Teaching is a craft and it is best learnt as an apprentice observing a master craftsman or woman. Watching others, and being rigorously observed yourself as you develop, is the best route to acquiring mastery in the classroom. (Gove, 2010)

This signalled a movement in teacher education towards 'on the job' training. It prefaced an increased role for schools to train teachers through the School Direct programme. In the two government papers cited above, the role of HEIs, in ITE, was diminished. There was, and continues to be, a movement towards skill-based competency training rather than teacher education. With the absence of HEIs from teacher education, there is a possibility that the theory for practice will be missing. Pratte and Rury (1991) argue that teaching is more like a 'craft-profession' as there is no common 'teacher knowledge'; the knowledge required to teach is as much practical as pedagogical. There is the argument that the body of knowledge provided by HEIs is no longer needed; but the activity of reflection requires a broad base of knowledge which is unlikely to be provided by schools. The knowledge base within a school is not critiqued to the same extent as the knowledge delivered by a HEI provider, and so it may recreate existing knowledge rather than produce new knowledge. The knowledge, provided with school-based training, is likely to be morphostatic rather than morphogenetic as it is a replication of knowledge of what already exists.

Even if student teachers engage in reflective practice, there is still a question about how they can continuously improve. They can only improve if they have access to the knowledge required for self-development. Hobbs (2007) argues that student teachers have difficulty reflecting critically when they only have a perceived understanding of how teachers should
be and how pupils should behave. Other writers, such as Roberts (1998), point out that student teachers may not be ready or able to reflect as they have yet to master the requirements of professionalism. Reflective practice can only be effective if the student teacher has the knowledge to engage in reflectivity. Having the knowledge to critique a practice is an important part of professionalism, but this area is being eroded by the movement of ITE away from HEIs (DfE, 2010). If a student teacher does not learn the theories that illustrate alternative practice, then only one practice can be reflected upon, diminishing the outcome of reflective practice.

The debate about whether teaching is a profession or not, is important for the future of reflective practice in ITE. If a ‘body of knowledge’ is no longer needed, then where does the tacit knowledge come from that is needed for reflection? Within the teaching standards student teachers are required to reflect on their lessons and improve them; this can only happen if they have the breadth of specialist knowledge to be able to reflect and improve upon. There is the argument, which the current government believes, that teaching can be learnt ‘on the job’, but the ‘body of knowledge’ present within schools is limited by the social structure teachers have to work within. Hodgson (2014) comments that often teachers do not have the time that HEI tutors have to read about new developments within their specialist subject areas, therefore they are not able to expand the knowledge base of the student teacher. In this case the movement to school-based training is not only a movement away from teaching being a profession, but may restrict the capability of meeting the teaching standards laid down by the state itself.

Professionalism is a word that has a multitude of interpretations and fluidity (Friedson, 1994). Troman (1996, p. 476) understood the word to be socially constructed and is best understood in its social context: ‘defined by management and expressed in its expectations of workers and the stipulation of tasks they will perform’. Evans (2008) argues there are four reified states of professionalism. The first has already been cited: ‘professionalism that is demanded’ with the standards of practice, for the profession, set down by the state. The second is ‘professionalism that is prescribed’. This professionalism is the practice which is demanded by analysts. ‘Professionalism that is enacted’ is that which is observed by ‘outsiders’ looking at the professional practice and is how the practice is interpreted. The last state of professionalism is ‘deduced’ or ‘assumed professionalism’, and this is the practice that is sustained no matter how much the policy of that professionalism changes. It is the traditions that are upheld by that profession.

According to Wilkins (2011) it is the ‘professionalism that is enacted’ that is most important as this is what actually happens. Even though the demands of professionalism change, depending on policy, enacted professionalism can adapt and change depending on the dynamic nature of the agent. In the case of teachers, their professionalism changes with governments and ideological shifts, but Wilkins argues that teachers will constantly adapt their practice to what best suits their teaching and pupils, irrespective of policy. This is the difference in professional practice that Evans (2011) refers to, as the macro and micro levels.

The macro level of professional practice is the demanded professionalism by the state whereas the micro level is ‘about an individual discerning a better way of teaching . . .’ (Evans, 2011, p. 865). It is the cognitive processes of the teachers themselves which leads to professional development; this is achieved through reflective practice. Even though at a macro level of professionalism the practice of the student teacher is demanded by the state, the
teacher is also contributing to their own professionalism through reflective practice. If reflective practice is seen, traditionally, as a component of teacher professionalism, then this practice will be sustained even if it does not have a large documentary presence in the teaching standards, but there is still a question over the knowledge the student teacher needs to reflect on their lessons and education as a whole.

**Conclusion**

Throughout this paper, I have referred to teacher education rather than teacher training. Training is traditionally linked to learning a ‘craft’ through instruction, observation and practice. There is an assumption therefore that by watching practising teachers, a student teacher can learn how to teach. Teacher education, in contrast, is or should be, educating the student teacher about the theory underpinning practice, the policies that inform practice and the practices themselves whilst arming them with the ability to critique all three and to improve their practice. It is educating the student teachers to be both reflective and reflexive and to know there are alternatives to what is prescribed by the state.

The teaching standards, introduced in 2010, focus on the craft of teaching. These standards represent ‘professionalism that is demanded’. Reflective practice still plays a part in these new standards, but only in the technical sense. Critical reflection does not exist in, and certainly would not be encouraged by, the new ideology of teacher education. Encouragement of critical reflection is, however, needed to inject new ways of thinking. If the student teachers are only judged by how well they meet a ‘standard’, then they are less likely to think ‘outside the box’ and create new ways of seeing and teaching. The student teachers need to question the structures that limit them rather than take them for granted. Critical reflection is important if a student teacher is to find the best way to improve the education of their pupils.

As a practice, critical reflection is not part of the teaching standards and so, if it does occur, it is part of ‘professionalism that is enacted’ (Evans, 2011). This would be a practice that happens irrespective of whether the state demands it or not. Although a number of theorists argue this is what is missing from teacher education, I would go a step further and argue reflection and the technical approach to reflective practice, advocated by Schön (1987), is also missing from teacher education. Reflection is advocated by the teaching standards and is part of ‘professionalism that is demanded’; however, the knowledge base that is needed for fruitful reflection is missing from school-based training.

**Notes on contributor**

*Charlotte Meierdirk* is a senior lecturer in Education at the University of Portsmouth, England. She has been a course leader and tutor on the PGCE programmes for 10 years. Charlotte started her career as a business and economics teacher and was the head of Business at a successful school/college teaching 13–19-year olds previous to joining Higher Education.

**References**


Reflections of the student teacher

Charlotte Meierdirk

School of Education and Continuing Studies, University of Portsmouth, Portsmouth, JK

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the concept of reflection and its changing role in the journey of the student teacher. It presents part of the findings of a year-long investigation into the reflective practice of student teachers during their training year. Specifically, it investigates the reflections of the student teachers’ lessons during the PGCE (Post Professional Graduate Certificate of Education) year, at a higher education institution (HEI) in England. The strengths and weaknesses of the student teachers’ lessons are analysed and how these reflections change as they reach Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT) status.

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Reflection; reflective practice; student teacher; teaching standards; initial teacher education; lesson evaluation; performance

Introduction

Interpretations of reflective practice vary between different professions and even within the same professional field, such as education. There are some areas of agreement and these are that reflective practice is the ‘process of learning through and from experience towards greater insights of self or practice’ (Finlay, 2008, p. 1). The process of learning is the basis for all interpretations of the contentious term, and whatever form reflective practice takes, the reflective practitioner should learn and grow from engaging with it. Reflective practice is used within teacher education to enable the student teacher to learn and develop (Poom-Valickis & Mathews, 2013).

In England, the teaching standards focus on ‘reflection’ and the importance of striving to produce the best lesson. There are many advocates of encouraging critical reflection in initial teacher education (ITE) and there are valid arguments for this (Elbaz, 1988; Lam, 2015; Liu, 2015); however, at present, critical reflection is not part of the teaching standards and this paper will focus on reflection and its changing nature during the Post/Professional Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) year. Reflection was reaffirmed as an important part of being a professional teacher and was one of the 2012 teaching standards:

... [a teacher must] reflect systematically on the effectiveness of lessons and approaches to teaching. (Department for Education (DfE), 2012)

According to Khan (2015), this teaching standard is often met by evidencing the evaluation of lessons. This learning from actual teaching is often referred to as the ‘technical approach
to reflective practice and includes reflecting on how the lesson objectives were met and to what extent learning occurred (Meierdirk, 2016, p. 2).

For this research study, the interpretation of reflection is based on the first stage of Finlay’s (2008) reflective practice continuum (see Figure 1). The overall research project investigated all three dimensions of Finlay’s (2008) reflective practice but, due to the amount of data this created, this paper will only focus on the first stage of the continuum: the reflections of the student teacher. This was examined through the research question: How do the reflections of the student teacher change during the PGCE year? The continuum contains a three-stage definition of reflective practice. The first stage is reflection, which is when the student teacher reflects on their own lessons and evaluates them. The second stage is critical reflection, when the student teacher reflects on the impact of the social world that surrounds them by looking at the role of power and the social field the student finds themselves in (Bourdieu, 1990; Schön, 1987). Reflexivity is the last stage of the reflective practice continuum, and is when the student teacher reflects on their identity and the need to reconstruct it due to the changing environment (Archer, 2007).

Reflection can be broken down into five different types (see Figure 2). The first three levels were developed by Schön (1995): ‘knowing-in-action’, ‘reflection-in-action’ and ‘reflection-on-action’; the last two, ‘reflection-for-action’ and ‘reflection-with-action’ were added by Glaye (2010).

‘Knowing-in-action’ is the unconscious reflective practice that occurs when a person’s acts are based on prior experience. The person does not actively reflect on the event but uses tacit knowledge before engaging in action. Erart (1994) refers to knowing-in-action as tacit knowledge, as it is the knowledge gained through experience that dictates how a student teacher behaves and reacts. As the student teacher moves to becoming a professiona, their tacit knowledge increases and influences their actions.

‘Reflection-in-action’ is a conscious reflection that is undertaken ‘on the spot’; it is a reaction to what is occurring at the time, rather than an instant reaction using tacit knowledge. Schön’s (1991) reflection-on-action occurs after the event and is a continual process of review and improvement. Schön developed a three-stage model for reflection-on-action:

Providing students with technical training
Helping the students think like a professional
Enabling the students to develop a new form of understanding and action. (Schön, 1987, p. 40)

The practitioner is encouraged to use reflection-on-action by continuously reflecting on a problem to generate new knowledge. This new knowledge is then used to solve a problem or dilemma. Schön (1987) advocated that problems are solved by thinking through the reflection process. According to Schön, this cyclical process would improve the standard of the professional experts in their field.
Figure 2. Types of reflection.

Figure 3. Reflection for action (Adapted from Ghaye, 2010).

Ghaye (2010) builds on Schön's 'reflection-on-practice' and adds two more types of reflection: 'reflection-for-action' and 'reflection-with-action'. Reflection-for-action is the implementation of an action that occurs after the reflection-on-action has been undertaken. The student teachers undertake continuous improvement and this manifests itself as a cyclical process (see Figure 3).

Murray (2010) refers to reflective practice as having two levels: individual and collaborative. 'Individual' happens when a teacher reflects by oneself and 'collaborative' consists of activities such as peer mentoring, coaching and support groups. On the PGCE course, reflections may occur in discussion between the student teacher and their subject mentor, tutor or peers. When the student teacher has a lesson observed, it may be followed by a joint discussion with the student teacher and the observer. The joint discussion may involve
identifying areas that were successful and areas for improvement and teaching strategies are often set based on these areas. This would be an example of 'reflection-with-action' as it involves joint discussion on strategies to improve. Naci Kayaoğlu, Erbay, and Sağlamel (2016) researched the student teacher’s journey and found that the mentor had a positive impact on the novice teacher, but they limited the teacher’s reflections if they did not match their own beliefs.

Research context

This research is situated at a higher education institution (HEI) in South East England. The case study participants were part of the overall PGCE programme. At the university, the PGCE is a full-time, one-year course that enables a graduate student to become a newly qualified teacher (NQT). The PGCE is one of the routes into the teaching profession in England. The student can pass at Level 6 of the framework for higher education award bodies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ), and obtain a Professional Certificate In Education, or pass at Level 7, after obtaining a Postgraduate Certificate in Education. Both the postgraduate and professional routes lead to qualified teacher status (QTS).

The HEI has a relatively small cohort of PGCE students with around 100 students enrolled every year. Seven different PGCE subjects are taught: English, Modern Foreign Language (MFL), Mathematics, Science, Business and Geography, with Computer Science added in September 2015. All these subjects cover the 12–16 age groups except Business, which is taught to the 14–19 age group. The structure of the PGCE course is the same for all the courses. Figure 4 illustrates how the student teacher’s time is divided between professional studies, curriculum studies and the school experience. The students arrive during the first week in September each year and study ‘professional’ and ‘curriculum’ studies. ‘Professional studies’ cover areas that are important for all the PGCE students, such as the National Curriculum, government policies, learning theories and behaviour management.
Figure 5. The reflective practice sheets.

'Curriculum studies' are the subjects that are specific to the PGCE subject area. The student teacher will attend seminars on areas specific to their teaching, for example, teaching the academically more able in Business or applying Bloom’s (1956) taxonomy. About one third of the PGCE year is spent at the university and the rest of the time the student teacher is in their placement(s).

After the first three weeks of the PGCE course, the student teacher will start at their first placement (Phase 1). After Christmas, they start Phase 2, with a placement in a different school/college, and after Easter, Phase 3 in the same school as Phase 2. The student teacher stays at the same placement for the last two teaching phases, unless there is a reason to move them to another school/college.

In Phase 1, the student teacher is given substantial assistance by the school mentor during the first few weeks of their school experience. The students observe, assist in the classroom and engage in collaborative teaching with some small-scale supported teaching. After the October break, the student teacher is in school five days a week and most students are involved with eight hours a week of whole-class teaching and six hours of observing and supporting other classes.

In Phase 2, the classroom teaching and learning activities are jointly planned by the mentor and student teacher. The student teacher should maintain a timetable that is approximately 10–12 hours’ teaching per week over four days, with three hours of observing and supporting in other classes. The student teacher is expected to observe taught lessons and help within the classroom with small groups as well as with whole classes. From February
Table 1. Extract from student A's January interview.

I: So, what does education mean to you?

P: I think for me I've always thought education is the key to being able to achieve things in life. I think that wherever you are, if you've got a good education you can utilise that, then you can go anywhere, and I think I come from a family that has people who are millionaires now who started, you know, in a council estate in Winchester and actually worked their way up. I mean my grandfather was, he was born in the East End of London and packed gun matchsticks, joined the army and used the army to get an education, as did my grandmother, used you know the [1:03] and so both of them started very lowly and ended up doing very well; they were majors; he was a major in the end, so... for me I think education is something that you can start low and go anywhere. So that's what I think it is. It's the ability to...to...

I: So from that point it's very important to you obviously.

P: Yes.

I: Do you think any of that influenced why you became a teacher then?

P: I don't know, I think partly...I suppose I've got a lot of teachers in my family. Well, most of them are professors or lecturers who I have, I have one doctor. The rest are professors or lecturers, so it's always been in the family. I always sort of suppose I did fancy doing it, but it was really when I did training of adults in my job that I actually thought I really like this and I actually enjoy doing it and I'm good at this, and that was when I wanted to do it.

Table 2. PGCE students and the case participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Age at start of PGCE (years)</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student A</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student B</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student C</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student D</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student E</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: M = married, S = single and P = partner.

Table 3. Phases of the PGCE year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 1 (Placement 1)</th>
<th>Oct-Dec</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2 (Placement 2)</td>
<td>Jan-April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 3 (Placement 2)</td>
<td>April-June</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

half-term, when the student teachers are in school five days a week, most students are maintaining a whole-class teaching timetable of approximately 12 hours with three hours of other classroom experience.

In Phase 3, student teachers will be planning their classroom- and school-focussed work more independently. The student teacher's timetable will remain at 12 hours per week and more independence should be demonstrated in order to achieve the teaching standards. The mentor exercises their professional judgement as to how much autonomy a student teacher can be given while maintaining the quality of teaching. The student teacher will be expected to observe other teachers and lessons for another three hours.

Methodology

The student teacher's reflections were researched using an exploratory case study (n = 6). The exploratory case study investigates the behaviours within a case and its surrounding context (Yin, 2003). One of the main critiques of case-study research is that it is difficult to generalise from the results as they are unique to a given space and time. Smith (1991) identifies the significant problems a legitimate case study has to conquer. Like other research
methods, a case study has to demonstrate reliability and validity. The uniqueness of a case study has the advantage of producing rich descriptions but with the disadvantage of limited breadth. By comparison, Zucker (2009) argues that a quantitative approach to research produces external validation but lacks depth.

The case-study design was chosen, as this study investigates reflective practice in a real-life context. It is exploratory research, as an ‘in-depth’ study was needed to be carried out on the phenomenon of reflection. Yin (2003) identifies a number of different types of case study: descriptive, explanatory and exploratory. An illustrative case study is a descriptive account of a real-life event that reinforces an argument. The explanatory case study explains why certain behaviours occur and may identify the variables that cause the behaviour. The research objective was explorative, and so was suited to an exploratory case study which would enable a greater understanding of reflective practice in its context by producing rich data from the student teachers’ responses.

The data-collection methods used in the case study were: semi-structured interviews and reflective practice sheets. The reflective practice sheets enabled an investigation into reflection which encapsulated: reflection-on-action, reflection-for-action and reflection-with-action (Ghaye, 2010; Schön, 1987). ‘Knowing’ and ‘reflection-in-action’ are unconscious actions and so would be difficult to observe through interviews and reflective practice sheets as both these methods happened after lessons were taught. The reflections by the student teachers on the reflective practice sheets centred around the student teacher’s weaknesses and strengths. Over 100 reflective practice sheets were examined with over 1000 reflective comments coded and analysed. All six case-study participants completed reflective practice sheets during the PGCE year. These were developed at the start of the academic year (see Appendix 2). The reflective practice sheets replicated Ghaye’s (2010) reflection-for-action and were divided into four segments illustrating the cycle of reflection (see Figure 5). The student teachers identified the strengths and weaknesses of their lesson. From the weaknesses the student identified strategies to improve and targets were set for the subsequent lesson.

The reflective practice sheets allowed analysis of the student teacher’s ‘reflections’. The sheets highlighted the issues the student teachers were reflecting on, and when they were reflecting on them, during the year. Twenty-one case-study interviews were conducted. The interviews were semi-structured with questions that were planned, in advance, but with the freedom of flexibility if topics arose that needed further investigation. This data allowed me to analyse and highlight any patterns that emerged in the student’s reflections.

The interviews designed for this case study were semi-structured with open-ended questions. They were designed to allow the student teachers time to expand on their answers but within a question schedule. At times, there were supplementary questions posed when

Table 4. Categories established from the secondary cycle of coding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>First cycle codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson planning</td>
<td>Starter activity, plenary, lesson plan and timings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour</td>
<td>Engagement of pupils, disruption, line, classroom control, classroom layout, external interruptions, gender and rules of the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance indicators</td>
<td>Targets, assessment, outcomes and lesson objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom activities</td>
<td>Resources, group work, differentiation, extension work, computers and note-taking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher’s role</td>
<td>Instructions, teaching assistant, questioning, pupils’ names, teacher led, support, speech, relationship, teacher error, teacher role, subject knowledge and teacher presence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
it was felt that it might give greater insight into the research. This is illustrated in Table 1 in an extract from Student A’s January interview. She was answering the question: ‘What does education mean to you?’ Her answer led to my further question concerning whether or not her family’s past belief influenced her own belief.

The semi-structured interview produces an exchange of conversation and dialogue between the interviewer and participant. This approach allowed me to focus on the participant’s ‘perception of self, life and experience’ in their own words (Minichiello, 1995, p. 52). The interviews produced rich data about the student’s understanding of reflective practice and allowed me to trace the journey they were on. One of the main goals of qualitative interviewing is to understand complex behaviour, opinions and thoughts that cannot be understood using direct observation, and during the interviews, I was fortunate to be able to listen to the student teachers’ narratives about their journeys.

Defining a sample universe and its population was done by applying a set of inclusion and exclusion criteria. In this case, the sample universe was students studying for a full-time PGCE at a higher educational institution (HEI) in England. Because of the nature of the research, into reflective practice, the sample size needed to be small enough to locate the voice of the individual. Robinson (2014) recommended a sample size of between three and 16, as this provides scope to highlight cross-case generalisations while preventing the researcher from becoming overwhelmed with data.

