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Theme 2

**Emerging teachers' perceptions of the factors
that affect their espoused professional identity.
A partial case study
using narrative methodology.**

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Abstract

An understanding of the factors which mediate the evolution of professional identity in early career teachers is key to developing effective teachers. This is a timely issue; the UK government is currently rolling out its 'School Direct' programme, shifting the balance of responsibility for initial teacher training away from universities and increasingly into schools.

My previous literature review (Lord 2012) identified a number of factors which may impact on the development of professional identity and synthesised these into a conceptual framework. The current study is designed to start to populate one aspect of that framework. It is a partial case study of espoused identity in two early career teachers, using a narrative methodology. Three techniques - story telling discussions, timeline construction and concept mapping- were used to elicit the participants' stories about factors which they felt had affected them in what they think and do as teachers. The data was analysed using thematic analysis.

Eight intersecting themes were identified which included 'support networks', 'social background' and 'personal characteristics' such as age. The implications of the research were discussed in the context of my framework and relevant literatures. The themes gave credence to my framework, and also highlighted areas where I may need to adapt the framework to acknowledge issues which I had not previously considered.

Future work will consider the links between espoused identity and identity in action, and will continue to develop methodological techniques which help to explain the development of professional identity in early career teachers.

Rationale and research question

The way that teachers do what they do in classrooms is the result of many influences. However, core to the understanding of this agency is the way in which teachers understand their roles as teachers; this reflects their professional identity. Teacher education focuses on the development of teacher skills and capability, but given that this capability is mediated by professional identity, understanding how this identity develops and informs teaching is a core concern. This is particularly so now that initial teacher training (ITT) is moving into schools, driven by the Secretary of State for Education through his vision of 'teaching schools', and his championing of the government's initiative 'School Direct'. School Direct is designed to enable schools to undertake ITT themselves, so they have the 'opportunity to recruit staff and develop training programmes with the support and assistance of existing providers' (Gove, 2012). Hence, teaching schools will need to consider their key role, and that of trainees' mentors, in becoming the focus for the provision of initial teacher training and in facilitating the development of new teachers' professional identities and ensuing agency.

The focus of this paper is concerned with how professional identities develop. The argument made is that professional identity is a complex phenomenon that reflects both an espoused notion of what it is to be a teacher and purposeful engagement with the social practice of teaching. In particular this paper will focus on espoused identity, and the factors which emerging

teachers perceive to be relevant to their professional identities, and hence to what they think and do as teachers. Identity in practice, which results from purposeful engagement with the social practice of teaching, will be the focus of a subsequent paper.

Various literatures [for example, the work of Connelly and Clandinin (1999) and Zembylas (2003) and in particular my RP1 paper (Lord, 2012)] have examined how issues of emerging professional identity impact on what teachers do. These literatures are concerned with a complex dynamic involving the intersection of biography both with the discourses of education and education policy and with situated experiences, which may take place both in and out of classrooms, schools and higher education institutions (HEIs). An understanding of the theory and practice of the development of professional identity in such contexts is therefore essential. In order to facilitate this understanding my research for this paper will focus on key aspects of identity development. In particular I will examine how early career teachers' narratives evoke a sense of emerging professional identity. This espoused or narrated identity is likely to bear a complex relationship to identity in practice and to agency and in many respects this complexity is documented in my literature review for RP1 (Lord, 2012).

Since writing RP1 I now see professional identity as less static and better described as being in constant flux, reflecting Zembylas' (2003) perspective that identity is more of a process than a single, fixed outcome. Seen in that way, professional identity then becomes understood as a dynamic, fluid

concept, situated temporally, spatially and socially and closely linked with agency and action.

In this paper I am concerned with professional identity as teachers narrate or espouse it. My research question is ‘What aspects of experience do early career teachers consider to be influences on what they think and do as teachers?’

Future work will also address the reciprocal relationship between how a teacher’s espoused professional identity and the processes of identity development are realised in the lived realities of teachers’ professional lives; and how these narrated actions and sense of agency affect the development of professional identity.