The selection process was also influenced by my sample strategy. There are two main sampling strategies that can be employed at this stage: random/convenience sampling and purposive sampling. Random sampling is the selection of cases randomly from the sample universe and is generally used in surveys. Convenience sampling is when the sample is selected on the basis of availability (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Based on the knowledge and expertise of the researcher, the sample illustrated typical students that embarked on a PGCE course and were students that the researcher would have close contact with throughout the period of the research. Purposive sampling can take a number of forms, such as extreme sampling, which is selecting ‘illuminating cases,’ and intensity sampling, which is the selection of ‘rich samples’ that are of interest to the research question (Patton, 2002, p. 232). In this case, the participants were both ‘illuminating’ and ‘rich’. Six PGCE students were selected to be part of the case study. Sampling in case-study research is different to sampling for surveys, as it is theoretical rather than statistical and seeks data that is rich and purposeful. In this case, the participants were selected using a range of variables including gender, marital status, age, religion and parental status. These variables were selected to highlight any differences in reflective behaviour with regards to habitus and are the bases for analysing the interview data (see Table 2).

The following are summaries of the student teachers in the case study.

Student A was English, had spent many years in Human Resources before applying for the PGCE course. She had been a local government councillor for four years. Student A was 34 years old, married with two young children.

Student B was Irish and had a long-term partner. She had a two-year-old daughter and came to England especially to obtain her PGCE. Her partner gained employment at a local firm during her PGCE year. Student B was 26 years old at the start of the course.

Student C applied for the 2009 course but was rejected at interview due to a lack of knowledge of teaching. She reapplied for the 2010 course after spending a year as a cover supervisor in an inner-city school in Portsmouth. She went to a tough inner-city school
herself and then went to the local university. Interestingly, although English and from a white working-class background, she embraced the Islamic faith after marrying and wore a hijab. Student C was married, 29 years old and had no children.

Student D was single. He was English and graduated from university and then spent a year as a cover supervisor in a local school before starting the PGCE course. He was 24 years old and had no children.

Student E was a mature student who was 49 years old. He was English and had been a manager at a top finance company for 20 years, and had run his own business. Student E had three grown-up children, two grandchildren and was married.

Student F applied for the 2009 course but was rejected. It was felt he lacked the ability to control a class. He then spent a year as a teaching assistant in an inner-city school before applying and starting the 2010 course. He was English, 33 years old and married with one son.

In total, 102 sheets were collected: 42 sheets in Phase 1, 43 in Phase 2 and 17 in Phase 3 (see Table 3). The majority of reflective practice sheets were completed in Phase 2. The small number in Phase 3 was, in part, because it only consisted of eight weeks of teaching. The 102 reflective practice sheets, with over 1000 reflective comments, were coded and categorised. All the reflective comments on strengths and weaknesses were coded. The sheets were analysed using first- and second-cycle coding.

A code is a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing or evocative attribute to a portion of language-based or visual data (Saldana, 2009, p. 3). The ‘portion of language’ that is coded can be as long as a page or as short as a single word. The data can consist of transcripts, videos, artefacts and numerous other forms of data. In this instance (reflective practice sheets), the data took the written form. There is a personal approach to coding, known as ‘the coding filter’, as one researcher’s interpretation may be different to another (Adler & Goodman, 1986). As Sipe (2004, pp. 482–483) stated, all ‘coding is a judgment call since we all bring our subjectivities, our personalities, our predispositions, [and] our quirks’ to the processes.

One way to improve the consistency of the coding was to engage in reflexivity during the coding process. ‘Constant comparison’ was used to check the coding process and its validity. Constant comparison has greater validity when in vivo coding is used, as an actual word is taken from the text to name the code. An example of constant comparison was when comparing two reflections with the same code. Student E reflected (Phase 2): ‘Net result was that a couple of students made good progress while the majority did not achieve to the same extent.’ This was coded as ‘outcomes’ which was compared to another reflection by Student B which was also interpreted as ‘outcomes’ (Phase 2): ‘Students made progress on planned activity. Pupil E and pupil N especially although they didn’t like being given extra work.’

There were two cycles of coding in analysing the reflective practice sheets. The first cycle involved a mixture of in vivo, evaluative, descriptive and simultaneous coding. In vivo coding is when the code is based on a word or a series of words used within the text. An example of in vivo from the first cycle of coding was ‘differentiation’. Student D reflected: ‘Good initial differentiation developed through well targeted question and answers’ (Phase 1). This comment was coded as ‘differentiation’ as that word appears in the text. It is also an example of descriptive coding, as differentiation is what the comment was about.
Some of the text was coded using evaluative coding. If the student reflections were not about a certain topic area, the text's meaning had to be interpreted. An example of this is shown by this reflective comment by Student B: 'I think the majority of students were on task and not using games/mobiles especially pupil A. This was his first lesson and he was not playing games.' (Phase 2). This reflection was coded with a D for 'disruption.' The word 'disruption' is not written in the utterance but it was interpreted as such, and this is evaluative coding. Simultaneous coding was also used throughout the first cycle. Simultaneous coding is when a text is read and given more than one code. The following reflection by Student D was coded with 'resources,' 'differentiation' and 'group work':

Group task to summarise the findings of the video clip worked well, but to achieve greater depth of answering, greater evaluations and [the] facilitation of peer learning, the groups need more differentiation in members. (Phase 2)

The first cycle of coding was also based on the subject area the student was reflecting on. This is exemplified by Student A whilst reflecting on a lesson:

[I] tried a more student centred approach using knowledge centres and splitting the class into groups. They worked well in their groups and understood the task. (Phase 2)

Using descriptive coding the utterance was given the code 'group work' and given the code 'Gr.' The 'Gr' coding was given to all other comments on group work that appeared in the reflective sheets. This method of coding was appropriate, as it enabled students' responses to be grouped and the first cycle of coding formed. After the first cycle of coding, 34 codes were established (see Appendix 1).

After the initial primary codes were identified, they were analysed again to establish relationships. Figure 3 shows the coding process for the reflective practice sheets. After the initial cycle of coding, there were a number of primary codes that overlapped topic areas, for example, lesson planning and lesson timings. Because of this overlap, I've new categories were created (see Table 4).

Performance Indicators included the first cycle codes that are part of performance management in schools. Performance culture dominates education: its structure, its culture and its discourse (Britzman, 1994). It was clear from the reflective practice sheets that performance discourse was present in the student's reflections and so it was decided to have 'performance indicators' as its own category. Ball defines performance as:

...a system of measures and indicators (signs) and sets of relationships, rather than on functions for the social systems and the economy.

And goes on to say it is about:

...value added, cost effective efficiency and effectiveness, measurement of achievement, learning outcomes, flexible delivery, markets... (Ball, 2004, p. 145)

In this case, utterances that included reference to targets, assessment, outcomes and objectives were deemed 'performance indicators.'

**Research analysis**

When analysing the reflective sheet data, a number of trends were identified. In writing about their weaknesses, the student teachers' reflections on 'performance indicators' increased as they gained more experience. This was the same for all the student teachers in
the case study. In fact, analysing the student teachers' weaknesses, reflections on performance indicators increased proportionally more than any other category (see Table 5).

In the teaching standards, only two of the 41 standards were 'performance indicators' but 'performance indicators' had more prominence in the reflections of the student teachers (DfE, 2012). This suggests the need to focus on 'performance' is coming from the environment of the student teacher rather than from the standards themselves. The student teacher belongs to different social fields where different agents are dominating. This change is reflected in the discourse the student teacher uses and the reflections they write.

In this analysis, the discursive practices of the student teacher are an important focus. Attention is paid to the influence of social structures on the agency of the teacher, thus co-occurring with Gee's (1990) viewpoint that discourse conveys a message regarding practice in a particular context. I believe the discourse of the student teacher reveals the relationship between the social agent, structure and practice. In this context, 'agents' refer to individuals and their participation in social structures (Archer, 2007). Structures may be interpreted at

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### Table 5. Phase comparisons of all the case study participants – weaknesses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coding:</th>
<th>Phase 1 (%)</th>
<th>Phase 2 (%)</th>
<th>Phase 3 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom activities</td>
<td>20 (2)</td>
<td>19 (2)</td>
<td>11 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson planning</td>
<td>14 (4)</td>
<td>9 (5)</td>
<td>17 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil behaviour</td>
<td>37 (1)</td>
<td>39 (1)</td>
<td>27 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance indicators</td>
<td>13 (5)</td>
<td>18 (3)</td>
<td>33 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of the teacher</td>
<td>16 (3)</td>
<td>15 (4)</td>
<td>12 (4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: () = ranking.

### Table 6. Phase comparisons of all the case study participants – strengths.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coding:</th>
<th>Phase 1 (%)</th>
<th>Phase 2 (%)</th>
<th>Phase 3 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom activities</td>
<td>31 (1)</td>
<td>24 (3)</td>
<td>21 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson planning</td>
<td>16 (3)</td>
<td>18 (5)</td>
<td>15 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil behaviour</td>
<td>15 (4)</td>
<td>22 (1)</td>
<td>32 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance indicators</td>
<td>16 (3)</td>
<td>18 (4)</td>
<td>19 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of the teacher</td>
<td>22 (2)</td>
<td>18 (2)</td>
<td>13 (5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: () = ranking.

---

![Diagram](image.png)

**Figure 6.** Outer reflective practice community.
both the personal and societal level. At the societal level, structures may refer to large social systems whereas at the personal level, they might refer to conceptual structures (Sayer, 1992). Structures can take different forms; they might be physical or a fusion of relationships between individuals.

Table 6 illustrates the overall reflections of strengths by the student teachers. In Phase 1, behaviour management was reflected on as the student teachers’ most dominant strength in both Phases 2 and 3. Its importance, as a ‘strength’ illustrates the student teacher’s ability to manage pupil behaviour. Around 32% (Phase 3) of all reflections are on pupil behaviour compared to just over 10% of the teaching standards (DfE, 2012).

The student teachers used different narratives when writing about the pupils. Student A’s discourse illustrated a ‘them and us’ approach to her classes, especially in Phase 2. She struggled with behaviour management, but used an authoritarian approach to conquer this problem:

I was in control of the class and continued to assert my authority on them (Phase 3)

Student C, however, took a more personal approach in her reflective comments and referred to pupils individually compared to the other respondents:

My rapport with the class and understanding that I will help and not be judgmental… (Phase 1)

Good environment and atmosphere within the lesson which made it enjoyable. (Phase 3)

Student C named individual pupils in her reflective practice sheets. She reflected on how she managed their behaviour and what strategies would improve their relationship. Her comments showed a more personal attachment to the class she was teaching and a need to build relationships between her and the pupils.

All the student teachers used behaviour-management strategies at the start of their PGCE year, such as developing classroom rules, seating plans, detentions and behaviour points. This is highlighted by Student B’s strategy in Phase 1 ‘…take note of pupils arriving late to lesson and give out discipline procedures and follow through with 10 minute detention’.
Behaviour-management strategies were commented on frequently by the students, but as they became more experienced they started to develop strategies that were more personalised. Students A, B, C, D and E all used differentiated material and exercises as a strategy in Phase 2, but not in Phase 1. A good example of a strategy was provided by Student C: ‘Plan extension tasks and learning objectives which are pitched at a higher level’ and ‘create pair/group work activities or whole class games through plenaries’ (Phase 2). The emphasis on classroom rules, as a strategy for disruptive pupils, was replaced with differentiation of resources. Differentiation of resources was used after the more traditional strategies were implemented. These findings concur with a study conducted by Poom-Valickis and Mathews (2013) who found novice teachers tended to use their authority to try and control a class rather than ‘tools’ due to limited experience. The reflective sheets in this study actually show the ‘tools’ that are developed and used as the student teachers become more experienced.

Although the reflections are presented as percentages in the above tables (see Tables 5 and 6), there was a definite trend to use the reflective practice sheets less as the student teachers became more experienced. A number of student teachers explained that it was because they began to reflect in their minds. Student D commented in the June interview: ‘I use them [reflective practice sheets] less in reflecting, but I think reflecting just one-on-one by myself, in my mind has increased.’ Student D may have been reflecting more but, due to time constraints, was not writing it down. This concurs with Eraut’s (1995) research findings that reflective practice is time-determined. Eraut criticised Schön’s (1987) theories on reflective practice as not allowing for the effect of time. The exact same trend was seen with all the students except Student F. They all reflected, in the interviews, that their reflective practice was becoming subconscious:

I suppose it has had a role. I’ve thought, you know, I mean I think I’ve tried to as the year’s gone on to be less negative in my reflective practice and be more positive and try and see things. I’m not a person who takes criticism well, I do know that about myself and I have tried to take it a little bit better. I think it has been, throughout the year it has been something that I have used, maybe subconsciously, as much as anything, in that afterwards I’ve been able to process information and think about it without emotion, perhaps, and understand things a little bit better in seeing where things have gone wrong and right and stuff. (Student A, Phase 3)

It would be difficult to ‘reflect subconsciously’ and know you are doing it, but Student A seems to be alluding to reflective activities occurring in the mind rather than in written form. This reflecting ‘in the mind’ is an example of Schön’s (1987) ‘reflection-in-action’ as the student teachers are reflecting quickly to solve a problem. Eventually, this reflection will become tacit knowledge or ‘knowing-in-action’ and will no longer be consciously reflected on at all.

‘Reflection-with-action’ was embedded into the teacher education programme. The students reflected upon their lessons with a number of people. They reflected with their subject mentor, their professional mentor and other teachers in the subject department. The analysis of this research data shows there are many other people involved in the reflective process. All the student teachers reflected with each other, either at university or socially. The students shared resources in order to ‘bounce ideas’ off each other. This group’s reflectivity was important for the student teachers’ progression and support. They needed experience and ideas in order to develop their lessons further. When engaging in ‘reflection-on-practice’ the more ideas the student teacher has, the more options they have to improve their practice.
All the student teachers reflected on how important support was from other people. The students found it important to talk through issues with people outside of the course. This support was invaluable in enabling them to complete the year (see Figure 6). Student E highlighted the need for this support when reflecting with his wife; he reflected that it was important 'just to have somebody to talk to about things ... cause I would say, sort of, being in a placement in the school is quite a lonely place' (May interview).

Figure 6 illustrates the people the student teachers reflected with outside the PGCE course. Being able to reflect with others outside the inner community, of the PGCE, was important for the students because, as stated:

...you're very conscious that you're being assessed and appraised all the time and you, you might not necessarily want to be as open within that process as you might be if you were a permanent fixture within the department, so you're sort of trying to ... faking it good to keep ... manage your own PR within the situation ... (Student E)

Student E explained that reflecting within the inner circle was limited, due to social constraints (see Figure 7). These constraints reflect the nature of the 'social fields' the students find themselves part of (Bourdieu, 1977). All the agents in the 'inner field' have power over the student teacher and contribute to his/her grading and assessment.

Discussion and conclusion

This paper presents part of the findings from a larger study and concentrated on the reflections of student teachers. During the PGCE year, the student teachers continually reflect on their lessons; as they engage in reflection, they evaluate their lessons and set targets for the next lesson. This process continues throughout the year as the student gains experience. All the student teachers need to reflect on their lessons to meet the teaching standards; however, the way the reflection develops is different for individual students. Student D (February interview), who was familiar with reflecting from years in industry, found he was reflecting 'in his head by February':

Yeah, even if it's not on ... written down on paper. There are times when I will be
constantly thinking about that and ... and I'd say I'm not a very self-critical.

With other student teachers this did not occur until after Easter and Student F still felt the need to write his reflections down in the last phase:

...actually reflective on, on what I do and write, you know, and, and committing that to, to writing. I think it's been really useful and there's cert, you know the, especially the circular stuff has been, has been really useful in identifying what I've done.

Student F was the lowest graded student teacher and there is a possible link here between the ability of the student teacher and how far their reflections have progressed from 'fully thought out' strategies on paper to ones that occur quickly in the mind. According to the student teachers, there was also a need to reflect quickly because there was so much pressure on them:

I just think I got distracted by everything else that I then saw that was a priority rather than reflective practice; such as your lesson planning, any other duties that come within being a teacher etc....

Therefore, the evidence suggests that reflective cycles are much quicker once the student gains experience and knowledge. This enables them to become quicker at reflecting on
lessons and moves reflection from a written activity to a thinking one. As the students' experience increases, they draw upon more knowledge and practice thus allowing the reflections to be quicker.

The student teachers used reflection to improve their teaching. They focused on a myriad of areas and these were categorised into: classroom activities, lesson planning, behaviour management, performance indicators and their teaching role. This reflection occurred throughout the PGCE year, influenced by the teaching standards they were working towards, to gain QTS. The student teachers reflected less through their reflective practice sheets as the year progressed. This was due first to lack of time. The students found they were under considerable time pressure planning lessons and did not feel able to actively reflect as much. Secondly, the student teachers used their reflective sheets less because they reflected unconsciously. They believed they no longer needed to write their reflections and strategies down. This 'reflecting in the mind' coincides with Schön's (1987) 'knowing-in-action'. Knowing-in-action is tacit knowledge; the practical knowledge gained that is observable but difficult for the practitioner to explain. Quite a few of the reflective topics were reflected on less as the student teachers gained more knowledge. This was most noticeable in designing 'classroom activities' and the 'role of the teacher'.

The role of the social environment and its impact became an important part of this study, as individuals do not act in isolation. The student teachers' narratives are a product of the social environment, and this was reflected in the students' discourse. Analysis of the reflective practice sheets revealed that the student teachers became more concerned with performance targets as they gained more experience. Reflections on topics such as targets, objectives, outcomes and assessment became more frequent. In Phase 1, the student teachers still talked about their feelings about education and their role, but by the end of the year they had stopped reflecting on their educational ideologies; instead, performance discourse gained more presence. There are numerous accountability structures in the social structure of education and the discourse of these structures is reflected in the reflections of the teacher.

The student teachers discussed the importance of support while on the PGCE course. This support came from the 'inner circle', which included the university tutor, subject mentor, other teachers in the placement and other PGCE students. This support, however, came with 'catches'. The inner circle or immediate 'field of play' for the student teacher had micro politics attached. The student teacher could not talk freely in this immediate 'field of play' as they were reflecting with dominant agents who controlled those fields (Bourdieu, 1977). This meant that the student teacher also needed a layer of support from agents outside this 'inner circle': parents, partners and friends. This reflection with practice was not always with a knowledgeable other but a 'supportive other'.

Notes on contributor

Charlotte Meierdirk is a Senior Lecturer in Education at the University of Portsmouth, UK. She has been a course leader and tutor on the PGCE programmes for 10 years. Charlotte started her career as a business and economics teacher and was a Head of Business Studies at a successful school/college teaching 13–19 year olds.
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Appendix 1. First cycle coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preliminary coding</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Preliminary coding</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questioning</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td>Lesson objectives</td>
<td>Ob</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>CR</td>
<td>Pupils' names</td>
<td>Nm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>External Interruptions</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>Speech</td>
<td>Sp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disruption</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil personalisation / Differentiation</td>
<td>Pn / Dif</td>
<td>Computers</td>
<td>Pc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>Ass</td>
<td>Subject knowledge</td>
<td>Sk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotion</td>
<td>Ext</td>
<td>Note-taking</td>
<td>Nt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching assistant</td>
<td>Ta</td>
<td>Group work</td>
<td>Gr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson plan</td>
<td>Lp</td>
<td>Lateness</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher led</td>
<td>TI</td>
<td>Targets</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil focus</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Gen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starter activity</td>
<td>Sr</td>
<td>Instructions</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rules of the classroom</td>
<td>Rc</td>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Rc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timings</td>
<td>Trn</td>
<td>Classroom layout</td>
<td>Cl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plenary</td>
<td>Py</td>
<td>Teacher error</td>
<td>Te</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom control</td>
<td>Cref</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher's role / teacher's presence</td>
<td>Tr / Tp</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2. Example of a reflective practice sheet

Lesson Subject area: KS 4
Year Group: Year 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Targets for this next lesson (these will be the same as the targets set from the previous lesson's reflectivity):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Not allow the students who are disruptive to sit in the lesson together and not to allow any of the students to sit on the back row of the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To allow the students to make their notes in the lessons and have a format for that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Plan extension activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ensure everyone understands the task and that all students stay on task.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflect on this lesson. What went well and why do you think this was?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The lesson content was good and appropriate for the lesson. I used video to explain the topic and I ensured that students paid attention by completing a worksheet which they had to fill in throughout.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The activity was stimulating and I used real and relevant businesses for the activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• For the activity I used paired work the students had to complete.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The controlled assessment lessons were good and the objectives were clear and all students understood what had to be achieved. This was achieved by setting high expectations and providing the students an example layout to complete the task which ensured that they had a lead to follow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The table created for the controlled assessment was useful and appropriate, as I referred to the Edexcel guideline for controlled assessment and what the students are required to complete.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I have noticed that by separating the students, they concentrate more and not allowing students to sit on the back row they are more focused.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Identify Strategies to address the problems/issues:

- I will not allow the disruptive and unmotivated students to sit together in the class.
- I will try to reduce the content for this lower ability set and enable them to make their own notes for the lesson. I provide the students with their own notes on the computer but I will put gaps and spaces in the notes to ensure they are engaged and following the pace of the lesson.
- Plan extension activities even for the lower ability set as some students work faster than others.

Identify any problems/issues in the lesson. Why you think they occurred?

- Managing the behaviour of some of the students in this low ability set was difficult one student in particular one male who is very unmotivated to do any work.
- I felt that the content was too much for some students to intake and the students didn’t have any method of taking notes.
- Some students almost completed the task and needed an extension activity to keep them busy, I hadn’t planned for this.
Paper 3

Research and reflexivity: the discourse of female students completing teacher education

Charlotte Meierdrick
School of Education and Continuing Studies, University of Portsmouth, Portsmouth, UK

ABSTRACT
This paper explores the concept of reflexivity and its changing role for both the researcher and participants. A phenomenology was carried out following three female student teachers through their teacher training and how they managed their multiple roles. Twelve semi-structured interviews were carried out over the academic year to investigate the changing nature of identity. The discourses of the students were analysed to reveal the equilibrium/ disequilibrium of the student teacher's identity and the impact on both the researcher and the researched.

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KEYWORDS
Feminist theory; reflexivity; phenomenology; student teacher; agency; mothers

Introduction
The research followed three female student teachers as they progressed through teacher education. The main aim of the research is to investigate the female students' lived experiences of studying a Post/Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) whilst managing their various roles. Three women, with phenomenologically different backgrounds, were interviewed at different times during the year. The phenomenology participants are part of a one year post graduate teaching programme that enables a graduate student to become a newly qualified teacher (NQT).

The methodological approach adopted, for this phenomenological study, is a combination of both feminism and critical realism. As Parr (2015) states, this combination of approaches can be challenging, however Satsangi (2012, p. 200) argues critical realism can actually inform the feminist researcher as long as the relationship between the researcher and the researched is addressed. This combination of methodologies is known as 'feminist realism' and has a number of key features. Firstly, there is a belief that knowledge does exist independent of the mind and there are different interpretations of reality. Archer (2007) argues reality can be reduced but is not limited to the interpretations of discourse. Social structures exist independent of individuals but are also created and influenced by them. Secondly, there is the central belief of empowerment of the individual and the 'uncovering' of the female voice. This uncovering of the female voice is a central feature to my research and one which has influenced my own empowerment.

CONTACT Charlotte Meierdrick Charlotte.meierdrick@port.ac.uk
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Knowing who I am was paramount to my research as, by knowing yourself, you can address your own feelings and biases towards the study. The feminist paradigm rejects the idea that a researcher can be independent of the study and encourages the use of reflexivity when collecting and analysing data. Reflecting on the power relationship between the researcher and the researched is central to this reflexive approach (Burgess-Proctor, 2015). Bourdieu (1993) also advocates reflexivity and a constant reflection on the research and the researcher's positioning. This constant reflexivity challenges any preconceptions the researcher may have about the participant and social context.

**Dual reflexivity**

Wrenn (2012, p. 404) describes social identity as a product of the interaction of the personal identity with its surroundings, a coming together of the social and the personal, rather than two distinct identities. This conscious reflection of struggling identities gives the agent the agency or the power to recognise the influences of the social. The meaning of teacher identity has been difficult to conceptualise because there are many different perspectives (Carelle-Elavar & Lizarraga, 2010; Gee, 2000; Meierdink, 2016; Sachs, 2005; Wenger, 1998). Teacher identity involves the role of the teacher and the individual's adoption of the professional teacher identity. Beijaard (1995) believes the professional teacher identity is derived from the teacher's expertise in their subject matter, combined with their skills, knowledge, and support for their pupils. This is balanced against the demands of the institutional setting, both at a macro and micro level. It is the reconciliation between the personal and professional side of teaching that produces the teaching identity (Pillen, Den Brok, & Beijaard, 2013).

Akker and Meijer (2011, p. 315) maintain, the student teacher's identity changes but it is unknown as to what is shifting and what determines the direction of the shift. According to Dang (2013), this is an area that is under-researched, but opines that it is the teaching environment that causes the change in identity, as the identity is constructed and reconstructed through interpretations and re-interpretations of the student teacher's beliefs. Conroy and O'Leary-Kelly (2014) present a model of 'work-related identity, loss and recovery' that conceptualises identity transitions within the workplace that can be applied to the construction of a student teacher's teaching identity during their school placements (Figure 1).

Conroy and O'Leary-Kelly (2014) assert that when an individual joins an organisation there will be disruption to their work-related identity (WRI), which has been defined as: 'aspects of identity and self-definition that are tied to participation in the activities of work... or membership in work-related groups, organisations, occupations or professions' (Dutton, Roberts, & Bednar, 2010, p. 266). WRI is the sense of self that is related to the person's work or organisational membership. Conroy and O'Leary-Kelly state that a person's work life involves identity loss. As an individual negotiates through the workplace they experience disruptions to their WRI as they surrender their current self and enter the liminal period.

This WRI loss is represented by the loss of a value or an aspect of a professional identity. An extreme example would be an individual who experiences a workplace injury and has to rethink their work identity. A less extreme example might be a disagreement over strategies within the organisation. Whilst the WRI experiences disequilibrium the individual enters the 'liminal interval' (Conroy & O'Leary-Kelly, 2014, p. 67). The liminal period is a transition
between the old and new self. During this disequilibrium period the identity lacks a connection with the social domain and features aspects of instability. Evans (2011) argues it is the reconciliation between the personal and professional side of teaching that produces the teaching identity. The teacher identity is constructed from the individual’s adoption of the professional expectations of teaching combined with their own social identity.

When a student teacher starts their teacher education they will have preconceptions of what a teacher is and the role of learning in the classroom (Pillen et al., 2013). Even before the course begins, students will have preconceptions about the profession. These preconceptions will be questioned during the PGCE course and critiqued until new knowledge is formed (Dang, 2013). This deconstruction of preconceptions is important for the student teacher, as it provides them with an opportunity to be reflexive and reflect on their own beliefs.

**My positioning**

In Reinharz’s (1992) book on *Feminist methods in social research* the personal journey of the researcher is viewed as an important part of the research. By understanding the personal journey of the researcher a connection can be drawn between the ‘journey’ and the research itself:

Feminist research acknowledges that there is often a connection between the research purpose and the private life of the researcher; hence works are often framed with a preface or postscript highlighting such relevance. (Probert, 2006, p. 7)

I situate myself as a white female lesbian feminist academic. I was brought up in a working class environment in South England, where I attended secondary school. My father was a mechanic and my mother was a factory worker. I was the first person in my family to progress
to university and went on to read economics and politics. After university I completed a teacher education course and obtained an economics and business studies teaching post. My past is part of my habitus and influences my decisions and behaviour with regards to my research (Bourdieu, 1990).

Reinharz (1992) wrote one of the most significant books on the feminist approach to research. Her definition of feminist research is any method that is used by self-identified feminists. This position is broad, but it is expanded to include any research that has been conducted by feminist writing in journal articles and books. This definition is criticised in Dankoski’s (2000) paper on What makes research feminist? because the term ‘self-identified feminists’ is a non-committal definition as it is left up to the individual to decide what they see themselves as. Dankoski (2000) goes on to suggest several factors that need to be addressed if conducting a feminist approach: the study should improve the lives of women and other marginalised groups; the research should not exploit the participants; and existing power differences should be challenged and uncovered. Uncovering power differentials is advocated by other writers but Reason and Bradbury (2001) also incorporate the aims: reducing the power balance between the researcher and researched, challenging structural relations and engaging in reflexivity.

The female student teachers knew what I was investigating, how the research was conducted, and the results. I believed it was appropriate for me to share the outcomes of the research with the participants. The participants were shown transcripts of the interviews and PowerPoints from lectures which have resulted from this research.

**Research context**

This research is situated at a Higher Educational Institution (HEI) in South East England. The study’s participants were part of the PGCE programme. The PGCE is a full-time, one year course that enables a graduate student to gain Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). The HEI has a relatively small cohort of PGCE students with around 110 students enrolled every year. About one third of the PGCE year is spent at the university and the rest of the time the student teacher is in their placement(s). After the first three weeks of the PGCE course the student teacher will start at their first placement (phase 1) and after Christmas will start phase 2 and 3, with a placement in a different school.

**Methodology**

The phenomenological study consisted of three female student teachers who were interviewed in total 12 times during the year. The phenomenological study allowed me to focus on the female student teachers’ perspectives on training to teach and revealed a deeper understanding of what participants were experiencing (Pilten, 2016, p. 1425).

The following are summaries of the student teachers in the study (All names have been changed):

(1) Jane was British. She had spent many years in Human Resources before applying for the PGCE course and had been a local government councillor for four years. Jane was 34 years old, married with two young children.
(2) Morag was Irish and had a long term partner. She had a two year old daughter and came to England especially to obtain her PGCE. Her partner gained employment at a local firm during her PGCE year. Morag was 26 years old at the start of the course.

(3) Amel applied for the PGCE course in the previous year but was rejected at interview due to a lack of knowledge of teaching. She reapplied for the course after spending a year as a cover supervisor in an inner city school in Portsmouth. She went to a tough inner city school herself and then went to the local university. Interestingly, although British and from a white working class background, she embraced the Islamic faith after marrying a Muslim. Amel was 29 years old and had no children.

In the research analysis the discursive practices of the student teachers are focused upon. Attention is paid to the influence of social structures on the agency of the teacher thus concuring with Gee’s (1990) viewpoint that discourse conveys a message regarding practice in a particular context. Fairclough’s (2003) pioneering work on critical discourse analysis (CDA) is drawn upon to analyse the student’s narratives. My choice of using CDA reflects a desire to gain insight into the student teacher’s understanding of themselves and the context of their journey to professionalism. CDA can be viewed from a number of perspectives. Firstly, it may be viewed using the constructionist lens by analysing how discourse is socially produced. Discourse may be viewed critically where the analysis focuses on the dynamics of power and the ideology behind the discourse (Phillips & Cree, 2014). As a feminist realist researcher, I am drawn to CDA as it analyses the powers that create the discourse within its social context. CDA can be used to show unequal power distribution which then leads to a greater understanding of the social context.

Research analysis

The first cycle of the interview coding looked for utterances on reflexivity. This type of coding is known as a priori and refers to the use of a theoretical framework to complete the initial coding (Guest, 2007). Any utterances that reflected the equilibrium/disequilibrium of the student’s identity were highlighted with attention to any themes related to empowerment and female participation. The analytical process started by transcribing the interviews. There was nearly six hours of digital recordings, producing over 100 pages of transcriptions. The transcriptions were completed using Word and therefore in rich text format.

Identity disequilibrium

Throughout the research the three student teachers were asked how they were changing as individuals. The interview analysis found there were a number of factors that impacted on the student teacher. Power is not interpreted just as ‘top down’ and hierarchical, although this type of power is present, but as a strategic power that exists in day to day interactions. These day to day interactions, with other teachers and mentors, presented moments of conflicts when ideologies clashed. Jane illustrates this finding when she found her belief about what kind of teacher she wanted to be did not match those of her school placement:

Yes, I think that’s what it is, I have to be somebody I’m not and I have to be a harder person than
was and you know assert a bit of discipline here and there but mostly I didn't need to do a lot to keep them in line, whereas at School A's it feels very much like I have to be like a hard arse and I'm not that kind of person. I mean Miss M's been telling me, "You must go in and you must rule them! And that's it." And I'm just like, I'm not that kind of person, I'm actually quite soft, I don't actually like shouting and screaming and being horrible. So, I mean Miss B's quite scary, I don't know if you've ever seen her when she does her thing?

All the student teachers became more confident in the classroom over time. As they experienced situations they were able to address the problems. Amel commented on how she convinced herself that she needed to display more confidence in the classroom, as this was an expectation of being a teacher: "I just ... took that step of, like, right I'm teaching now, and it all kind of settled in! In this case the student teacher believed the institutional identity was a person who displayed confidence and she needed to achieve this. The institutional identity is the identity recognised by the institution, in this case the school/college. It is the identity the school/college advocates and recognises (Gee, 2000). There was disequilibrium in her teaching identity whilst her identity was being reformed to reflect this. The student teacher acts in a way they believe a teacher is supposed to act in that given environment and is highlighted in Morag's discourse below:

From phase 2 I've become a lot more relaxed, whereas before this I would have seen teaching as you know, OK, yeah, you have a lot of hours to put in and it is, can be, stressful, but I think now I've learned OK, let's not just get stressed over it. You know, the more stressed I was getting, the longer it was taking me to plan the lesson, and my problem is being creative with activities and I just found I could spend two hours sitting there going, "What am I going to do?" and still having nothing by the end, whereas now I'm like, OK, just look at the topic and go back to ... go through it step by step and say, "OK, that's an activity ..." And I think the less stressed you are, the easier it is to go in and deliver it.

Morag alludes to being stressed in her first phase and not being able to cope. She comments on how she learns to cope with stress and looks for confirmation of her statement by using the term 'you know'. Morag spends less time planning and this has reduced the amount of stress that she felt which consequently made her a better teacher. There is a canonical narrative here about what makes a good teacher and in this case it is someone who is not feeling stressed. However, Morag comments that working long hours and being creative with activities is part of being a teacher. Working hard is an expectation of all teachers and one Morag has had to find ways to cope with. This is part of the 'Institutional Identity' that there is an expectation of working long hours by the school (Gee, 2000).

Morag became stressed as she was not getting her work done. She found that she could not complete all her lesson preparation in the evenings but coped by changing her lesson planning process. Around this time Morag entered the liminal period of identity change (Conroy & O'Leary-Kelly, 2014). She was finding there was much more work to teaching than she expected; she had not realised that teaching was so stressful and therefore had to find ways to cope and change her preconceptions of teaching.

The placement school's culture had an impact on Amel's identity and narrative construction. She had a pre-notion of what teaching was and was surprised by what she found, as seen by her comment: "... it wouldn't be as target driven and so egotistical as I thought the business environment was, and I'm starting to realise that may not be the case! The importance of target setting was a surprise to her. Amel went through what Conroy and O'Leary-Kelly (2014) refer to as identity disequilibrium as her pre-notions of what a teacher is are reshaped by her experiences.
Amel thought teachers were also quick to criticise new initiatives: ‘It can be quite difficult to convince someone of your opinion… I think teachers are quite quick to come in and say, “Oh no I’ve tried that before; I don’t think that’ll work”’. This critical culture can restrict the introduction of new ideas in the classroom. Amel overcame this obstacle, but only by being confident in what she thought and by maintaining her own beliefs on the role of a teacher. Amel did not seem to go through a long liminal interval of WRI loss as her changes in beliefs did not last (Conroy & O’Leary-Kelly, 2014). There was no evidence in her narratives of a long emotional struggle between identities. This may have been due to Amel managing to withhold many of her original beliefs, of what a teacher was, or she was unaware of how she was changing.

In her January interview Amel told a story which gave insight into why she believed the relationships with the pupil were so important:

I think so, in that before… when I was at school I went to a bad school, I had friends which, at the time, was just… I know I done stuff which I shouldn’t have done, it was just not good, but… and I suppose the positive aspect of that is that I’m not shocked by what any kids do.

Amel had been a non-conformist at school. She went to a ‘tough’ inner city school and got into trouble. It was not until she went to college that she refocused on what she wanted from life and engaged with education.

Identity equilibrium

Morag talked about how she became more relaxed as the year progressed because she was allowed to teach the way she wanted. When the student taught the way they believed was right for them, they felt more at ease. She commented: ‘now I find I’m not as stressed when I’m teaching’ (Phase 2). Morag reiterated this feeling while on her second school placement:

...I think there is... much more need for self-control in terms of how your personality manifests itself within a school setting than maybe there would be in a work or a social setting, and you’ve got to be setting a good example all of the time without exception, would be my view. And that is changing me and I do think much more deeply now about, you know, not that I misbehave or anything outside of it all, but just in terms of... how you conduct yourself and set a good example at all times really, so it’s curbing any, you know, no casual swearwords within a school context.

All of the students remarked about the stress they felt when ‘forced’ to teach in a way they would not naturally do. It was evident that the student teacher’s identity was constantly being remoulded during the PGCE year. The reshaping of their professional identity was the result of many forces including: the student’s identity and who they are; and the school’s perception of a teacher identity.

Jane reflected on how she learnt to ‘process information... without emotion’. It seemed that by ‘reflecting without emotion’ the student teacher could reflect better. According to Conroy and O’Leary-Kelly’s (2014) model of work-related loss and recovery, the period of liminality and identity reconstruction can be an emotional time. This liminal period is defined as ‘the dynamic process of self-construal, a time in which a sense of “who I was“ gives way to a sense of “who I am becoming”’ (Conroy & O’Leary-Kelly, 2014, p. 67). During the liminal period the student teacher is mourning the loss of their identity as they reconstruct a new one.
All the participants experienced shifts in their identity and found they became more confident in themselves. Morag's husband commented to her that she was more confident:

[i'm] just probably more confident in myself and I have my own opinions now and I don't really care what anybody else thinks of me at this stage, I'm like whatever < chuckles >. I've definitely become more assertive than I probably was, yeah definitely. Yeah I probably have changed yeah, even [my boyfriend] says it, you know there's a big change in you as, you know you, you actually like getting up and going to work now, before this was hassle, it was like I don't want to go to work, you know? Just, my attitude on life has changed an awful lot, yeah.

Amel reflected also on her changing identity

[i'm] much more confident, much more ... just ... yeah, whole ... I don't know. Much more confident that I can do things. I know before I would never have dreamed of walking into a classroom and just ... not my class, don't know who the teacher is, and felt confident or whatever, but now it just ... completely not an issue. It's just [i'm] much more confident.

The student teachers told stories of their growing confidence. Jane commented on how she now had the confidence to go back into a shop and return items, something she would have never done before (May, 2011). Morag learnt how to 'switch off' when she went home after work which made her life easier. All the student teachers recognised that it was important not to get stressed over teaching. For a number it took a whole phase of the Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programme to realise just how important it was not to take problems home:

Probably from phase 2 I've become a lot more relaxed, whereas before this I would have seen teaching as, you know, OK, yeah, you have a lot of hours to put in and it is, can be, stressful, but I think now I've learned OK, let's not just get stressed over it (Morag, Phase 2)

Amel reiterated Morag's comment and reflected (Phase 3):

Well I think what always stands me in good stead is I don't tend to look back too much or for too long....... so if there are issues going on, I'm always looking ahead rather than worrying about the detail of what's happened, and I think that allows you to sort of park a lot of things that might worry other people.

This finding was emphasised through discourse analysis as the students' responses became more confident as the year progressed. They used the 'I' term more in their utterances rather than the third person and took greater possession over their comments by the end of the year. When they discussed an upsetting experience they tended to use the third person and were less likely to take ownership of the lessons that were unsuccessful. However, by the end of the course, the student teachers were more inclined to admit their failures. They had become less emotional and more critical about their own teaching:

Looking back on what I've done and being critical, but being positive as well, so seeing both sides of the equation. So looking, you know, from my point of view what it felt like standing there and teaching, but also what it would have been like as a child to sit there and receive that teaching, but also someone who's looking at that lesson observing it, what would they have seen? So it's looking at the situation as a whole, sort of... from different people's point of views and thinking... or getting a broader picture of what I'm doing and not just seeing it as me standing in front of that class delivering a lesson, because that isn't the way it's perceived by everyone (Amel, Phase 3).

The discourse of the student teacher revealed who they were and who they were becoming. Their identity changed during the PGCE year and at times displayed conflict. The students rejected some of the ideals of the institutional identity whilst accepting others. Their
discourse revealed the claiming and rejecting of the different identities and the conflict that ensued from this.

**Feminist themes**

The research raised a number of important themes related to feminist participation and empowerment. The importance of the student teacher’s family was evident from the narratives. When the student teacher is reflexive there is a questioning of their own teaching identity. This liminality can be a difficult period as Jane pointed out: ‘I feel like I’m having to be somebody I’m not and it’s actually a lot of pressure being a person I’m not all the time...’ The student uses discourse to recreate their new identity and confirmation from an ‘other’ (Conroy & O’Leary-Kelly, 2014). This ‘other’ ranges from friends, parents, to grandparents. This support and ‘sounding board’ was an important part in the student teacher’s finishing their training and in some cases the key to completing the year.

There were many references to the importance of the family in supporting the student teacher. This support came in many forms but the student teachers found it necessary to reflect with their family. This reflection was important as it did not have the constraints associated with reflecting with those involved in making judgements on the student’s performance. Being able to reflect with others outside the inner community, of the course, was important for the students because, as Amel stated:

...you’re very conscious that you’re being assessed and appraised all the time and you, you might not necessarily want to be as open within that process as you might be if you were a permanent fixture within the department, so you’re sort of trying to... faking it good to keep... manage your own PR within the situation...