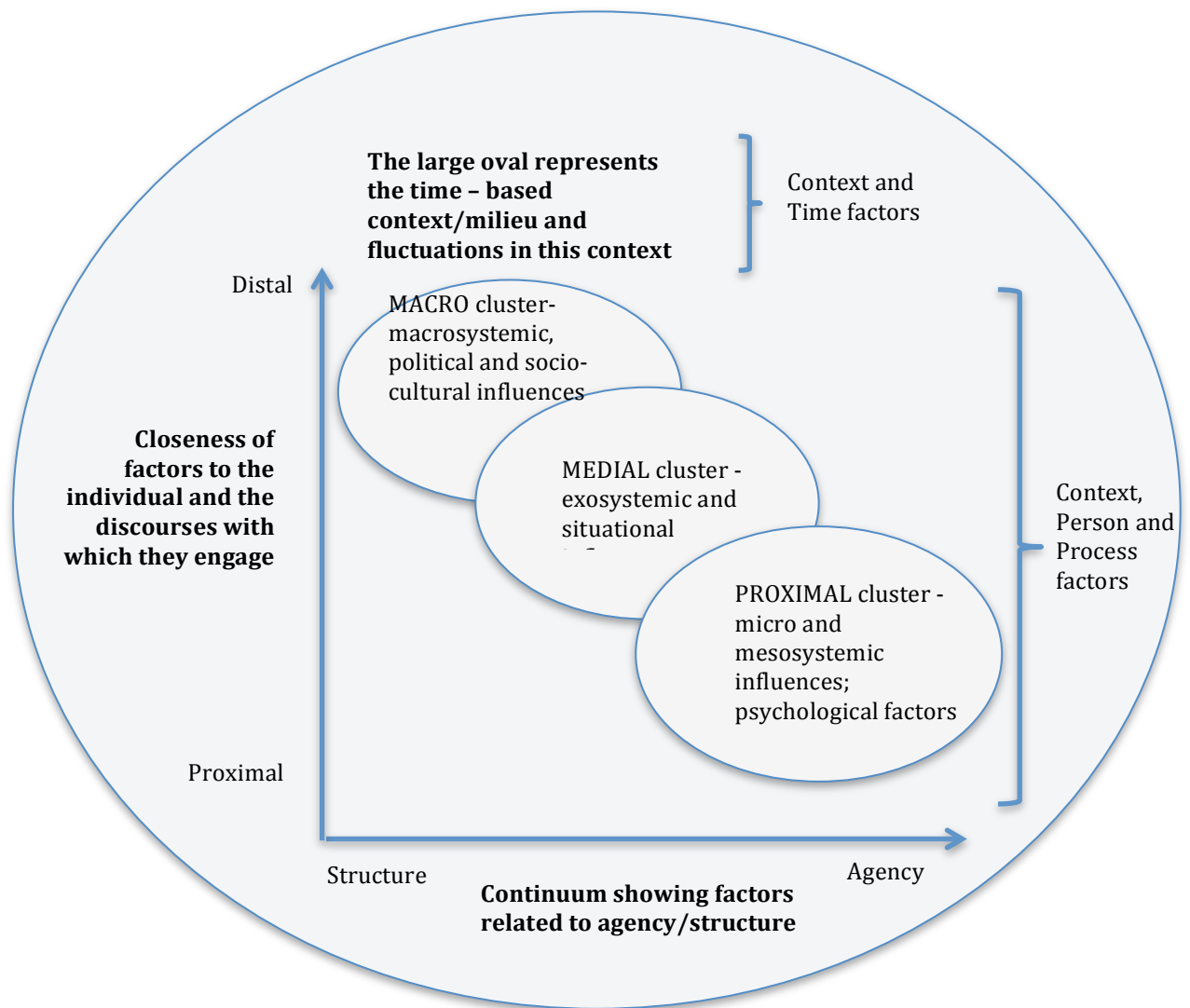
Background and position

In RP1 (Lord, 2012) I proposed a conceptual framework which showed the dynamic intersectionality of factors which mediate the professional development in early career teachers, and how this links to their sense of agency (see figure 1, below; more details can be found in appendix 1). My framework was an attempt to make sense of what informs the understanding of teachers’ ‘doing’ and ‘thinking’. As a logical corollary, for this paper I want to examine some of these factors.

The purpose of this proposed initial investigation was therefore to pilot an

approach that might enable me to get a narrated sense of the lived reality of the professional lives of the individual teachers who were my participants. In particular I wanted to explore those factors that appear more proximal to teachers' professional lives (figure 1, below) , although I expected to encounter some seepage from the medial and macro level clusters of my framework.

Figure 1. Framework to show the interacting influences of a number of potential factors on the development of a teacher's professional identity



Methodology and methodological techniques

The position from which this work originated was a phenomenological one; I was concerned with teachers' experiences of the factors influencing their espoused professional identity. I was concerned both to examine and to understand some aspects of the lived realities of early career teachers' professional worlds and to begin to understand the 'meaning making' process of identity formation in early career teachers, through their own personal perspectives. The construction of my conceptual framework was largely predicated on the ethnomethodological assumption that social processes are defined and created by interactions; the link to intersectionality, which is key to my framework, is thus explicit. Both in my framework and in the methods I used to investigate it, I employed research methodology which is both phenomenologically and ethnomethodologically informed; in other words, I chose a design and set of methods which gave an account of meaning and structure from within the phenomenological perspective. By adopting a case study approach, rooted in narrative enquiry, I hoped to engage with 'how' and 'why' questions about the development of early career teachers' espoused professional identity.