Amel explained that reflecting within the inner circle was limited, due to social constraints. These constraints reflect the nature of the ‘social fields’ the students find themselves part of. The educational environment consists of power struggles in different social fields: the classroom, subject departments, school management, and the macro power struggles between outside agencies. These social fields are social spaces, with their own rules and regulations. Agents will compete and jostle within these social spaces to try and change the rules of the game (Bourdieu, 1990). All the agents in the ‘inner fields’ have power over the student teacher and contribute to his/her grading and assessment.

The reflection with ‘others’ was free from the influence of power and the need to impress, although there will be a power struggle within every social field. The importance of the family was not restricted to reflective freedom. The support of the family for those student teachers who had children was paramount. This support ranged from help with the children when they were ill to actually caring for one of the student teacher’s young daughter enabling her to complete the course.

The interview analysis showed that the female student teachers with children relied heavily on their parents. Both Jane and Morag not only talked through their problems, with their parents, but the parents often helped with childcare. Jane admitted that she ‘boxed up’ her role as a mother whilst at school. This was a part of her that she ‘put aside’ during the work day. It is not unusual for parents to ‘box up’ their home life when at school. Halford and Leonard (2006) argued that in many jobs it would be seen as a weakness if parents did not fully focus on work. They found in their research on nurses that the latter left their parenting identity at home and did not resume it until leaving work. They referred to this phenomenon
as 'separate identities' and actually found a tendency towards separate identities stronger in the male nurses (Halford & Leonard, 2006, p. 171).

In the February interview Jane was asked how she was coping with the course. Her response was: 'So everything I do, the house, has just like been chaos; the children have been, you know, all of it and then the work, and the school and you feel like you've just gone backwards 'cause you've gotten to almost the point you were in phase 1 on the day you started.' When Jane's children were ill she felt unable to take time off teaching and left her children with her parents. Being a mother is part of Jane's identity, it is always there, but she is managing to distance herself from it while on her placement. This distancing from the 'mother identity' was similar with Morag. Jane also relied heavily on her parents to help out: 'cause my parents are very close and I have to balance that relationship as well 'cause they're my child carers and so I also have to ... sounds awful but I have to sort of remember to stop in and have a cup of tea with my mum at the end of the day...'. Jane knew she was relying on her parents to help with the children and so it was important to show her appreciation. Her husband was less supportive and helpful at home.

Morag moved to Portsmouth with her partner and two year old daughter but decided in her first term to send her daughter back to Ireland to stay with her mother:

...if I had [my daughter] here with me I don't think I would manage as well. I definitely wouldn't be able to do the planning and preparation for my lessons, 'cause I'd be coming home and trying to get her settled, get her to bed and then settle into it, whereas this way now I ... can actually take work home, I know I can have that break, that I have lessons planned for when I come back. (Feb, 2011)

Morag found it very difficult teaching and being a mother. She came home from school and spent all her time looking after her daughter instead of completing school work. She found that sending her daughter back to live with her grandparents meant she could work in the evenings and 'catch up' lesson planning. Morag's partner initially changed his work patterns to help out with childcare: 'Dave changed his working times so he now works from home all the, well not all the time but at least three days,' but even this was not enough and Morag

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**Figure 2. Spirals of reflexivity.**
ranged from help with the children when they were ill to actually caring for one of the student teacher's young daughter enabling her to complete the course.

Expectations of the way I act, behave and my beliefs are instilled in me over many years. I no longer see identity as fixed and predetermined. I believe identity to be fluid and constructed by society and its rules and regulations. Sometimes it is only when stepping 'outside of the box' that life can be seen more clearly. When part of a school/University culture it is hard to question that it could be different, because it is difficult to see that it could be. It is easy to become blinded by the day to day workings and suppress your own values to comply with the norm. Ball (2003, p. 221) refers to this as 'values schizophrenia' – when a teacher suppresses their personal values in order to conform to the performance culture and I could see this not only in the student teachers but also myself.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes on contributor

Charlotte Meiendorf is a Senior Lecturer in Education at the University of Portsmouth, England. She has been a course leader and tutor on the initial teacher education programmes for 10 years. Previous to lecturing at the University of Portsmouth was a lecturer, in finance, at the Open University. Whilst lecturing at the Open University founded and managed a limited company selling educational resources that were developed for secondary schools' business and economic departments. Charlotte started her career as a business and economics teachers and was a Head of Business Studies at a successful school/college teaching 13–19 year olds.

References


CHAPTER 12
REFLECTIVE PRACTICE IN TEACHER EDUCATION
CHARLOTTE MEIERDIRK

Introduction

Reflective practice is acknowledged to be a characteristic of all professions. There are, however, many theoretical perceptions and definitions of what it is and so it is not surprising that professions interpret its meaning in different ways. This chapter first explores the concept and its various manifestations before examining its role in the training of professional teachers.

Different interpretations of reflective practice

Finlay (2008) argues there are three approaches to reflective practice and these exist on a continuum ranging from reflection, through critical reflection to reflexivity (Fig. 12.1). The first stage on the continuum reflection is a technical approach to reflective practice and includes the action of reflecting or looking back upon the work being done to assess its effectiveness and improve the performance if necessary. A more holistic interpretation encourages critical reflection which involves looking at the role of power within the social fields the professionals find themselves in (Schon, 1987, Bourdieu, 1990). There are also advocates of reflexivity which is the third stage of Finlay’s model which Loughran (2006) defines as “personal reflection” and the “turning of the lens” on oneself to reflect on the professionals changing identity.

Figure 12.1: Reflective practice continuum

Reflection can be broken down into five different types (Fig 12. 2). The first three types were identified by Schon (1995), one of the earliest and most authoritative writers on the subject. He distinguished between “knowing in action”, “reflection in action”, and “reflection on action”. A fourth and fifth type were added by Ghaye (2010), which are “reflection for action” and “reflection with action”. “Knowing in action” describes the instant response to an occurrence. That response will change as the professional becomes more knowledgeable and experienced. Eraut (1994) refers to this as “tacit knowledge” or the knowledge gained through experience that dictates how a professional behaves and responds. “Knowing in action” then is the unconscious practice that occurs when a person’s acts are based on prior experience. The person does not actively reflect on the event but uses “tacit knowledge” before engaging in action. Tacit knowledge is the knowledge a person has built up from different experiences they have had. As the novice moves to becoming a professional their tacit knowledge increases and influences their actions but unconsciously.
Figure 12.2: Types of technical reflection

- Knowing in Action
- Reflection in Action
- Reflection on Action
- Reflection for Action
- Reflection with Action

“Reflection in action” is undertaken “on the spot”; it is a conscious reaction to what is occurring at the time, rather than an instant response using tacit knowledge. An example of this type of reflection would be a professional reflecting and acting in response to a situation that occurred in the workplace. Schon’s (1991) third type of reflection “reflection on action” occurs after the event and is a continual process of review and improvement. Schon (1987, p.40) developed a three stage model for “reflection on action” including providing student teachers with technical training; helping them to think like a professional; and enabling the trainee to develop a new form of understanding and action. Here the practitioner is encouraged to use ‘reflection on action’ by continuously reflecting on a problem to generate new knowledge and then use the new knowledge to solve the problem. According to Schon (1987) this cyclical process improves the performance of the professional in their field. Ghaye’s “reflection for action” is when the reflections are taken forward to the next situation and applied and “reflection with action” is when the reflections are discussed with a third party. In the case of the student teacher this may be their school mentor (Ghaye, 2010).

Zeichner and Liston (1996, p.1) believe that a practitioner has not engaged in reflective practice unless they have questioned the context in which they are operating and their own individual beliefs. This “critical reflection” encourages reflection on the practitioner’s past experiences, ideological beliefs and the social context in which they are operating. This type of reflection moves away from the technical reflective practice advocated by Schon (1987) and offers a more holistic approach. The process of critical reflective practice involves a questioning of the norms of the organisation and emancipates the practitioner from the social constraints, within the complex social environment, and practices that are “taken for granted”.

The third form of reflective practice is reflexivity which is the process of constantly updating and reconstructing identities in the face of a fast changing world (Sweetman, 2003). Archer (2007, p.94) emphasises the importance of reflexivity in navigating our way through the world, and defines it as “the regular exercise of the mental ability, shared by all normal people, to consider themselves in relation to their social context and vice versa”. Finlay’s model encompasses all three types of reflection but implies a linear relationship which can be challenged.

The use of reflective practice in teacher education

Reflective practice is a well-established feature of the teaching profession and plays an important role in teacher education and training. Researchers confirm its presence and using the theoretical frameworks outlined above explore the practice in developing professionalism among graduate teachers. Reflective practice is interpreted differently by teacher educators but there is agreement that it is the “process of learning through and from experience towards greater insights of self or practice” (Finlay, 2008, p.1). This ‘process of learning’ is the basis for all interpretations of the term, and whatever form it takes the reflective practitioner should learn and grow from engaging with it. Reflective practice within teacher education enables the student teacher to learn and critique teaching practice (Meierdirk, 2016). Contention amongst researchers and educators occurs when discussing what it is exactly the student should be learning when engaging in reflective practice.

Much of the research on reflective practice in initial teacher education (ITE) focuses on its use “with others”. Parkinson (2009) and Freese (1999) both use “reflection with practice” by investigating the use of reflecting in pairs and with the student teacher’s mentor. Harford (2008) not only investigates student teachers’ reflecting on their own teaching ability (reflecting in practice) but includes the practice of reflecting with others about their practice. Harford’s (2008) action research project investigates the use of reflective practice in ITE, centring on student teachers’ videoing as they reflect in a group. The student teachers use videoing as an analytical tool to help them engage in Ghaye’s (2010) “reflection on action” and “reflection with action”. Reflection with others occurs on most ITE courses as the student teacher’s lesson is often discussed and reflected upon with the subject or university tutor. Harford’s study takes “reflection with practice” further by involving other student teachers in the reflection process. The students chose two video clips, of themselves teaching, which they showed to a small group of student teachers who discussed and reflected on observations and improvements. The findings from Harford’s (2008) study highlight the positive nature of engaging in peer reflection. At first the student
teachers were reluctant to be critical about other student teacher’s video clips, but with time they became more critical and analytical. This study shows the importance of peer-based learning and reflection with others including peers on the course and the university tutor.

Freese’s (1999) research focused on “reflection-with-practice” and the importance of learning from an experienced “other” and the role of the subject mentor. After an observation the student teacher engaged in retrospective reflective practice with the tutor. Freese found a number of advantages of engaging in retrospective reflective practice with the school mentor:

“Debriefing using the reflective framework helps the pre-service teacher become more aware of the complexities of teaching, to go beyond the technical aspects of teaching and focus on student learning as well as teacher decision making” (p.899).

The student teacher gained a greater insight into their own teaching by engaging in “reflection with others” and this improved their awareness of the pupils’ learning as well as the teacher’s planning.

Not all the research into the reflective practice of student teachers is limited to “reflection with practice”. Parkinson’s (2009) research investigates the misconceptions student teachers have about education and schooling. He advocates a need for the student teacher to deconstruct their own beliefs, by questioning the epistemologies and knowledge they have constructed over their lifetime. By following a pupil the student teachers reflected on areas of educational concern and reconstructed their preconceptions about education. Parkinson refers to the student teacher’s gained knowledge and experience as eco-epistemology and uses Horn and Wilburn’s (2005) interpretation of the term as “on-going maintenance of growth”. It is the student’s prior experiences that are reflected upon in their preconceptions and these change as the student teachers “articulate their worlds”. This interpretation is very similar, if not identical, to Bourdieu’s (1977) concept of habitus. A student teacher’s habitus is influenced by the experiences of the social worlds they previously and presently belong to. The difference between Bourdieu’s “habitus” and Parkinson’s “gained knowledge” is that Bourdieu believes habitus can influence the social and so it is a two way rather than a one way process. This interpretation of reflective practice goes beyond Schon’s (1987) technical approach of evaluation as there is reflection on the student teacher’s own beliefs and identity, which is reflexivity.

When a student teacher starts their teacher education they will have preconceptions of what a teacher is and the role of learning in the classroom. This knowledge is built up over years of participating in different social arenas and experiencing different events. Even before the training course begins, students will have preconceptions about the profession of teaching, and these will be questioned and critiqued during their training until new knowledge is formed (Dang 2013). This deconstruction of preconceptions is important for the student teacher, as it provides them with an opportunity to reflect on their own beliefs.

It is clear from this brief survey of the literature that reflective practice is an essential element of ITE and that it takes the form of multiple practices. A more detailed study undertaken by the author is reported on below

**Reflective practice in practice**

The author embarked upon a research project into student teacher’s use of reflective practice during a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programme. The aim and objectives are set down in Table 12.1. In order to meet this aim the concept of reflective practice was explored through a study of the literature and Finlay’s (2008) continuum was used as the research framework

Table 12.1 Aims and Objectives of the study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aim:</th>
<th>To investigate the role of reflective practice during the PGCE year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Objectives: | 1. To explore the concept of reflective practice  
2. To explore the impact of reflective practice on the PGCE student  
3. To investigate the PGCE student’s changing identity  
4. To investigate the impact of the social environment on the PGCE student |

The context of the research was a university based PGCE programme in secondary education which recruited 100 students each year distributed across eight subject groups. All students attended taught units in the university at the beginning and end of the programme and all had two placements in local schools or further
education colleges. One placement was in Phase 1 and the second in Phases 2 and 3 (See Figure 12.2). All students were introduced to reflective practice at the beginning of the programme and required to complete reflective practice sheets during their placements. Their university tutor made observation visits to both placements and in each placement the student teacher also had a subject mentor who met with them for tutorials on a weekly basis.

Six students from the Business Studies group volunteered for the in depth case study. There were three women and three men: three were married, one was in a stable partnership and two were single; four had children; and their ages ranged from 24 to 49 years. The data collection methods used were semi-structured interviews and analysis of the reflective practice sheets. Over 100 reflective practice sheets with over 1,000 reflective comments were coded and analysed covering each of the three phases of the PGCE programme (Figure 12.3).

Figure 12.3: Phases of the PGCE year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 1 (Placement 1)</th>
<th>Oct – Dec</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2 (Placement 2)</td>
<td>Jan – April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 3 (Placement 2)</td>
<td>April – June</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interviews were spread across six months from January to June. They were semi-structured to allow for flexibility but key questions were asked of all students. The January interviews focused on what education meant to the student; how many roles they thought they played; what had surprised them in their first placement; what kind of teacher they wanted to be; what they thought reflective practice was and what it was designed to discover. The February interviews repeated some of the questions above to detect changes but pursued additional questions including: is there anything stopping you from being the teacher you want to be? Do you think you have changed as a person since undertaking the course? The March interviews repeated again the questions relating to identity but also sought information on the two placements and how, if at all, they differed? A deeper question about how the students had engaged in reflective practice was asked. The final interviews in June asked students to reflect on how they thought reflective practice had changed their teaching; were they now able to be the teacher they wanted to be; how their views of teaching and education had changed; how they had changed as individuals; and did they think they were now a good teacher?

Critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 1995) was used with a priori coding to categorise the interview data, to make connections and discover patterns in the students’ narratives. The content of the reflective practice sheets was also analysed using in vivo coding into five categories – classroom activities, lesson planning, pupil behaviour, performance and teacher-self-identity. An analysis of the sheets revealed how the students assessed their strengths and weaknesses and how these changed across the three phases and the different placements.

Results and analysis

During the PGCE year student teachers continually reflected on their lessons; as they engaged in reflection they evaluated their lessons and set new targets against which to judge their progress (See Figure 12.3). This process continues throughout the year as all student teachers need to meet the teaching standards set down by the government. However, the way reflection developed was different for individual students. For example one student in the case study was familiar with reflecting from years in industry and found he was reflecting “in his head” early on and he chose not to record his thoughts as his knowledge quickly became tacit. This did not occur with the other student teachers until after Phase 3, although another student still felt the need to write his reflections down:

“...actually reflective, on what I do and write, you know, you are committing that to, writing. I think it’s been really useful and there’s certainly, you know the, especially the circular stuff has been really useful in identifying what I’ve done.”

The student cited above was the lowest graded student teacher at the end of the programme and there is a possible
link here between the ability of the student teacher and how far their reflections have progressed from being “fully thought out” strategies on paper to ones that occur quickly in the mind. According to the case study respondents there was a need to reflect quickly because there was so much pressure on them. The evidence suggests that reflective cycles are much quicker once the student gains experience and knowledge resulting in a spiral of reflection. This spiral of reflection does not occur within a vacuum but a complex set of social fields, and competing social structures.

Finlay’s (2008) model of reflective practice was originally used as the analytical framework for the study with its continuum of reflection, critical reflection and reflexivity illustrating a linear movement. The research findings, however, challenged that model in a number of ways. First, evidence suggested that reflective practice is not in fact a linear progression. In Finlay’s model the student teacher starts off engaging in reflection as illustrated in Figure 12.1. They then move on to critical reflection and finally to reflexivity. This progression was not borne out by the study’s empirical findings. The evidence demonstrates that student teachers engage in reflection throughout the training year. The form the reflection takes changes but the students carry on reflecting upon their lessons, in all five forms identified by Schon (1995) and Ghaye (2010) up to the end of their second placement.

Critical reflection and the act of reflecting on external structures happened early on in some cases. It was triggered for example when an “event” occurred that caused the student teacher to question those external forces. This could occur at any stage in the training programme. Such “events” took the form of a disagreement with the subject mentor’s preferred pedagogy and with the school’s management policy on dress codes. All students began to question the requirements set down by OFSTED during their first placement. It was clear that the student teachers questioned these external forces when they conflicted with their own values or perceptions of education and the role of the teacher. Critical reflection also occurred when the student teachers came up against agents, such as subject mentors, that were trying to determine their practice which they themselves disagreed with. In some instances this occurred early on in the programme, sometimes in the second placement but in one case not at all.

Figure 12.4: The reflective cycle
does not want to shout and raise her voice, but this is in conflict with the institutional identity of school first placement). This clash of identity continued throughout the student’s time in her school placement. She never accepted this institutional identity and, although she tried hard to please her mentor, this expectant role clashed with her own strong beliefs. However in her second placement the institutional identity was closer to her own teacher identity.

Figure: 12.5 Student’s clash of identity

1 I: Do you think anything has stopped you throughout the year
2 teaching the way you wanted to teach? Being the teacher you want to be?
3 P I think I feel more like the teacher I want to be now than I did say four months ago. I
4 think that I realised that the kind of teacher I am is more suited to a college. And I think
5 when I was at school I knew that, that I felt very
6 constrained, almost strangled by the teaching there and how I had to be because I’m not, I
7 just don’t care about lots of stuff. That sounds really awful but I’m not a disciplinarian, I
8 care about the important things, as I see them, and I don’t feel I could be bothered with
9 uniforms and with, you know, telling people not to have an earring, or you’ve got nail
10 varnish on, you know these things to me are miniscule and unimportant and it’s the main
11 Boundary rules that you know I use. And so I think those things when I was at School
12 stopped me being what I wanted to be, I felt very constrained about how everything
13 Had to be. I also prefer the longer lessons because I feel you can really go into depth. I
14 found when you only have an hour lesson or a 55 minute lesson you can’t go into the
15 depth you can, even just an hour-and-a-half you can do so much more and you can allow
16 the students to really start working and getting onto tasks and actually do a proper
17 Activity and I like that.

Reflexivity then occurs in a social field which may itself have a desired teaching identity. This “institutional identity”, for example how a school believes a teacher should behave and act, will be projected onto the student teacher and become part of a reflexive process as they decide how much of the institutional identity they subsume (Gee, 2000). This process is not just reflexive but also critically reflective. Both of these reflective practices can happen simultaneously, as opposed to Finlay’s (2008) sequential continuum. Finlay’s model also fails to give a reason for their occurrence, when in fact critical reflection and reflexivity both appear to occur after a conflict of ideologies with another agent. The findings in this research pointed to reflection, critical reflection and reflexivity sometimes occurring simultaneously and often being rather more of a fused process than linear and sequential.

The interview analysis found there were a number of key factors that impacted on the student teacher. One was power relationships. Power is not interpreted here just as ‘top down’ and hierarchical, although this type of power was present, but as strategic power that exists in day to day interactions (Foucault, 1980). These day to day interactions with other teachers and mentors sometimes presented moments of conflict when ideologies clashed. Due to the greater experience of some teachers in the placement schools and therefore more social capital, students tended to surrender to their (other teachers) dominant beliefs. In this study social capital was interpreted as “resources based on connections and group membership” (Bourdieu, 1990, pp. 3–4). Reflexivity is an important part of ITE, because of the need to reflect on these complex social pressures.