The case study method 'allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life events...' (Yin, 2009, p.4). Yin suggests that the case study approach is appropriate if these are the issues under consideration.

A quantitative, positivist approach was not appropriate as I was concerned with the construction of meanings, and with espoused identity, rather than with 'facts'. A large number of factors potentially could be of interest in this work, as can be seen from my conceptual framework. Consequently, a case study methodology, using multiple sources of evidence and a range of data, was a useful approach. However, because I was focusing on certain proximal elements of teachers' professional lives and not the whole picture, this was in fact a partial case study. I expected that the immediacy to the participants of what they were saying about themselves and their professional lives would mean that I would automatically connect into the proximal aspect of my framework (figure 1, above). However, given that my participants were asked to talk through (immediate) and talk about (historic) events and features of their professional lives it was possible that I would gain access to more than the proximal cluster of factors which my research question addresses for this paper. For example, talking about historic events may have meant that my participants engaged with discourses relating to wider educational or sociopolitical contexts, which related to more distal aspects of my framework.

Participants

My target population was early career teachers in the first three years after their NQT year. The reason for choosing early career teachers is because I am concerned with the importance of evolving policy in initial teacher education, hence the focus on this particular stage of career development.

The single cases I used were those of two early career teachers and their stories/constructions of meaning in relation to their agency and evolving professional identity. By using a small sample I was able to pilot the methods and I also had the resources to do a thorough analysis. Details of the sampling technique are in appendix 3.

Pen portraits of Participants

Consuela

Consuela is a 26-year-old primary school teacher who is her third year of teaching , in an infant school with approximately 220 Foundation and Key Stage 1 children on roll.

She completed her PGCE at a local Post-92 university, although she had a very difficult time on her first block placement in a school with a high number of disabled and statemented children. She completed her second teaching practice in the school where she was subsequently appointed as a teacher.

This year she is leading year 1. She is also subject leader for Science. She is known in the school for being a committed, outstanding teacher.

Consuela is teaching in the borough where she was born and brought up. She herself describes her family as being a 'rather odd set up', not in any way affluent and in many ways dysfunctional. Consuela was the first in her family to go to university where she read English and French, and subsequently completed her primary PGCE (with Modern Foreign Languages specialty).

She met her future (now) husband while at Sixth Form College. They attended university together and spent a year in France together studying during their third year. Subsequently they completed their final years at university and Consuela went on to do her PGCE and her husband to complete his legal practice course. They got married in the summer of 2012.

Louise

Louise is a 24-year-old teacher in a large sixth form/FE college with nearly 3000 learners. In 2011 the college was graded 'outstanding' across all areas in a mini inspection, and the college is popular and well-regarded locally.

She has taught Psychology there for two years – her NQT year and her first year subsequently. Louise teaches AS and A2 Psychology and has also successfully introduced the International Baccalaureate in Psychology to the college. She has cross-college responsibility for collaborative learning and developing oracy.

After Sixth Form College Louise went straight to university to read Psychology and then on to an 11-19 PGCE in Social Sciences. Her first teaching placement was a great success, but she suffered from lack of support in her second one, despite being in a college which is well known for being one of the top ten colleges in the country in terms of A level points per student and outstanding Ofsted grades. She subsequently got her first job in the college where she now works. Her time there has been very successful; she is known to be an outstanding psychology teacher, committed to her students and to developing innovative learning methods.

Louise had a somewhat disrupted childhood. She is seen by her family as the white sheep, the daughter who has really done well for herself. She lives at home with her mum and brother.

Rationale for using narrative enquiry as a method.

The focus of this study is on identity development. Narrative enquiry is one of the best ways of generating an understanding of identity because it is rooted in stories of individuals' experiences. According to Webster and Mertova (2007), narratives can provide researchers with a rich framework through which they can investigate the lived realities and experiences of their participants, as depicted through the participants' stories. Connelly and Clandinin (1999) suggest that such 'stories to live by' can help us to understand 'how knowledge, context and identity are linked and can be understood narratively' (p.4). Similarly, Goodson et al. (2010) propose that the 'interior conversations' that people have, where individuals define their personal thoughts and courses of action and create their own stories, are key to their identity and understanding of their own place in the world. They suggest that this storying and the construction and presentation of narratives become a significant influence on how people see themselves and ultimately on what they do.