When the student teachers were placed in an educational establishment they became agents of numerous ‘fields of play’ (Bourdieu, 1977). Bourdieu interprets the ‘field’ as a “space of conflict or competition” (cited in Winkle-Wagner, 2010, p.8). The ‘fields’ are the various social and institutional arenas in which people express and reproduce their cultural competence and knowledge. There are no general rules within a field; each field has its own rules that determine the conditions of entry or exclusion. Hence, one’s own social capital may be very useful in one field but meaningless in another. In the extract below of a Phase 3 interview the student reflects on the teaching environment. Her initial belief about the role of the teacher changed over the PGCE year. She was surprised by the ‘target driven culture that existed in schools. In the interview (Figure 12.6 lines 2 to 8) she speaks about how she found teachers more egotistical than she initially thought, she also found a performance culture that she believed only existed in the business environment and thirdly she was surprised that the teaching profession was not as supportive as she envisaged it to be.

Figure 12.6: Student interview 3

1 I: Is there anything else surprising you about school life, about being a teacher in
I think at the beginning I thought that teachers, I thought the whole environment would be much more... it wouldn’t be as target driven and so egotistical as I thought the Business environment was, and I’m starting to realise that may not be the case.

In what way?

Teachers have very dominant points of view and dominant characters and they’re very quick to make assessments of other people, which I didn’t necessarily think would happen in a school environment where you’re all in the same situation. You teach the same pupils and there’s so many similarities compared to if you’re in a business environment, I thought it would be completely different, but no, I think I’m starting to learn now...

Within a school student teachers enter the departmental “field”, whole school “field”, the staffroom “field” and even the classroom has a “field” that the student belongs to. Externally there are much larger “fields” that are controlled by external bodies, such as Ofsted and the Department for Education (DfE). All these “fields” have agents who dominate and control the field’s power because they have the cultural and social capital needed to make decisions and rules. The student teacher has limited social and cultural capital and therefore less power or influence. Not having full ownership of a class impacted on all the student teachers in the case study. One student reflected on the class not being hers:

“At the moment, probably the fact that I’m taking on somebody else’s class as a trainee and [not]... in the ways of their previous teacher. I am still a trainee so I don’t know what works, what doesn’t work and I suppose my own confidence in putting that into practice and not worrying about treading on anyone’s toes or offending anyone.”

As the student above articulated it is a difficult balance when teaching someone else’s class. The student is constantly worrying about what the regular teacher is thinking. In addition the pupils have to become accustomed to someone else’s style of teaching.

The subject mentor has a big role in the student teacher’s development. When the participants were asked if there were any constraints on their teaching, a number were quite adamant that there were and the most frequent constraint was the mentor. The school’s subject mentor had weekly meetings with the student teacher, observed them and graded them. This impacted on the students in a number of ways. Some students found their mentors had a certain way of teaching and wanted them to replicate it:

“I think within School A and within the business department there is only one way of doing things and <laughs> that’s the head’s way, the Head of Department’s way.”

Others referred to mentors imposing structures of lectures:

“I can’t fault their idea of best practice and their grades prove that it works and you see the kids’ books and you see... and it works, it’s just... what I, I’m struggling to kind of... I’m not going against it but struggling to fully embrace it because I can see that it works, but it’s just not my, my way... my idea, my ethos of teaching.”

As the student above reflected, he could see why the school had prescribed a certain way of structuring the lessons, as it worked and the pupils did obtain the expected grades. The mentors themselves have accountability and some of the rules they enforce are because of the stakeholders they must answer to. The mentor is ultimately accountable for the student teacher and this is a major responsibility. The mentor is also responsible to the head teacher, governing body and the parents for the pupils’ grades. If a prescribed style of lesson achieves the desired grades then, due to the accountability of the senior management in the school, it is likely that style of lesson will be insisted on.

However the student felt himself constrained because the mentor was inhibiting him from trying new ideas “I couldn’t essentially be the teacher I wanted to be, I was just being on paper what you should be as a teacher”. Here the student was referring to the teaching standards set by the National College of Teaching and Learning (NCTL) and the criteria set by Ofsted (TDA, 2010, Ofsted, 2008). These criteria and targets, such as exam results, league tables and Ofsted criteria, must be met in order to be a “good” teacher (Mansell, 2007). The student teacher must also meet the criteria set by the university PGCE course thus they have two different accountability hierarchies to work within.

As argued earlier, reflexivity and critical reflection can occur simultaneously as the student teachers
never seemed to question their own identity without also questioning either a dominant agent’s actions or a social structure’s power. This is illustrated in the extract below when there was a “clash” between the student’s own beliefs and those of the school, but as he argues in lines 2-5 (Figure 12.7) “there’s no point swimming against the tide or swimming against the current in a river, you’ve got to swim with the current…”

Table 12.7: Student agency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I:</th>
<th>Have you had to question your own identity as a teacher?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P: “Absolutely, and that’s been quite difficult for me, and I think as well it’s quite difficult for the permanent teachers who are there and … but it’s like with all of these things you have to, there’s no point swimming against the tide or swimming against the current in a river, you’ve got to swim with the current and then work out ways of how you can have your own, you can put your own flavour to your teaching. But there’s no way that you’ll ever be able to have as much room to manoeuvre within a secondary school, with a tight management style within the department you’re in, than you would do at sixth form college where…”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The student wanted to comply and keep the mentor happy, even though he disagreed with the teaching style the management recommended. In the interview he commented on "being forced into a hole" and into a teaching style he was not comfortable with. He is convincing himself, with his narrative, that it is an expectation that he has to just ‘run with it’ and is ‘giving in’ to this expectation, even though it is not his belief as to what a teacher is.

Discourse identity (D-identity) is the identity presented by the student teacher when discussing their role (Gee, 2000). D-identity suggests that the identity of the student teacher is created through their discourse. It is the student’s discourse that creates the teacher, rather than the teacher that creates the discourse. The discourse of the student teacher is also influenced by the social fields they belong to and the dominant agents within those fields. The discursive influences derive from the subject mentor (the dominant agent in the teacher’s education field (within the school); the university tutor (in the school and university), the head of subject department (in the school), head of teacher education (in the school) and the senior management (in the school). There are also the external “fields of play” the student teacher belongs to ranging from Ofsted to the NCTL. This study showed how the student teacher becomes a product of these agents.

The accountability hierarchy represents the dominant agents in the student teacher’s “field of play” (Fig 12.8). In the immediate field the student teacher’s mentor is dominant, in the department the dominant agent is either the mentor or head of department, and within the school senior management are dominant agents. In the outer “field” of education’ there is Ofsted and the DfE which dominate policy. The latter’s’ powers are more distant but permeate the closer immediate domains which are the governing body, the head teacher, the departmental head, the mentor and the student teacher.

Figure 12.8. Accountability hierarchy
Although this study confirms that student teachers do engage in critical reflection and reflexivity it is not currently part of the teaching standards or the Ofsted criteria for assessing teacher education (Meierdirk, 2016). It was however part of the PGCE curriculum and encouraged by the university. The student teachers did reflect on their environment and the way the social environment impacts on them. They also became aware of new environments and fields of play and by the end of the PGCE year it had become part of their discourse and professional identity i.e. what it means to be a teacher. There was clear evidenced of this in the student teacher's reflective practice sheets with the growing use of performance language over the three phases. There was also evidence from the interviews what the students thought about the impact of their mentors and the requirements of the ITE programme, Ofsted and individual school requirements.

The research findings confirmed reflective practice was a key part of teacher education and training in all its forms. It is not, however, a simple linear process but is best presented as a spiral. It not only contains the practice of reflection as a means to develop skills and competencies in the technical aspects of teaching – lesson planning, pedagogy, behaviour management and performance, but also critical reflection and reflexivity which assist in the understanding of the power relationships within educational organisations and a consciousness of one’s own identity both as a person, a teacher and a professional. All three forms of reflection move in and out of the students lived experience and occur continuously and sometimes simultaneously as student teachers constantly examine their performances; work through the challenges from the power structures and seek identity equilibrium.

Conclusion

There is still controversy and different interpretations of what reflective practice includes here; reflection is not the same as critical reflection or reflexivity as discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Schon’s (1987) “knowing in action”, “reflection on action”, “reflection on action” and Ghaye’s (2010) “reflection for action” and “reflection with action” are all important for the development of the student teacher, but they involve a technical approach which is all about what and how rather than why and what for. They do not allow the student teacher to reflect on the broader workings of the school and the education system but focus on the task of teaching. Bourdieu (1989, p.4) believed that, unless individuals question the structures that limit and constrain them, they are more likely to be “the apparent subjects of actions”. Reflexivity enables the individual to become aware of these structures that inhibit them. As Beck and Giddens (1994) state: “individualism is not based on the free decisions of individuals. It may be an illusion that people are free to pursue the life and goals they want but in reality, student teachers are subject to rules and regulations, some written, some unwritten, that influence what they do. Critical reflection makes the student teacher aware of these structures and their impact.

Dang (2013) wrote about the importance of student teachers reflecting on their preconceptions and what it means to be a teacher. The evidence from the case study is that students do reflect on these preconceptions when engaging in reflexivity and critical reflection as they question their own teaching identity, but in the light of events
caused by agents in their social fields. They also question the structures they find themselves part of, from the school’s management to the NCTL’s teaching standards. The reflective practice of the student also included their reflections on their lessons; the very reflective practice that Schon (1983) was first accredited with. Reflection has a very important role in the professionalization of the student teacher as they question their own teaching styles and try new ideas.

Recent changes in education policy and ITE has possible implications for the teaching profession and the role of reflective practice within it. Most teachers in recent decades have been graduates trained and educated in university Education Departments. Although that is still a route, the Government has introduced a new route - School Direct- where student teachers are recruited to one school, with perhaps a few weeks in a partner institution, instead of being based in a university department with practical training in two schools or colleges (DfE, 2013a). The research conducted here suggests that having one mentor and being subject to one institutional identity could have a limiting effect on the development of the student teacher, resulting in less freedom to develop their own teaching style or become aware of different approaches and ethos.

Critical reflectivity may be inhibited. It is not just thinking critically about education and education policies, critical thinking is an emancipator. It frees the mind from what one sees as the norm and allows one to question those social structures taken for granted. In the last few years there has been a shift in the ideology of teacher education, with a movement away from teacher education, run by universities, in favour of school-based training which looks likely to increase along with academisation.

All three types of reflective practice: reflection, critical reflection and reflexivity are important and almost equally so for the progression of the student teacher. The definition of reflective practice as the “process of learning through and from experience towards greater insights of self or practice” (Finlay, 2008, p.1) remains valid but there is so much more happening to the student teacher’s reflective practice during their PGCE year. They are not just gaining “greater insights of self” they are redeveloping and questioning their identity and their social environment. They are recreating their own practice almost daily by changing and improving that practice. Finlay’s definition of reflective practice is a belief that there is a greater insight into the ‘self’ but does not recognise that the student’s teaching identity is constantly changing and has not fully developed yet. From this study a more accurate definition of reflective practice in ITE, can be posited, as “the questioning of practice, purpose, identity and the social context due to an increase in knowledge and experience”.

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Paper 5

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The Changing Identity of the Student Teacher

Charlotte Meierdirk

*Corresponding Author: Charlotte Meierdirk, charlotte.meierdirk@port.ac.uk

This article explores the concept of the student teacher’s identity and the form it takes during Initial Teacher Education (ITE). There is an examination of the recent changes in England’s government policy towards ITE and how these impact the teaching identity. It is argued that the student identity does not exist in isolation and therefore there is a need to look at the impact of the social environment on the agency of the student teacher during their training year.

Keywords: Student teacher, Identity, Initial teacher education, Teacher training, Novice teacher

Introduction

Chambers Dictionary’s (2015, no page number) interpretation of identity is ‘the state or quality of being a specified person or thing; who or what a person or thing is’. With this interpretation the word is a noun and refers to identity as an object. In this case identity does not change or recreate itself, and is what Wetherell (2010, p. 5) describes as the ‘fixed essence that a person possesses’. The humanistic movement of the 1950s questioned the notion of a fixed identity. Erikson (1950 and 1968) developed the belief that identity was more fluid than was previously thought. He argued a person could adopt an identity that subsumed the personal with other peoples’ views and beliefs. Erikson referred to this ‘social identity’ as a person’s ‘ego identity’, as it was constructed from the interaction with the social. The ego identity is not fixed over a lifetime as people adapt and change as they go through different stages of life. Erikson constructed a psycho social model with eight stages a person’s identity goes through during their lifetime. He also highlighted the importance of conflict in these transitions as a person develops a new identity which he called the ‘identity crisis’. A conflict of identity can be seen during the education of new teachers as they contend with the prescribed teacher identity and their own preconceptions of the professional role (Britzman, 1994).

The post-modernist movement of the 1980s saw yet another approach to the construction of identity. Tajfel’s (1981, p. 255) work on the social identity was at the forefront of this. He defined social identity as:

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1 University of Portsmouth, United Kingdom.
That part of the individual’s self-concept which derives from their knowledge of their membership of a social group (groups) together with the value and emotional significance of that membership.

This quotation highlights the importance of two influences on identity, the first being the notion of self-concept and personal identity, i.e., ‘who we are’ combined with the second influence of the social context in which the self-concept is formed. Identity is perceived here as fluid and dependent on the membership of a social group or groups. The notion of a social identity becomes a new source of conflict. Erikson (1968) saw the conflict of identity occurring over time, and at different stages of life, but the post-modernist interpretation of identity sees the conflict occurring between the social and the self. There is the identity that the individual possesses and the one that society imposes on the individual through the workings of the state.

Wrenn (2012, p. 404) describes social identity as a product of the interaction of the personal identity with its surroundings, a coming together of the social and the personal, rather than two distinct identities. Agency has an important role in the reflection of the conflict of identities. This conscious reflection of struggling identities gives the agent the agency or the power to recognise the influences of the social. For Wrenn, however, this conscious reflection is superficial and an illusion of empowerment. The neo-liberal approach sees empowerment as a ‘grand illusion’ because individuals believe themselves to have agency, but this is at a superficial level as the ‘market mystifies human relations’ and individuals have a distorted view of reality (Heron, 2008, no page number). Reality is distorted by the demands of capitalism which inhibits the capacity of an individual’s agency. Agency is interpreted here in its broader form rather than the masculine definition that limits it to the achievement of an individual’s own capitalist ends. Heron defines agency as the capacity to be able to think, act and make decisions independent of the political and cultural forces around them. Within teacher education the student teacher’s agency is directly impacted on by the political and cultural forces they encounter.

The post-modernist approach to identity construction has been furthered influenced by performativity. No longer is the question just about ‘what is identity?’; there is also the question of ‘how it is discursively constructed?’ (Wetherell, 2010, p. 6). Butler (2006) introduced the notion of performativity and identity formation. She built upon the notion of a socially constructed identity by introducing performativity and the extent to which an individual’s identity is discursively constructed. Butler theorised that gender was not a biological state, but a product of discourse and that discourse was a product of the constant and persistent regulation and governmentality. Rose (1998) describes governmentality as the institutional apparatus which regulates human conduct and identity. However the term was first coined by Foucault (1980).
and played an important role in his analytical constructs. As Lemke (2002, p. 3) points out:

... a decisive role in his [Foucault] analytics of power in several regards; it offers a view on power beyond a perspective that centers either on consensus or on violence; it links technologies of the self with technologies of domination, the constitution of the subject to the formation of the state; finally, it helps to differentiate between power and domination.

Foucault (1980) interpreted governmentality as the way the state uses its practices to govern and dominate its subjects. He wrote extensively about the domination of the state over its subjects and refers to the relationship as the ‘missing link’. For Foucault government is not limited to the modern meaning of government but is interpreted more generally as: ‘government as conduct, or, more precisely, as ‘the conduct of conduct’ and thus as a term which ranges from ‘governing the self’ to ‘governing others’. (Lemke, 2002, p. 2). This governmentality can be found by analysing the discourse of the individual. Fairclough (2003) uses critical discourse analysis to analyse discourse and the influence of the social by detecting the influence of practices and structures.

Defining Teacher Identity
The meaning of teacher identity has been difficult to conceptualise because there are many different perspectives (Wenger, 1998; Gee, 2000; Sachs, 2005; and Lizarraga, 2010b). Teacher identity involves the role of the teacher and the individual’s adoption of the professional teacher identity. Beijaard (1995) believes the professional teacher identity is derived from their expertise in their subject matter, combined with their skills, knowledge and support for their pupils. This is balanced against the demands of the institutional setting, both at a macro and micro level. It is the reconciliation between the personal and professional side of teaching that produces the teaching identity (Pillen et al., 2013).

The reconciliation between the personal and professional identity is not without difficulties. The student teacher experiences tension between the different demands on themselves. The student has to decide which parts of their personal identity they are willing to set aside in favour of the professional demands. The construction of the student teacher’s professional identity is developed during the Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) year, but this journey is full of complexities. The student teacher arrives with their values, beliefs and experiences, which may cause serious tension if or as these collide with the professional expectations. Pillen, Beijaard and Den Brok (2013, p. 674) classified these tensions into three categories. The first tension is the change in role the student experiences from novice to expert; the second is the conflict between the desired and actual support given to the student; and the third is the conflict over the conceptions of how the student teaches and the pupils’ learn.
The tension between the student’s own personal beliefs and knowledge, and the professional identity, is not always a disadvantage. The tension experienced during the student teacher’s journey may make them stronger and more reflexive. The reflexivity is needed to enable the student teacher to decide which of their own values and beliefs they can hold onto and which ones do not fit with the prescribed professional identity of the teacher. This journey is needed to establish the student’s teaching identity (Coldron and Smith, 1999). The student does not start the course with their teaching identity; it is developed during the PGCE year and beyond.

Fuller (1970) wrote about the three stages of a teacher’s development. His research led him to believe the first two stages, his early and middle stages, as occurring during the novice stage of teaching as student teachers concentrate on themselves, controlling the classroom, professional expectations and their relationship with the pupils (Table 1). Fuller’s last phase, which involves serious concerns related to teaching and learning, can only be reached by the experienced teacher. Kagen (1992) appears to support the view that the student teacher is concerned about surviving the PGCE year and classroom control and subject knowledge are some their main concerns.

However, on many PGCE courses reflection on teaching and learning is taught as part of the syllabus and student teachers begin their teaching by following rules and applying theory they have been taught which is their first step of acquiring professional skills. The experience the student accumulates whilst on their teaching practice adds to their expertise and allows them to reflect and solve issues they experience. The teacher’s professionalism

<table>
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<th>Table 1: Fuller’s Model of Teacher Development</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>I</strong> Early phase</td>
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<td><strong>II</strong> Middle phase (competence)</td>
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<td><strong>III</strong> Late phase (professionalism)</td>
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Note: Adapted from Fuller, 1970, p. 17.
is a combination of their knowledge, educational studies, practice in the classroom and reflective practice (Okas et al., 2013).

The teaching identity is, as suggested above, fluid as it not only reflects the teacher’s own beliefs and values but their own professional identity and these can develop and change. It can be argued as the demands on the teaching profession changes there will be an impact on the professional’s identity therefore leading to a constantly changing teacher identity. The continuous changes in education in the last 40 years have given rise to the question as to whether teaching is has been de-professionalised. Interpretations of what it means to be a professional is not without controversy. Professions are often defined as ‘occupations with a special status as experts and/or moral authorities, often as a result of extensive education, training and licensing’ (Adams, 2012, p. 329). To become a member of the profession there is a body of knowledge and training that needs to be learnt and understood. The profession will also have a licensing procedure that restricts entry into the profession which leads to ‘social closure’.

Teacher education through a university programme, such as the PGCE, does display the characteristics of a profession. To be able to apply for a PGCE the student must have a degree in a closely related subject, there is a body of knowledge that is taught during the PGCE year to assist with professional development which is applied in the classroom. The university tutor recommends, at the end of the year, teacher qualified status, therefore agreeing the student teacher is of a certain standard. By applying Adams’ (2012) definition of a profession to the PGCE course there is a strong argument that teaching is a profession, however this is not true of all routes into teaching. The recent government decision to allow non-qualified teachers to become teachers does de-professionalise teaching. In Academies and Free Schools Qualified Teaching Status (QTS) is no longer required therefore eroding ‘social closure’ of the profession (DfE, 2012b). Also by allowing the ‘training’ of teachers through the school route of Schools Direct, the government is indicating that there is ‘no body of knowledge’ required to become a teacher another requirement for a profession.

There is much evidence to suggest the training of teachers solely in schools misses out on the pedagogical knowledge needed to assist with reflective practice. Not only are we seeing some of the routes into teaching becoming de-professionalised but there is also an erosion of the teacher’s autonomy, one of the prominent characteristics of ‘being a professional’. It is important teachers make decisions based on their own practical knowledge and beliefs. A teacher’s reflective practice gives them the knowledge to decide on the best teaching and learning approach for their pupils. As Hoyle and John (1995, p. 92) state:

A positive form of autonomy represents a teacher’s freedom to construct a personal pedagogy which entails a balance between personality,
training, experience and the requirements of the specific educational context.

There is a question as to what extent teachers do have autonomy and to what extent decisions are made for them. More and more in teaching there has been increasing control leading to 'regulated autonomy' (Dale, 1982). Regulated autonomy is autonomy but within limited boundaries. In the last 30 years there has been greater central government control over schools and teacher education. The Department of Education (DfE) and the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) have a myriad of requirements ranging from what to teach to how to teach it. These requirements limit the teacher's autonomy and thus their professional practice. The de-professionalisation of teaching may lead to a less reflective teacher as there are fewer requirements to critically reflect using a body of knowledge. The decrease in autonomy of the student teacher may also impact on their teaching identity.

The Struggles of Identity

'Teacher' is more than just a word; it is a role that is socially constructed and contextualised to have meaning. According to Bondi (2009), to create harmony in that role the student teacher is expected to balance the relationship between the 'nature identity' and the 'teacher identity'. As stated above there are many definitions of identity, but it is generally agreed that identity is not fixed but a fluid phenomenon and that it is socially constructed. Gee (2000) identified four perceptions of the student teacher's identity: 'nature/native identity' (N-identity) which is the product of the student's natural state, such as race or gender; 'institutional identity' (I-identity) which is the institutional recognised identity, for example how a school believes a teacher should behave and act; 'discourse identity' (D-identity) results from discourse about oneself to other people; and 'affinity identity' (A-identity) which is determined by one's practices and the student teacher's behaviour. The student teacher's identity changes depending on the social context and, therefore, needs to be understood within that context. Identity is interpreted as both the product and process of the social world; it is fluid and is socially constructed.

Student teachers come to Initial Teacher Education (ITE) with a pre-conceived idea of teaching. The student has an understanding of the school system through their own schooling. Some will know teachers and may already been employed in schools. Even when starting the course the student teacher will have a teacher identity but it will change and develop during their teaching career (Sachs, 2005). This identity will not stop changing once they are qualified; their identity will continue to develop as they interact with their social environments. Sexton (2008, p. 75) suggests: 'teacher identity is treated as the relationship between one's inherent traits and those that emerge through micro and macro situations.' There is an array of
factors that are drawn upon that re-form the student teacher's identity, and these factors often lead to a conflict of identity. Student teachers can experience a conflict and struggle of identity, but may not realise what it is. If student teachers are led to believe there is only one role of a teacher, this may cause conflict with their own preconceptions and beliefs.

Britzman’s (1994) provides a case study of Jamie, a struggling PGCE student, to illustrate and examine the dualism of identity. Jamie dropped out of school twice but, after her degree, decided to go into teaching and have an impact on pupils who were disengaged in the classroom like she had been. After a month on the PGCE course she wanted to leave. Jamie was concerned about the regulations and demands of the curriculum and ‘alarmed’ by how the pupils demanded such ‘traditional activity’. Britzman argued that Jamie survived the course by splitting her personality into two. She had personal beliefs of what a teacher should be but conformed to what society believed being a teacher meant.

I have finally decided when I enter the school building in the morning I am not a teacher. I am a human being who’s assuming a role that has been designated ‘teacher’. And I carry out some of the functions of that teacher. But when things go against my grain, (and) I don’t want to do it, I don’t believe in it, or I just don’t know, then I can admit that. And that way I can save my own peace of mind and I can deal with the situations that arise (Britzman, 1994, p. 6).

Lauriala (2005) theorised that students: teachers have one conception of self, but with different dimensions, which are: ‘the actual self’, ‘the ought self’ and the ‘ideal self’. The ‘actual self’ is the one that prevails, ‘the ought self’ is the one recognized externally, and the ideal self is the self that is achievable with targets. In the case of Jamie, there is a conflict between the ‘actual self’ and the ‘ought self’ (Britzman, 1994).

The concept of the socially constructed identity was further developed by Wenger (1998) with his notion of ‘communities of practice’. Wenger (1998 and 2010) proposed a social theory of learning that embraced not only the individual’s identity but the importance of the community in which the learning take place. Student teachers are learning in two different environments: schools and the university, and even within those environments there are different learning communities. The student teacher is learning constantly, not only in formal university sessions but also in the formal meetings at school, staffrooms and social meetings with their own peers, their classroom and even in the pub. In all of these communities the student will try and ‘fit in’. There is a powerful process of professional socialisation at work shaping, constructing and re-constructing identity as a negotiated experience. Wenger (1998, p. 149), explores these different identities further and believes there to be five:
1. Identity as a negotiated experience – identity is defined by who we are, by the way we participate and by the way others reify ourselves. It is how a person behaves when working with others and alone.

2. Identity as community membership – identity is how we define ourselves by what is familiar or unfamiliar.

3. Identity as a learning trajectory – identity constitutes where a person has been and where they are going. Identity is a trajectory, as the experience of a person shapes who they are and how they behave.

4. Identity as nexus of multi-membership – a person is defined by how they meld the different memberships, of different communities, into one identity.

5. Identity as a relation between the local and the global – we define ourselves by negotiating local ways of belonging to something larger.

Wenger does not see identity as an object but a ‘constant becoming’:

The work of identity is always going on. Identity is not some primordial core of personality that already exists. Nor is it something we acquire at some point in the same way that, at a certain age, we grow a set of permanent teeth… our identity is something we constantly renegotiate during the course of our lives (Wenger, 1998, p. 154).

A student teacher becomes a member of many different communities of learning, including: the whole PGCE cohort, PGCE subject cohort, whole school/college, the subject mentor, departmental teachers, classroom, and the staffroom. There are many communities of learning that the student teacher must become a member of to be successful.

One of the largest studies of teacher identities was the VITAE project, a four year study of teachers sponsored by the DfES and led by Professor Christopher Day (Day et al., 2006). The study was an investigation of 300 teachers covering 100 schools, across seven LEAs. The aim of the project was to investigate the effectiveness of teachers and was seen as:

... the most comprehensive and extensive study of teachers' work and lives, and is the first to explore associations between these factors and teacher effectiveness (Day et al., 2006, p. 2).

The breakdown of the school sample in the VITAE project was 50% primary and 50% secondary school teachers. The sample consisted of teachers who taught years 2, 6 and Maths and English. Semi-structured interviews were the main research method used. The interviews were focussed on the effectiveness of teachers, but identity was one of the variables (Day et al., 2006).

The VITAE project found that teachers' 'effectiveness' and 'outcomes' were based on two main factors, referred to as the 'moderating' and 'mediating' factors. Moderating factors are factors from the wider context that affect teachers' professional and private identities. The mediating factors are the pupils, school policies, school
management, colleagues, the socio-economic context and continuing professional development (Day et al., 2006, p. 1).

The VITAE data found that it was not until a teacher had been teaching from four to seven years, that they had formed strong identities:

Seventy-eight per cent of teachers in this phase had taken on additional responsibilities, which further strengthened their emerging identities (Day et al., 2006, p. 3).

The study suggested that the teaching identity was the professional identity. The findings from the study concluded that there were three parts to a teacher’s identity: ‘professional’, ‘personal’ and ‘situational’. The teacher had a personal identity outside the classroom, an identity whilst teaching and an identity that is dependent on the situation. According to the study’s results, only 67% of the teachers had a positive identity and felt they could make a difference, whilst 33% had a negative identity and believed they did not make a difference to their pupils’ learning. Although the report acknowledges there is more than one identity, in the findings only single identity is referred to (Day et al., 2006, p. 271). Unfortunately, it is not known how the semi-structured interviews led to these results, but it seems that the authors are making a direct link between positive identities and teachers’ efficacy.

Day (2006) has written extensively on teacher identities by utilising the VITAE project findings. He commented that studies into teacher identities were limited by their lack of longitudinal data and that ‘none seek to address possible relationships between identities and teacher effectiveness’ (Day et al., 2006, p. 611). He then goes on to argue that the lack of longitudinal research is addressed in the VITAE project; however, due to the large size of the sample, the interviews were short and provided limited narrative. The results were reduced to statistics rather than narrative extracts, which does not illuminate the reader about the teacher’s different identities and how they transform.

The VITAE study concluded that a better understanding of the mediating and moderating factors would increase teacher effectiveness in schools (Day, 2006). There should be an encouragement to manage these factors, as this leads to a more effective teacher. From the findings it can be deduced that if teachers can manage their identities they will be more effective. The recognition by teachers of their different identities is important to a teacher’s self-esteem, but there is no suggestion as to how these identities should be managed - only just that it should happen.

Research also demonstrates there may not only be tension between the different components of the student teacher’s identity but also between the student teacher’s perceived teaching identity and the teaching identity that develops during the PGCE year (Korthagen, 2005; Flores, 2006; and Stingu, 2012). Stingu advocates that teacher
education programmes should help students reflect on these tensions and believes it is important for initial teacher programme leaders to analyse the social context of the placement school. This would enable the provision of as broad a range of experience as possible for the student teacher.

The student teacher’s identity is dynamic and fluid. Both Wenger (2010) and Bourdieu (1977) suggest identity alters depending on the environment the individual finds themself in. The student teacher enters a placement school with preconceptions of teaching and learning, and these beliefs change as they interact with the social context. Akkerman and Meijer (2011, p. 315) maintain, the student teacher’s identity changes but it is unknown as to ‘what is shifting and what determines the direction of the shift.’ According to Dang (2013), this is an area that is under-researched, but opines that it is the teaching environment that causes the change in identity, as the identity is constructed and reconstructed through interpretations and re-interpretations of the student teacher’s beliefs.

Within teacher education identity conflict is under-researched, but it has been researched widely in business and psychology (Dang, 2013). Conroy (2013) presents a model of ‘work-related identity loss and recovery’ that conceptualises identity transitions in the workplace (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: A Model of WRI Loss and Recovery**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liminal Interval</th>
<th>Entity Equilibrium</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identity Equilibrium</td>
<td>Restoration Orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td>WRI Loss Event</td>
<td>Post-Loss Identity</td>
</tr>
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<td>Loss Orientation</td>
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Note: Adapted from: Conroy, 2013, p. 70.

This article can be downloaded from [http://www.trpubonline.com/journals.php](http://www.trpubonline.com/journals.php)
Conroy asserts that when an individual joins an organisation there will be disruption to their Work-Related Identity (WRI), which has been defined as: ‘...aspects of identity and self-definition that are tied to participation in the activities of work... or membership in work-related groups, organisations, occupations or professions’ (Dutton et al., 2010, p. 266). WRI is the sense of self that is related to the person’s work or organisational membership. Conroy (2013) states that a person’s work life involves identity loss. As an individual negotiates their self through the workplace they experience disruptions to their WRI as they surrender their current self and enter the liminal period.

This loss is represented by the loss of a value or an aspect of a professional identity. An extreme example would be an individual who experiences a workplace injury and has to rethink their work identity. It may be they no longer can do the specific job they did before or they have to find a different vocation. A less extreme example might be you change teams or you have a disagreement over strategies within the organisation. The WRI loss interrupts the existing identity and the individual enters the ‘liminal interval’. The liminal period is a transition between the old and new self. During the liminal period the identity lacks a connection with the social domain and features aspects of instability (Conroy, 2013, p. 57).

Conroy (2013) identifies two conflicts that occur during the liminal interval; the first is ‘loss orientation’, which is the process of establishing ‘who I was’, and the second is ‘restoration orientation’, which is establishing ‘who I am now’. During this time emotions play a large role in how quickly a person moves on to their ‘post-loss identity’. The more agitated the individual’s emotions are to the WRI loss, the longer the liminal period will be. Agitated emotions can manifest themselves in the form of anger or guilt and, as Brockner and Higgins (2001) argue, anger will lead the individual to avoid the situation that caused the disequilibrium of the WRI in the first place. The length of time an individual spends in the liminal period will have an effect on the individual as they wrestle with their new identity.

Before the individual moves into the ‘post-loss identity’ period they will look for affirmation of their narrative on the WRI loss event. According to Swann (2009), an individual whose WRI is going through transition will look for an external validation of their narrative. If no validation occurs, the narrative will be revised until it is. The narrative is the story the individual presents about the self that he/she has constructed on the WRI loss event. Eventually the narrative will be accepted by the social group and the individual will move on. This will be a recurring process throughout an individual’s work experience (Conroy, 2013).

Applied to this research WRI loss can be seen as the student teacher revises their preconceptions of teaching and reconstructs their teacher identity. The student teacher will encounter various events that may destabilise their teaching identity. There will be tensions between their personal teaching identity and the professional identity that are
'played out' during the liminal period. During this time the student tries to reconcile what is expected of them by different educational establishments with their own values and beliefs. These tensions will occur throughout the PGCE year and even after the student teacher is qualified, as the professional demands from educational establishments change with government policy.

The Contextual Factors Influencing the Teacher’s Identity

Student teachers enter many social fields when they start their teaching practice, from their own PGCE course cohort to the placement school’s staff room. The amount of influence an agent has within a social field is influenced by the amount of capital they possess. She/he will maintain the rules of the field that benefit their own position and power. Bourdieu interprets the ‘field’ as a ‘space of conflict or competition’ (cited in Winkle-Wagner, 2010, p. 8). According to Flemmen (2013), the ‘fields’ are the various social and institutional arenas in which people express and reproduce their cultural competence and knowledge. There are no general rules within a field. Each field has its own rules that determine the conditions of entry and exclusion. Hence, one’s social capital may be very useful in one field but meaningless in another. The agents who belong to the field decide on the ‘membership’ requirements to join the field. The strategies used by the dominant group/person to maintain power are known as ‘symbolic strategies’. This reproduction of the dominant agent is what Bourdieu (1984) refers to as symbolic capital. For example on a macro scale the National College of Teaching and Learning (NCTL) decides on the standards needed to qualify for Qualified Teaching Status (QTS). They also make decisions on teacher education funding. At a micro level there may be many written and unwritten rules within a school environment. An individual may need to be a qualified teacher to belong to the school’s staffroom. The rules of all different social fields within a school will shape the ethos of the school (Wood, 2013).

The importance of these social fields on identity was developed by Wenger’s (1998 and 2010) studies of ‘communities of practice’. He perceives identity as ‘ongoing’ because of the membership of and participation in different communities. He refers to identity as a trajectory, rather than being static. A person’s trajectory carves a landscape through different social groups or communities of practice:

In using the term trajectory I do not want to imply a fixed course or a fixed destination. To me, the term trajectory suggests not a path that can be foreseen or charted but a continuous motion – one that has a momentum of its own in addition to a field of influences. It has a coherence through time that connects the past, the present, and the future (Wenger, 1998, p. 154).

According to Wenger (1998 and 2010), the temporary nature of our identities is dependent on the social contexts that shape our trajectories. Our identities are defined by the interaction of these trajectories and
the way they merge. This theory can be applied to the student teacher whose identities are constantly being moulded and remoulded, depending on the social communities they belong to.

Teachers are the ‘products and producers of their own environments and of their own social systems’ (Lizarraga, 2010, p. 294). It is important the student teacher has access to the different communities, as this is where learning occurs. Education is about ‘opening up’ an identity and spreading the trajectories wide. This ‘opening up’ of an identity will occur by belonging to many communities of practice. The more communities the student teacher belongs to, the more ideas that are reflected on.

When the student teacher starts at their placement school they join a very complex environment. The realm of education has changed rapidly in the last thirty years and schools have become more accountable at every level of management (Mansell, 2007). ITE has become one of the political battlegrounds in education. Until the 1980s, teacher education remained relatively unregulated by the government. Universities and colleges decided on how to train teachers and what constituted the content of the ITE courses. During the 1980s, teacher education started to change dramatically when the Conservative Government established closer central control. Since the foundation of the Council of Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE) in 1984, the content of teacher education has been specified.

In 2000, the Labour government established the General Teaching Council of England (GTcE). The GTcE oversaw and regulated teachers’ professional conduct and competence, but was abolished by the Conservative/Liberal Democratic coalition and replaced by the Teaching Agency. In 2013, the Teaching Agency merged with the National College for School Leadership to form the National College of Teaching and Leadership (NCTL). The NCTL specifies the teaching standards needed to reach Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and controls the funding for student teachers. The NCTL (2014) is only one of the many external organisations that impact on the student teacher’s education.

Ofsted has ensured the increased accountability for results, and standards of teaching, at all levels. Ofsted was created in 1992; prior to this time Her Majesty’s Inspectorate (HMI) had a responsibility for school inspections, but it had a less formal role. Baxter (2013, p. 706) refers to HMI’s role as being likened to the ‘role of a critical friend’. Ofsted has a much stricter inspection regime, which has brought with it greater accountability (Thrupp, 2003; Alexander, 2004; and Hatcher, 2005).

Ofsted is an external stakeholder which presence has led to an increase in the external accountability by the headteacher and governing body. This accountability has also increased the internal accountability between the different levels of hierarchy within the school. Ofsted has the power to deem a school ‘cause for concern’ which would trigger ‘special measures’ and could ultimately lead to the replacement of the governing body and management of a school (DfE, 2006).
The myriad of stakeholders of a school influence the social fields within the school setting. A number of the stakeholders will affect student teachers indirectly, such as greater accountability to school governors, but the majority of the stakeholders will directly affect the student teacher, such as Ofsted's grading of lessons. The accountability to these different stakeholders will have an impact on the various social fields the student teacher belongs to. The rules of a social field may be controlled by these external bodies, such as Ofsted and the NCIT.

These different stakeholders may have a different view on how a teacher should behave and act. These views will impact on what Lauria (2005) refers to as 'the ought self' – the identity derived from a position recognised by an external authority or society. In the case of the teacher, there are numerous authorities that have their own views on what a teacher is.

In education teachers are continually driven to meet targets. Many new teachers are aware of this performativity and conformativity (Mansell, 2007). Teachers themselves are judged by these criteria: 'Performance management is the process for assessing the overall performance of a teacher or headteacher' (TDA, 2010a). It is the new education culture. Results and targets are driving education and this is reflected by our teachers and their training.

The focus here is primarily on performance itself as a system of measures and indicators (signs) and sets of relationships, rather than on functions for the social systems and the economy (Ball, 2004, p. 145).

The realm of teaching and education has now embraced this performance culture to such an extent it now seems like normality:

...if language in which teaching is spoken about is predominantly improvement, value added, cost effective efficiency and effectiveness, measurement of achievement, learning outcomes, flexible delivery, markets and the like, then it should not be too surprising if this lexicon gradually begins to have the appearance of being credible natural, logical and a common sense way of talking about what is important to teaching (Ball, 2004, p. 247).

Performance culture dominates education: its structure, its culture and its discourse. It is dominated to an extent that there is less room for the teacher's identity and questioning of the ideology of education (Britzman, 1994).

Conclusion

The journey to professionalism happens in a very complicated environment with interactions and numerous power struggles. Both schools and universities have a complicated accountability structure with various stakeholders. These stakeholders, whether internal, such as senior management or external, such as Ofsted have their own targets. The student teacher has two hierarchical structures to fit within making it a highly complicated cultural context.

The student teacher will have many identities. The first is their 'natural identity' which includes their gender and race. This
part of their identity does not normally change. A second identity is their teaching identity which is moulded through the year as the teacher reflects the institutions they belong to and this social environment is a complicated one. At times the student teacher’s identity will go through a period of disequilibrium. During this time the student teacher will feel a loss of the teaching identity they had, or thought they would become until there is an acceptance of the new identity and equilibrium will then resume (Conroy, 2013).

Each student teacher is set individual targets but the teacher’s identity is only considered to a limited extent. Students, at university, are reduced to categories: mature students, overseas and minority (Clegg, 2008). The identity of the teacher conjures up many statements but many of these statements of identity are based on stereotypes that are associated with the role of the teacher rather than the ‘who’ or ‘what’ the person is themselves (Britzman, 1994). Teachers are often identified by the role they play, or are perceived to play, rather than their actual identities. The:

...role speaks to public function, whereas identity voices subjective investments and commitments. Role, or what one is supposed to do, and investments, what one believes and thinks, are often at odds. The two are in dialogic relation and it is this tension that makes for the ‘lived experiences’ and the social practices of teachers (Britzman, 1994, p. 59).

‘Teacher’ is more than just a word it is an identity and for many teachers there may be a struggle between what the ‘teacher’ represents to the community and what it represents to them. This struggle will manifest itself with most teachers having more than one identity (Wenger, 1998). For student teachers and new teachers this struggle may cause a conflict of identity and there needs to be assistance in the realisation that a conflict exists. If teachers are led to believe there is only one identity of a teacher than this will start to suffocate their true identity.