In my research I am concerned with the idea of the process of meaning-making, in which individuals construct mental models, and perhaps stories,

that ground their understanding in a deeply personal and unique fashion that reflects their identity. It was important therefore that I thought about knowledge elicitation and the ways in which it is best to elicit narratives about professional identity, not least because I was expecting to be investigating nested and embedded professional discourses. I hoped that if I used appropriate techniques then these techniques would elicit narratives about what participants think and do that illuminated these nested discourses. The techniques I chose enhanced this meaning-making process, by creating opportunities for dialogue within a rich, safe and engaging data-collection environment.

I was aware that I need to consider how far I wanted my participants to develop their narratives; I wondered initially whether to use a bounded technique, setting parameters for my participants and asking them quite specific questions about their daily work. There were risks with using a bounded technique because it might not have allowed the participants to discuss other authentic factors that a more open approach might allow. On reflection I decided to use a open, non-constrained set of narrative-elicitation techniques, whilst keeping the focus of the study on proximal and personal identity factors. Goodson and his colleagues for example, used the very open stimulus question 'Can you tell me about your life?' in their 'Learning Lives' project (2010). One of the reasons for my decision is that the manner in which someone articulates their narrative may reflect the way they understand their identity. According to Goodson et al (2010),

‘It is not just the present situation which influences one’s understanding of the past. The way in which people *understand and articulate* their present situation is important as well. It is, in other words, not just the ‘now’ that is always present in one’s story of the past; it is also one’s *story of the now* that impacts on one’s story of the past.’ (p7.)

The act of narration is not a neutral act, as Rosenwald and Ochberg (1992) explain:

How individuals recount their histories – what they emphasize and omit, their stance as protagonists or victims, the relationship the story establishes between teller and audience – all shape what individuals can claim of their own lives. Personal stories are not merely a way of telling someone (or oneself) about one’s life; they are the means by which identities may be fashioned (1992, p.1).

In other words narration creates aspects of identity. I recognise therefore that the very act of asking teachers to narrate aspects of their identity development influences how they then position themselves as teachers and professionals.

Narrative elicitation

A number of techniques were used to elicit my participants’ narratives; timeline construction, a focused conversation/story-telling discussion and concept mapping. (Full instructions and protocols for all 3 techniques are in Appendix 4.)

My initial thoughts were that I needed to use methodological triangulation with these methods in order to maximize validity and reliability. However, as I stepped away from the positivist tradition with which I was familiar, I realised

that the advantages of my proposed methods were not about validity and reliability, but rather about using a range of methods to allow a fuller explanation of storying of my participants' professional lives. I was aware that I could not just aggregate the data to arrive at some notion of 'truth' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). Ultimately, the different narrative elicitation techniques which I chose complemented each other in such a way that their intersectionality provided a rich account of what my participants think and do as teachers. This enabled me to access a sense of the authentic lived reality of my participants and to make certain inferences about the evolution of their professional identities.

Technique 1 – timeline.

The purpose of this technique was to elicit personal understandings and to provide a basis for further discussion. I asked the participants to draw a timeline for their career as a teacher, not worrying about exact dates but showing, in whatever way they preferred, the significant events in their life that affected their career or career choices, and also to show any events in the wider world which might have been significant to them. This kind of graphic elicitation technique is useful because not all knowledge or understanding can be reproduced in language, or at least not in sentences. The ability to represent things along non-linguistic dimensions, or in addition to linguistic dimensions, may allow people to access and represent different levels of experience (e.g. Bagnoli, 2009). This kind of method may help the individual to engage with the question and it enhances their reflexivity. It has the

additional advantage that the data was much more holistic than if I had asked a series of biographical questions.

The construction of timelines may have a similar kind of link to agency as the idea of open narrative (Goodson et al, 2010). The timeline also, of course, expresses temporality. I structured the task as a very open, broad one that participants could do in their own way. Of course, in analyzing these timelines, I was careful to remember that linear interpretations of time may not always be helpful.

I used the timeline method as a way in to the idea of narrative and asked the individuals to narrate their timelines subsequently in our story-telling discussions. Using a timeline suggested, in part, the themes and foci for such a discussion. One of its advantages is that it gives participants time to think and reflect on the issues under consideration as they construct, draw and annotate their timelines (Gauntlett, 2007, cited in Bagnoli, 2009, p.548). I either engaged in discussion about the timeline as the participant drew it, or afterwards, when I asked about the story of their career.