Dreyfus et al. (1983) believes that every day we make choices and decisions. Teachers may find an erosion of their autonomy, but with student teachers they may be less questioning of themselves and the educational system because of the need to conform. New teachers are joining a profession that they want to fit into. Bourdieu talks about adopting a language that makes us feel that we belong to a group. The schools and cultures, the student teacher joins, have very strong practices and ideas and it may be difficult for a new teacher to maintain their sense of self in such environments.

References


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Paper 6

Relative Practice in the Business Classroom

Interpretations of reflective practice vary between different professions and even within the same professional field, such as education. There are some areas of agreement and these are that reflective practice is the 'process of learning through and from experience towards greater insights of self or practice' (Finlay, 2008, p.1). The process of learning is the basis for all interpretations of the contentious term, and whatever form reflective practice takes the reflective practitioner should learn and grow from engaging with it. Reflective practice is used within teacher education to enable the student teacher to learn. The contention occurs when discussing what it is exactly the student should be learning from when engaging in reflective practice.

Reflection-on-action occurs after the event and is a continual process of review and improvement. Schon (1987, p.40) developed a three stage model for reflection-on-action:

1. Providing students with technical training
2. Helping the students think like a professional
3. Enabling the students to develop a new form of understanding and action

The practitioner is encouraged to use 'reflection-on-action' by continuously reflecting on a problem to generate new knowledge and using the new knowledge to solve a problem or dilemma. According to Schon (1987) this cyclical process would improve the standard of the professional experts in their field. But this is critiqued by Finlay (2008), who argues that there needs to be a grounding of tacit knowledge before this cyclical process can occur. In the case of the novice professional tacit knowledge would not have been developed and accumulated to be able to successfully draw on their expertise. Schon’s technical approach to reflection has also been questioned by other authors who advocate the use of critical reflective practice. Again, this is not without debate, as interpretations range from reflecting on the social environment to a more inward looking interpretation of engaging in personal reflection.

Reflecting on lessons
When a student engages in reflection their practice changes and improves; it never goes back to the start, it morphs into a better practice so reflection and the need to constantly improve takes a spiral form (See Figure 2 on following page).

I have researched the use of reflective practice by student teachers and how its use changed through the PGCE year. The changes ranged from reflective practice becoming second nature to the student teachers becoming more critical of their own teaching. Interestingly some of the teachers used reflective practice not just to improve their own lessons but it became part of the lesson itself. The teachers decided the practice could be used by their pupils to improve their business knowledge ‘they have been helpful and I’ve started now to bring them into my classes and getting the kids to do them as well. Not to the extent that
we do, not as developed, but just the idea of them looking back at... it's well and good us telling, you know, the kids where they need improve, where they're doing well, where they're doing bad, but I think it's really important for them to sit there and be able to do it."

This practice of integrating reflective practice into lessons should be encouraged. There are numerous ways to integrate reflective practice into a business lesson; these are just a few suggestions:

- Self-assessment
- Plenaries
- Target setting

Self-assessment

Reflective practice can be used by the pupils reflecting on their own performance for a piece of assessment. The reflective exercise was used to reflect on a piece of assessment of an AS lesson (Appendix). This type of reflection can be built into both formative and summative assessment from a classroom case study to an end of unit test. If it is reflection of a piece of formative assessment the teacher may decide to allow the pupil to use the reflection for themselves and not share it with anyone. As with all summative assessments the key is to encourage the pupil and emphasise the learning that's being achieved rather than seeing it as a de-motivating activity.

Target Setting

Although the target setting culture of our education system is easy to critique it is nonetheless something we have to work within (whether we like it or not). In both A level, GCSE and BTEC lessons target setting by pupils can be an effective reflective tool. Teachers introduce a topic, at the beginning of a class, and ask pupils to set their own targets for that lesson. This often happens in BTEC or other vocational classes where there is a tendency towards more independent learning. Target setting is about positive reinforcement of achievements rather than grades. Within a BTEC lesson each individual pupil could be asked to set a series of 'achievable' targets for the lesson and the pupil reviews whether they have met their own targets at the end of class. Equally the pupil may set their targets with the teacher, and both decide on to what extent the targets have been met.

Plenaries

Plenaries are an important part of a lesson. They are used to check progression of pupils understanding. Quite often teachers leave out a "formal" plenary but knowing the pupils and their level of understanding at the end of the lesson (and even partly way through a lesson) is important for the pupil and the teacher's progress. Plenaries can be a checking process, by the teacher, through questioning to 'gauge' the understanding of the pupils. However, it is much more effective for the teacher to create reflective activities that the pupils can use to reflect upon their own knowledge and understanding.

Attached are a couple of examples used by two PGCE students (William Sparrow and Anna Barrass). The first is a short reflective activity used at the end of a GCSE class on external economic factors (Example A). This is a small activity reviewing what the pupils thought they understood and what they would like to find out more about. This activity enables the pupils to think about what they now understand and what areas of the topic stimulated greater interest.

The second reflective activity was used with an AS level business class on cash flow. In this case the pupils reflected on how the topic related to them. Example B shows one of the pupil's response and how they are already using cash flow at home with their father's business. Example C: "I think it will relate to me in the future when I get into the business world...". By reflecting on cash flow in this way the pupil is 'building a bridge' between what is learnt in lessons and the application to their lives. This reinforces learning and can also lead to a 'deep'
learning of a topic rather than 'surface' learning.

Conclusion
Reflective practice can be used to give the pupils responsibility over their own learning. By enabling the pupils to identify their own weaknesses they can become better learners. As one PGCE business student commented:

... it's well and good us telling the kids where they need improve, where they're doing well, where they're doing bad, but I think it's really important for them to sit there and be able to do it themselves.

Reflective exercises are important for the teacher to know the pupil's knowledge of that topic area. But also for the pupils to know their strengths and weaknesses.

References:


Charlotte Meierdirk, School of Education and Continuing Studies University of Portsmouth

Appendix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Completed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understand what is included in an application form</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understand what a CV is and able to write one</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understand the purpose of a letter of application</td>
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</table>

Self assessment

Evaluate (6 marks) - an effective conclusion that proposes a solution or recommendation

Analysis (5 marks) - choice of argument using theoretical knowledge

Application (6 marks) - applying to a context with examples

Accurate knowledge (4 marks) - accurate understanding of theoretical contents
Paper 7

Developing a growth mindset

What are mindsets?

Educational fads come and go over the years. I have seen assessment for learning, project based learning, and enquiry based learning to name but a few. The new “fad” in town is Carol Dweck’s (2012) mindsets. Most of us have either been to a lecture, conference or CPD on this new approach to learning. Basically it is the resilience to keep going when things get tough. It is the attitude a pupil has when they come up against a challenge.

Dweck (2010) argues pupils either have a fixed or a growth mindset. Pupils with a fixed mindset believe their intelligence is fixed and they either have the ability to do something or not. These pupils like to be praised for their smartness but do not like failure. A fixed mindset pupil tends to give up in the face of diversity, as this questions their intelligence. Pupils with a growth mindset, however, went to learn and grow.

They do not mind challenging activities, even if it involves temporary failure. Pupils with a growth mindset see difficult problems as a challenge which will make them grow and improve.

Teachers have an important part to play in the mindset of pupils. They themselves can encourage growth or reinforce fixed mindsets. Fixed mindsets are encouraged by emphasising ‘success’ rather than effort and a belief that a pupil has a natural ability in a subject. Teaching finance and accounts springs to mind here as so often pupils believe they are naturally able or not able to do finance. This fixed mindset may be encouraged by the teacher. How often have you heard a pupil say ‘Oh no, we’re doing finance today!’ and heard a teacher or yourself reply ‘I know it’s boring but we have to do it’? I hear this all the time from my student teachers and at this point I remind them that their response to the pupils has a big impact on their mindset towards the subject.

Business pupils often relate their ability to be good at finance directly with their mathematical ability. There are obvious links between accounts and maths; being able to do basic mathematical skills, such as addition and subtraction is important but equally is the need to manipulate data and have good evaluative and analytical skills. As all A level teachers know an A level business student who can complete calculations on a profit and loss account or a balance sheet will not gain a high grade.

An A level pupil will only obtain a better grade by understanding and evaluating the results.

How can a growth mindset be encouraged in a business class?

Both Dweck (2012) and Boaler (2016) encourage tasks to be meaningful and challenging to all pupils. The material should ‘stretch and challenge’ whilst the teacher encourages and guides their pupils. The work should be portrayed as exciting.
nd interesting. Teachers should not agree that accounts are bring as this just reinforces the pupils’ mindset. When pupils at a finance question wrong the teacher should show a different strategy. Finance is one of the most useful topics to cover, believe that having a basic knowledge of finance can help with all aspects of life and this evidenced from research. A number of studies have evidenced the link between financial literacy and adult indebtedness. Isney and Gathergood (2013) noted there is a relationship between financial literacy and the likelihood of holding high cost debt in adulthood.

we set aside the argument as to whether teachers should set homework or not for a moment; now there’s good arguments for both. Homework should be challenging rather than just a task that needs completing. Soften homework is set that lacks learning. Tasks should stretch the pupil. Homework can be differentiated and not just by outcome. It is not the ‘brightest’ get ‘further’. A lot of students teachers produce these exercises for their pupils, depending on their mastery of the subject the pupils pick the activity that challenges them and not the one they can easily do. Attached a good example of a differentiated task flow task designed by one of the PGCE students (Anne Barton, University of Portsmouth). A pupil analyses the cashflow exercise that businesses them. A critique might is the pupil will always pick the activity which is easy to complete, it just generally that is not the case. The teacher’s role is to encourage the pupil to choose the more challenging exercise.

pupils can focus on an area of improvement and then establish a goal to improve in that area, once the pupil reaches their goal they could then teach their area of weakness to other pupils, perhaps break-even or financial ratios. The pupils can share their goals and even help each other to improve and meet their goals. Dweck (2012) recommends encouraging pupils who have mastered a topic area to write to other pupils who are struggling with that topic. The pupil can write a letter encouraging and explaining strategies to help understand the topic itself.

A teacher could design an assignment that is interesting that applies what the pupils have learnt. This does not always have to be geared towards passing the exam. Practicing exam evaluation questions can get boring. Of course exam technique has to be taught but should not have to be every lesson for two years. We are so lucky in business that we can apply our theory to everyday situations and there is a wealth of information out there to help us. A fun activity is to ask students to analyse a set of accounts. They can create a YouTube video presenting their findings. The pupils could also create videos explaining some finance terms, such as current assets or gearing.

If you have access to digital learning programs the pupils can create animated videos that explain and apply business terms. Every year I ask my PGCE students to make a YouTube video explaining a business theory. They love doing it and you would be surprised what they can produce by just using their phones.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9r3KFwU02OQ&feature=youtu.be

A business teacher could give their pupils two sets of accounts; an income statement and balance sheet and ask them which business they would invest in. They could act as venture capitalists and present their findings as a video or even write a report. This can be quite challenging. I always liked to tell my pupils that this is basically what top finance investors do: analyze accounts and decide where to invest. The pupils apply their ratio analysis and overall knowledge of accounts, but they have fun completing doing the exercise.

A growth mindset can be encouraged if teachers move away from rote learning methods and allow pupils to ‘stand back’ and apply theory in creative ways. In Boaler’s (2015) book on Mathematical Mindsets she encourages the use of reflections by the pupils. The children complete written reflections on the maths they have been taught rather than just repeating exercise after exercise. This exercise could be easily encouraged with business students. A teacher could teach cash flow forecast and then ask the pupils to reflect on the theory.

Grading dominates our life in education: value added, progress and target grades. Teachers live and work in a performance dominated culture where grades matter, however teachers do have some freedom, within their classroom, to teach the way they want. Of course exam preparation is needed, however there needs to be room for activities that are interesting and nurture a growth mindset.

References:

Charlotte Meierdirk
Classroom Practice

The only way is ... cash flow!

Joey Essex is planning on opening a salon in Winchester called 'Reem'. He already has another salon in Essex. Joey has asked you to produce a cash flow forecast for the salon January to June. Joey has given you the below information on his predicted inflows and outflows over six months based on figures for his salon in Essex. Transfer this information into the cash flow forecast sheet yourself.

Joey starts the year with £1000 savings.

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Fill in the cash flow table.

What advice can you give Joey based on his cash flow forecast?

### Cash Flow 2

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</table>

1. Fill in the missing figures in the table.
2. Why do you think Joey may have had a cash flow problem in May?
The impact of the social environment on the student teacher's agency

Charlotte Meierdirk
School of Education and Continuing Studies, University of Portsmouth, Portsmouth, UK

ABSTRACT
This paper explores the agency of student teachers during the Post/Professional Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) year at a Higher Education Institution in England. It presents part of the findings of a year-long investigation into the reflective practice of student teachers during the PGCE year. The multi-method study includes surveying student teachers (n = 101) and longitudinal interviews with student teachers (n = 6). One of the aims of the study was to investigate the impact of the social environment on the student teacher. The research analysis found that the complex environment the student teachers exist in can be both supportive and constraining.

ARTICLE HISTORY
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KEYWORDS
Teacher education; student teacher; agency; Bourdieu; social field; habitus

Introduction

This paper presents part of a research project that investigated all the different dimensions of reflective practice, including reflection, critical reflection and reflexivity. Due to the amount of data the project created, this paper focuses on the latter two types of reflective practice and the impact social environment has on the agency of the student teacher. The social environment of the school is an arena of accountability (Lindgren, Hanberger, & Lundström, 2015). When the student teacher is placed in an educational establishment they become agents of numerous arenas. In this paper, Bourdieu's (1998) social field theory has been used to analyse the complex relationship between agency and structure within teacher education with a focus on field, habitus and capital.

According to Flemmen (2013), the 'fields' are the various social and institutional arenas in which people express and reproduce their cultural competence and knowledge. There are many different 'fields' in existence, all 'historically constituted areas of activity with their specific institutions and their own laws of functioning' (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 71). Bourdieu's social fields are a hub of social positioning and relationships amongst its members where the concepts of habitus and capital play key roles.

Within schools, fields exist at macro and micro level from the school educational system at the macro level to the classroom at the micro (Burridge, 2014). Papers by Nolan (2012) and Ferrare and Apple (2015) are relevant here, as they focus on the interplay between educational structures of practice and agents. Nolan (2012) work analyses teacher education
In mathematics concluding how difficult it is for mathematics teachers to ‘take risks’ when trying to question the norm pedagogies in the subject. Whereas Ferrare and Apple’s (2015, p. 53) theoretical paper encourages researchers to use field theory to evaluate ‘the structures of practice and meaning in local educational contexts’ such as schools.

Each field has its own rules that determine the conditions of entry and exclusion. Hence, one’s own capital may be useful in one field but meaningless in another. The agents who belong to the field decide on the ‘membership’ requirements to join the field. The strategies used by the dominant group/person to maintain power are known as ‘symbolic strategies’. This reproduction of the dominant agent is what Bourdieu (1984) refers to as symbolic capital. For example, in England, on a macro scale the National College of Teaching and Learning (NCTL) decides on the standards needed to qualify for Qualified Teaching Status (QTS) whereas at the micro level there may be many written and unwritten rules within a school environment. Within a school, the rules of the different social fields will shape the school’s ethos, such as an individual needing to be a qualified teacher to belong to the school’s staffroom (Wood, 2013).

Bourdieu’s concept of habitus is interlinked to the concept of field and capital. Bourdieu posits the equation (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 101):

\[
(\text{Habitus})(\text{Capital}) + \text{Field} = \text{Practice}
\]

Habitus is what causes a person to act and behave in a certain way; it is what makes them who they are. Habitus is fluid and is structured by the past and influenced by the future. It has a two-way relationship with the social field and the teacher’s position in that field. Habitus will change depending on the social field the agent finds themselves in but will correspondingly influence the field. The teacher’s membership of these different social fields influences the way they act, whilst simultaneously making adjustments to their habitus. It is the interaction between habitus, capital and field that results in practice. As Marton (2008, p. 4) summarises:

... practice results from relations between one’s disposition (habitus) and one’s position in a field (capital), within the current state of play of that social arena (field).

The relationship between the variables: habitus, capital and field, can be used to unpick different practices and in this case is used to help explain the practice of the student teacher.

The interaction between habitus, capital and field is key to this study and the extent the student teacher’s habitus fits in the new social fields. Grenfell (2006) argued the interaction between field and capital is key to whether the student teachers succeed. He refers to a specific habitus for teaching: pedagogic habitus:

It is possible to explain teacher professional practice in terms of the interaction between their field contexts and their own habitus; or specifically those aspects of it which influence their pedagogic habitus. (Grenfell, 2006, p. 287)

The student teachers will possess a pedagogic habitus consisting of past experience and belief. The student will need to adapt their pedagogic habitus under the influence of the new social fields and their expectations. A ‘clash’ will occur if the pedagogic expectations of these new social spheres do not align with the already held pedagogic habitus.

The relationship between field, habitus and capital is complex but can be used to understand the demands of certain fields and how to ‘play the game’. Bourdieu (1990) refers to there being an adjustment of behaviour, whilst adhering to the required behaviour of
dominant agents within a field. Learning 'how to play the game' is an important part of the journey to professionalism of the student teacher and this paper explores these concepts and to what extent the student feels the need to adhere to the dominant agents in the different fields they encounter.

Capital plays an important function in the piecing together of field and habitus. The amount of influence an agent has within a social field is influenced by the amount of capital they possess which can be put simply as 'the currency of the field' (Grenfell, 2006, p. 287). Agents will use their capital to become more influential and maintain their standing in that particular social environment. The capital Bourdieu (1990) refers to is divided into four types: economic, social, cultural and symbolic and is collectively known as the 'species of capital'. Different capital may have more significance within different social fields and can be used to protect the existing power and rules that may be present. Economic capital is the wealth an individual has or has access to. An increase in wealth may lead an individual to have greater access to some social circles. Social capital is the capital received by being part of a social group, or a certain class. For the purpose of this paper, cultural capital is most relevant. Cultural capital is the knowledge and skills acquired through either an embodied state, such as the knowledge of music, or an institutionalised form, such as educational credentials (Grenfell, 2008).

When the student teacher starts at their placement school they join a very complex environment where they face unique situations (Ulvik & Smith, 2011). In the contemporary model of Initial Teacher Education (ITE), the student teacher is primarily accountable to their school mentor, professional mentor and university tutor. These agents have a direct influence over the student teacher and an interest in their performance (Gustafsson et al., 2015). Student teachers have yet to 'build up' the capital that is relevant to the field of teaching. They will have a degree and perhaps some school teaching experience but are not qualified teachers. Some of the more mature students come from high managerial positions in industry but the capital they possess will not have the same weighting in schools. This lack of capital can lead to frustration amongst student teachers.

The use of reflective practice in ITE

Finlay (2008) argues there are three approaches to reflective practice and these exist on a continuum ranging from reflection, through critical reflection to reflexivity (Figure 1). The first stage is reflection, which is reflection on practice, when a student teacher evaluates

![Figure 1. Reflective practice continuum. Source: Adapted from Finlay (2008, p. ix).](image-url)
their own teaching and ways to improve. The next stage of the continuum is critical reflection which involves looking at the role of power within the social field the professional finds themselves in. The ultimate stage of the continuum is reflexivity which Loughran (1996, p. 45) defines as 'personal reflection' and the act of reflecting on one's own changing identity.

Reflective practice is a well-established feature in teaching education and plays an important role in teacher education (Meierdirk, 2016). Although reflective practice is interpreted differently by different teacher educators there are some areas of agreement and these are that reflective practice is the ‘process of learning through and from experience towards greater insights of self or practice’ (Finlay, 2008, p. 1). This ‘process of learning’ is the basis for all interpretations of the contentious term, and whatever form reflective practice takes the reflective practitioner should learn and grow from engaging with it. Student teachers engage in reflective practice within a complex environment.

Research context

This research is situated at a Higher Education Institution (HEI) in South-east England. The case study and questionnaire participants were part of the Post/Professional Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) programme. The PGCE is a full time, one year course that enables a graduate student to gain QTS. The HEI has a relatively small cohort of PGCE students with around 110 students enrolled every year. Seven different PGCE subjects are taught: English, Modern Foreign Language (MFL), Mathematics, Science, Business, Geography and Computer Science. The structure of the PGCE course is the same for all the courses. About one third of the PGCE year is spent at the university and the rest of the time the student teacher is in their placement(s).

After the first three weeks of the PGCE course, the student teacher will start at their first placement (phase 1). After Christmas they start phase 2, with a placement in a different school, and after Easter, phase 3 in the same school as phase 2. The student teacher stays at the same placement for the last two teaching phases, unless there is a reason to move them to another school.

Methodology

Results from part of a study investigating the different aspects of reflective practice will be presented in this paper. The original study consisted of a case study involving six participants (n = 6). The case study participants were interviewed in total 21 times during the PGCE year. From the analysis of the interview data, a questionnaire was devised to investigate the power constraints illuminated in the interviews. The questionnaire investigated to what extent different power constraints were common amongst all PGCE students (n = 101) and this part of the project will be focused upon here.

Results from the interview analysis found that there may have been a relationship between the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) grade of the placement school and the power asserted over the student teacher. Ofsted was founded in 1992 and has cultivated a strict inspection regime of schools and ITE which has brought with it greater accountability (Alexander, 2004; Hatcher, 2005; Thrupp, 2003). Ofsted is a non-ministerial body that reports to parliament and inspects all schools, colleges, Early Years
Providers and teacher educators in England. A new framework of inspection was introduced in 2015 that gave Ofsted the power to grade the different educational establishments as either: 'Outstanding,' 'Good,' 'Requires improvement' or 'requiring special measures.' Ofsted has the power to deem a school 'inadequate' which would trigger 'special measures' and lead to the replacement of the governing body and management of the school (DfE, 2006). Ofsted is an external stakeholder whose presence has led to an increase in the external accountability by the head teacher and governing body.

As argued by Courtney (2016), this accountability has also increased the internal accountability between the different levels of hierarchy within the school. Teachers are accountable to many different stakeholders. The teacher has 'hierarchical accountability' to Ofsted and 'professional accountability' for their lesson plans and assessment (West, Mattei, & Roberts, 2011). The head teacher is accountable for many practices including: exam results, attendance, exclusions and finance. This accountability has led to an increase in performance measures that are present in the social fields of a school (Gustafsson et al., 2015; Mansell, 2007). This increase in performance measures is felt by the student teachers as they find themselves adjusting their teaching to meet Ofsted criteria.

From the interviews, there was evidence of different social environmental factors which impacted on the student teacher and it was decided this relationship needed further research. The questionnaire is a common research method and can be used for large and small populations. It was used in this case to collect data from the total population of PGCE students (n = 101) across all subjects on the PGCE programme. The questionnaire of open-ended questions was designed to collect data which could be compared to those obtained in the case study. The questionnaire, consisting of a combination of closed and open questions, were distributed at the end of the last PGCE lecture (June), which allowed access to all the student teachers assembled together.

The responses to the open-ended questions were coded using descriptive coding. Descriptive coding is based on the subject area apparent in the narrative, such as talking about mentors or school policy (Saldana, 2009). The questionnaire results were coded and then analysed. After questions 2 and 4 were analysed, four categories were established: mentor constraints, schools policy, facilities and personal constraints (Table 1).

Question 1 asked the PGCE student ‘What was the name or Ofsted grade of your school?’ in each Phase? The majority of students did not know the Ofsted grade of their school/college. Only six students wrote the Ofsted grade down for their first placement and only five knew the Ofsted grade for their second placement. It is possible some of the other respondents did know the Ofsted grade but chose not to state it. In the case of those respondents who stated an Ofsted grading, but not the name of the school/college, they were possibly protecting their own anonymity. The questionnaire was anonymous but had I wished to it may have been possible to discover who the respondents were by their placements. I did not do this and have kept the respondents' placements anonymous.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discursive coding</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentor constraints</td>
<td>Mc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School policy</td>
<td>Sc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal constraints</td>
<td>Pc</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Discursive codes.
Questionnaires differ from interviews as it is the participant who records the answers, whereas with interviews the answers are recorded then transcribed. It is argued this distance reduces bias; however, there may still be room for bias in the interpretation of those answers due to the subjectivity of the interpretation (Varga-Dobai, 2012). There were only a few answers to the questions which were ambiguous. For example, one respondent wrote there were no constraints to their teaching but then commented: ‘I was allowed to teach the way I wanted but the school’s department was quite old fashioned and didn’t have modern teaching methods.’ In this case, I had to make a decision as to whether the student teacher felt constrained in their teaching or not. I decided not, as they were still allowed to teach the way they wanted.

Ethical considerations

My research proposal was approved by the University of Portsmouth’s Research Ethics Committee and I followed their guidelines. All Universities have drawn up their own detailed codes of practice and the University of Portsmouth is no exception. The University of Portsmouth’s (2013, no page number) ethical code of practice states the following principles should govern research:

- Respect the rights and interests of participants in the research, and to take account of the consequences for them.
- Respect individuals as autonomous agents with rights regarding decision and choice, and to conduct research on the basis of informed consent.
- Reflect on the broader social and cultural implications of the research.

It was important the participants had the right to their own destiny and the right of self-determination. I achieved this through considering the participant's right of informed consent, beneficence, privacy and confidentiality, right to fair treatment and the right to be informed of any benefits.

Interview analysis

The original research case study included semi-structured interviews. From analysing the interview data it was found that those student teachers who were placed in an 'outstanding' school had more pressure on them than those in lower graded schools. For example, Student D, who taught in an 'outstanding' school, commented:

... yeah, I’d say my mentors …. I can’t fault their idea of best practice and their grades prove that it works and you see the kids books and you see … and it works, it’s just … what I’m struggling to kind of … fully embrace it because I can see that it works but it’s just not my, my way … my idea, my ethos of teaching. (Student D)

And when asked about the teaching in the department he said:

It’s ... I would have to say it’s overly structured and overly regimented with not a lot of innovation or independent thought-provoking going on which is kind of the exact opposite of how I like to run my lessons and how I see education. I want to try different things and ... I just think sometimes I’m kind of pushed down ... Look, I’m used to this … these are standards, these are requirements, we need to hit them, and I completely understand that and I know I need to do that to pass the course, it’s like that with anything but ... I like to try different things and just ... not be creative, innovative, to the point that everyone goes, ‘Wow, I was blown away by a
lesson,' but just try something different not only for the class but for me and I do feel I get a little bit held back. (Student D)

Student D highlighted the impact of his school mentor. He understands school mentors are good teachers but they have 'formula' to their lessons that he would rather not adhere to. He knows teaching in the mentor's style of lesson achieved good grades but he would have liked to try more innovative teaching. In this instance, the mentor is restricting the student teacher's teaching but these restrictions are there because the mentors themselves are 'controlled,' to some extent, by the educational structures they work within and can be argued take the form of symbolic violence, as Ofsted create an environment of performance discourse that becomes embedded into teaching practice.

Student A stated:

I always feel that as an adult if you're wrong you should admit you're wrong and you should always treat children with respect, and I just feel a little bit sometimes that, you know, bailing them (the students) out over things just to make the point that you rule the classroom, which I can see exactly why you have to, it doesn't fit with who I am. So that would probably be the thing that would stand between me ... (and the way I want to teach). (Student A)

Student C stated:

I think at the beginning I thought that teachers ... the whole environment would be much more (supportive) ... it wouldn't be as target driven and so egotistical as I thought the business environment was and I'm starting to realise that may not be the case.

The student teachers share common experiences across the school/college placements but it is their habitus that will cause the trainees to react and behave differently. All the student teachers possess different habitus made up from various backgrounds and experiences. The habitus will itself be formed from the rules, powers and social fields that the student teacher engages with. Although the social structures impact on the student teacher, they still have agency. The interview analysis found students have a pedagogic habitus that they try to preserve during the PGCE year and so there is not complete determinism.

Questionnaire analysis

The questionnaire was intended to further discover the different constraints on the PGCE student and whether some of the relationships, between the student and the placement school, were apparent across all PGCE students. It was found that the relationship between the Ofsted grading, of the placement school, and the types of constraints the student teacher experienced, needed further investigation. There was evidence of different social environmental factors that impacted on the student teacher and it was decided this relationship needed further research. A questionnaire was devised to investigate the power constraints illuminated by the case study interviews and to what extent they were common amongst all PGCE students.

Table 2 shows the relationship between the Ofsted rating/grade of the school placement and the perceived constraints on the teaching of the PGCE student. Table 2 presents the

| Table 2. Relationship between constraints and Ofsted grade for all phases (%) |
|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Constrained |
| Unsatisfactory | Satisfactory | Good | Outstanding | Total |
| Y | 2 | 33 | 44 | 21 | 100 |
| N | 5 | 30 | 38 | 28 | 100 |
same data as percentages linked to phases 1 and 2. After correlating phases 1 and 2, there were no obvious trends and so phases 1 and 2 were accumulated to judge any overall relationship. The evidence from Table 2 indicates there is no relationship between constraints and Ofsted grading. For example, out of those students who felt constraints on their teaching, two were in ‘unsatisfactory’ schools, 33% in ‘satisfactory’, 44% in ‘good’ and 21% in ‘outstanding’ schools. The extent of the constraints within the school environment does not have a direct relationship with the grading of the school; however, 63 students were placed in outstanding and good schools and felt some constrains on their teaching.

The second and fourth question on the questionnaire asked the student teacher ‘Was there anything that stopped you from being the teacher you wanted to be? If yes, what was it?’ The results were coded simply into ‘yes’ or ‘no’ and Table 4 shows the results for phase 1 of the teaching practice. In phase 1, 39 student teachers felt their teaching was constrained and 62 did not (Table 3).

In phase 2, 53 student teachers felt constraints on their teaching (Table 4). It is possible this is due to the schools having more influence on the ways the students taught or was due to the student having more experience and therefore greater knowledge of teaching. As the student teachers gained in confidence they were more likely to try out new ideas and therefore, felt more constrained in their second placement.

Table 5 shows the cross tabulation of the student teachers’ answers to questions 2 and 4: ‘Was there anything that stopped you from being the teacher you wanted to be?’ The results were coded simply into ‘yes’ or ‘no’ and a cross tabulation calculated between the two phases. The results from Table 5 show the majority of student teachers felt their teaching had been inhibited in some way in one or both of their placements. In fact, just over 70% (20 + 19 + 33 = 72), felt something stopped them from teaching the way they wanted to in at least one of their placement schools and there was a dominant pedagogic habitus they

### Table 3. Number of students feeling constrained in teaching in phase 1 (N = 101).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
<th>Valid per cent</th>
<th>Cumulative per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>38.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>61.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>101</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4. Number of students feeling constrained in teaching in phase 2 (N = 101).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
<th>Valid per cent</th>
<th>Cumulative per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>52.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>101</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 5. Cross tabulation of phase 1 constraints and phase 2 constraints (N = 101).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constraints phase 1</th>
<th>Constraints phase 2</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
were expected to adhere to. On the positive side, 30% (29) of the students felt they were not constrained and could teach the way they wanted to in either placement. This stresses the importance of having two placements as the data is evidence that a student teacher will be more likely to have the freedom to be innovative if they are placed in different schools. In different placements the student teacher will experience different social environments. The more experience the student has, of different social fields, the more cultural capital they will accumulate that will give them more agency over their evolving pedagogic habitus.

A number of students liked the freedom and support they received:

> My mentors were outstanding and encouraged me to experiment with different strategies.

> Lots of different teaching styles in department so good to develop my own style ...

Having access to different teaching styles and allowing the student teacher the freedom to develop their own style is seen as important to the student teacher, but the results show only 29 found this freedom in both placements. Interestingly, in the second placement more student teachers felt they had less freedom even though they were now more experienced. Whether this ‘lack of freedom’ was due to an increase in constraints on their teaching or due to the student being more aware of the constraints is unclear, but more student teachers felt less freedom in their second placement and greater conflict in their pedagogic habitus.

Out of all the placements there were a number of student teachers who were placed in the same school but in different departments. There were also some departments who had a different PGCE student in phases 1 and 2. Due to some students not recording the name of their school/college it was hard to have a definitive figure of those schools that had more than one PGCE student, but there were certain trends. Two of the most popular schools, to be placed in across subjects, did have consistent findings. Two schools: school X and Y had five PGCE students placed with them across the two phases and across subjects. With school X, four of the PGCE students felt constrained and with school Y, four felt they were allowed a lot of freedom in their teaching. With these two schools the way the student teachers felt was not limited to their department or their particular placement phase. With school Y, where students felt constraints on their teaching, the comments made by the students were similar:

> The department weren’t very approachable or helpful so I didn’t feel like I could experiment with teaching.

And …

The school had a specific structure to follow for each lesson regardless of the class. The mentor wanted things done a certain way and would relate my teaching practice to hers therefore I felt I had to teach the same.

According to the questionnaires, three of the PGCE students, across all the courses, actually had three placements. With one of those students they went back to their first placement in phase 3 and for the other two they went to a completely different school for the last phase. With all three students they felt ‘overly’ constrained in their second placement. One student commented: ‘I had to follow a structure identified by my mentor. I felt on edge when teaching in front of him’. There are a few unknowns with these three students. For example, had they been ‘failing’ students, one would have expected them to have less freedom in the class. Mentors would have had greater presence, in their classes, and control over their teaching.
Types of constraints

Table 6 illustrates the factors, derived from the questionnaire, which constrained students' teaching. The results show the strong influence of the school mentor.

These results may not be surprising because of the key role of the mentor; however, the student teachers distinguish between a mentor supporting them and acts that constrained them. The following quotes were fairly typical responses with regards to how mentors influenced the student's teaching:

I felt like I had to produce lessons my mentor would approve of (i.e. give lessons in his own style) in order to get a satisfactory Doc 9 (lesson observation). He didn't like it when I tried new things, ideas or differentiated.

And...

I had to teach the way my mentor did. I had to use the school's lesson plan and follow the school's scheme of work completely. If my mentor thinks he would have done something a different way to how I did it he would grade me unsatisfactory.

These comments were not uncommon and showed that some mentors, although supportive, had expectations that the student teacher should teach like them. The student teachers wanted to keep their mentors happy and so they changed their teaching style to be similar to their mentors. There was a belief amongst the students, that by teaching in a similar way to the mentor they would receive higher observation grades and so the student teacher's pedagogic habitus was heavily influenced, if not dominated, by that of the mentor's.

Teaching in a similar way to the mentor was not the only constraining factor. A number of students said they could not be who they wanted to be: 'I didn't feel like I was able to show my personality in lessons'. This comment correlates with one of the conclusions from the case study interviews that student teachers had to be a different person in class. In the case study it was found that it was not until the student had more confidence that their 'usual' personality could be known.

Some students felt the department they trained in was not welcoming and it made them feel like an outsider:

Relationships with other members of staff were not easy to establish, which made me feel an outsider within the school.

Social integration into the department is important to student teachers. If the social induction is hard then the student teacher feels like an 'outsider'. It is possible the mentors and other members of staff need to find a way to exert power over the student and distancing themselves is certainly one way of doing this. The subject department will have its own 'field of play' and within that field there will already be 'rules of the game'. The student teacher has to fit into an already established field and discover its rules. They will have less cultural capital with which to influence the decisions within that field. This situation is the same for all PGCE students but some departments may be less accepting of a new agent within 'their' field.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentor constraints</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School policy</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal constraints</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lack of facilities was a reason why 17% of student teachers could not teach the way they wanted, with lack of ICT facilities being the most common reason:

... (there was a) lack of working printers, photocopiers to produce resources, shortage of papers, board pens, text books etc ...

A number of trainees were denied access to:

... working computers, printers, photocopiers etc ... and also being denied access to these resources when they became available.

The student teachers commented about it being a privilege to have access to some of these resources. This made them feel like ‘outsiders’ or ‘second class citizens’. The restriction on using resources and access to computers is an example of Bourdieu’s (1977) power within a field of play. Social and cultural capital is being used to gain access to resources: ‘Bourdieu compares the structure of a field to that of a poker game where the pile of chips reflects the unequal distribution of capital that both summarises the results of previous struggles and orient strategies for the future’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, pp. 98, 99). The amount of capital the student teacher has will determine whether they will be subordinate or dominant within a field. In this case, the students have less social capital, as they are new to the placement school, and they also have less cultural capital as they are yet to qualify as teachers.

Too much reliance on ‘Ofsted’ grading was identified as the second most common factor affecting the students’ teaching:

There was an over reliance on the Ofsted grading of an ‘outstanding’ lesson which meant all lessons had to stick to an unrealistic plan at all times that restricted creativity within the classroom for both teacher and pupils.

Ofsted is an external body that schools are accountable to, but the impact of Ofsted requirements run down the school hierarchy, and affect all members of the educational establishment. Some schools have rigorous frameworks for the teachers and student teachers to work within. These policies help the school achieve their desired Ofsted grade but restrict the teaching practice.

Positive experiences

Not all the comments were negative on the questionnaire. As illustrated in Tables 3 and 4, around 50% of the student teachers felt they had freedom to teach the way they wanted in at least one of the teaching phases. Some student teachers commented on what they thought was good about their mentoring and this is important in recognising what makes a good placement. The most frequent comment was to do with the freedom to teach the way the student teacher wanted and to try different pedagogies:

I was allowed to teach exactly as I wanted. I was encouraged to take my own path. I was offered feedback on my lesson plans and a couple of times I changed them.

And other similar comments:

I had complete freedom to be the teacher I wanted to be.

The school was brilliant. I was supported by the mentor and could teach and develop at my rate.

The teachers let me develop my own style

The students who were happier with their placements were supported but also allowed freedom to develop their own teaching style. This scenario is very important to the PGCE
students as they want to develop their own teaching styles by trying out new ideas, rather than just being told what works for the mentor and having to conform.

**Conclusion**

Analysis of the questionnaire showed there were many social fields that the student teacher belonged to, both at a macro and micro level (Figure 2). There are various agents, within these social fields, that will dominate and control the 'rules of the game'. Those dominant agents possess more of the relevant capital that allows them to be more influential. The questionnaire showed how important cultural capital is within the placement schools, at both the macro and micro level.

At the micro level, the very person who reflects with the student (the mentor) influences the student teacher but for some student teachers mentors are restricting their innovation as they are being 'held back' and 'having to teach a certain way.' The different 'fields of play' have rules and 'internal logic' and the student teacher may find they do not have the capital to influence the field. This is shown with the majority of student teachers having to teach the way the mentor requires: 'the mentor wanted things done a certain way ... and I felt that I had to teach the same (way) ....' This reproduction of the same pedagogic habitus takes the form of symbolic capital and to some extent symbolic violence as it is the reproduction of the status quo by a dominant agent.

This symbolic violence relies on the student teacher accepting and following the rules, which they generally do, so as not to upset their mentors and the consequence of perhaps receiving lower grades. If the student's pedagogic habitus does not fit with their placement then they become a 'fish out of water'. At one end of the scale of conflicting pedagogic habitus, the student may compromise and accept the change; and at the other end, the
student may leave the course because they are not willing to change. This changing pedagogic habitus is reinforced through the constant use of reflective practice. In teacher education, reflective practice generally happens with the mentor or university tutor and so the dominant pedagogic habitus can be reproduced.

Within the social field of the ‘whole school’ some student teachers were made to feel unwelcome or were restricted when accessing resources, such as not allowing the use of the departmental photocopier or printer. These limits are placed on the student teacher by agents that have more capital in that particular field. As Nolan (2012) argued, the student teacher will feel more comfortable in the field that best matches their habitus, even though both habitus and field will be evolving all the time. Student teachers have yet to obtain the status needed to have influence in those fields and are still learning how to ‘play the game’.

The power exerted at the macro level by external agents, such as Ofsted, impact both directly and indirectly on the student teacher. The questionnaire data showed that Ofsted’s grading of lessons caused pressure and stress for the students and there was an ‘overreliance on Ofsted grading … that restricted creativity’. Senior management is accountable to Ofsted for grades and attainment but the teacher is responsible for meeting the targets (Courtney, 2016; Mansell, 2007). This responsibility and accountability is being felt by the student teachers. As Student A quoted ‘… I thought the whole environment … wouldn’t be as target driven …’.

The agency of the student teacher is being limited from a number of areas: the mentor, other teachers, school management and Ofsted. Some of these limiting factors are ‘a priori’ and independent of the individual. Ofsted is a structure that impacts on all agents within the field of education whereas the mentor and teachers within the school create a social structure.

The data suggest some students have more agency than others depending on their placement. About 30% of the students felt they were not constrained at all, in the way they taught, in either of their school placements. These students felt free to try new teaching approaches: ‘I had the freedom to be creative and experimental’. This freedom allowed the students to create their own pedagogy but 70% felt constrained in one of their placements, with 29% feeling constrained in both. The more fields the student teacher belongs to, the more ideas that are reflected on. The results from the questionnaire analysis illustrates the importance of placing student teachers in different schools over their PGCE year. The student learns how to satisfy both demanding mentors and ones that have a more laissez faire approach; both approaches have their merits and disadvantages but it is important for the student teacher to recognise and question the ‘norm’ within these different fields. If the practices in the different fields of the student teacher are not questioned they may be ‘blindly’ accepted and reproduced without legitimacy.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes on contributor

Charlotte Meierdirk is a senior lecturer in Education at the University of Portsmouth, England. She was a course leader and tutor on the initial teacher education programme for 10 years and is now course leader for the MSc in Educational, Leadership and Management. Previous to lecturing at the University of Portsmouth, she was the head of Department at a local school and college.
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