Photographs of the timelines my participants produced are in appendix 5.

Technique 2- story-telling discussion

I used a semi-structured or focused interview (e.g. Merton and Kendall, 1946) where the themes and focus of the interview, but not the detailed protocols,

are set out and decided by the researcher in advance. I called these 'story-telling discussions'. They were designed to elicit the respondent's relevant personal context, and their individual associations, beliefs and ideas. I started the discussions by asking the individuals to tell me the 'story of their career in teaching'. Each discussion was held after the participant had first drawn their timeline, and discussions were individually tailored by my using a number of prompts to facilitate them in giving more substance to their story. These prompts were non-directive and wide-ranging, and were designed to bring out the affective and value-laden implications of the participants' responses, as well as to cover the aspects that the participant included and any gaps which I felt were evident in their story or my construction of the narrative.

Technique 3: - concept mapping/mind mapping

Concept maps represent knowledge visually as a hierarchical framework of concepts and concept relations. Epistemologically, concept mapping has its roots in the work of Ausubel (1963) on propositional thinking and learning, whereby meanings are constructed through human perceptions and interactions with objects and events in the world; hence it is an appropriate method for me to use to develop my understanding of teachers' espoused identity. Traditional definitions of concept mapping have been extended to include other visual representational techniques which are more flexible approaches to collecting of graphic representations of experiences (Wheeldon and Faubert, 2009). Central to the rationale for using concept mapping in my research is that whatever their format, participant-generated maps can

assist individuals to frame their experiences. Concept mapping may facilitate the expression and externalisation of participants' understandings (White and Gunstone, 1992) in this case of the development of their professional identities.

I felt that there were innovative ways of getting participants to construct their own concept maps which would help them to frame their ideas about the development of their identity and which would also enable me to see whether there was at least a degree of construct validity in the framework which I have developed. I asked participants to construct a 'concept map' with the central concept 'Me as a teacher - what I think, feel and do' - which I had chosen as my operationalization of espoused professional identity - and to try and include any influences on what they think, feel and do. The participants were given some concepts from which to choose, derived from the literatures reviewed in RP1 (Lord, 2012) as well as being allowed to add any others of their own to the maps. As the participants constructed their maps I encouraged them to talk about what they were doing, so enabling me to get a sense of the reflective process. In using concept mapping I am asking my participants to root their stories in the concrete, telling me about 'what they think and do as teachers'; I am using ideas about the links between action, agency and identity to allow me to make inferences about the development of professional identity. These links will be explored more fully in my RP3 paper. Photographs of the maps my participants produced are in appendix 6.

Both my participants completed the three narrative elicitation tasks and the data was then transcribed and analysed.

Analytic methodology

Thematic analysis - Rationale

Thematic analysis is a method for

‘identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes your data set in (rich) detail. However, frequently it goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic.’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.79)

Thematic analysis organises the data into patterned themes, but I also completed some narrative analysis, looking for meaning. The purpose of my analysis is, as Jerome Bruner puts it, to look at ‘how protagonists interpret things’ (Bruner, 1990, p.51) and to systematically interpret their world view. The story and the subsequent narrative I built was of course subjective; this subjectivity is valuable to me because my research question is concerned with individuals’ subjective interpretations and figurings of the factors which they feel impact on their own professional worlds.

Thematic analysis is the most flexible and useful method for me to analyse the data from my timelines, storytelling discussions and conceptual maps. Thematic analysis is sometimes criticized for a lack of demarcation (e.g. Braun and Clarke, 2006). However, attempts to demarcate it clearly may result in it being limited and constrained, and hence in it losing one of its key

advantages. I will show that I engaged in a rigorous process in terms of the criteria for identifying defining and naming and verifying themes.

Use of MS Word as analysis tool

After some deliberation I decided to use MS Word as a tool in my analysis, rather than a bespoke tool such as Nvivo™. Condie (2011) describes how MS Word has the advantage of familiarity, as well as the fact that research data is usually transcribed using MS Word; there are therefore no issues with import or export. In addition, the use of the same software for writing and for analysis facilitates the writing process. Nvivo™ has a reputation for being slow and cumbersome (e.g. Softwareforscholars, 2011). I should have had to learn it - which has resource implications - and of particular concern is the fact that it fragments the data (Jones, 2007). Although thematic analysis by definition breaks up the corpus of data, in the case of my data I completed the fragmentation myself, keeping the holistic sense of the narrative in place, rather than relying on Nvivo's protocols and heuristics to do it.

Description of the Thematic Analysis process

Details of the processes of the thematic analysis are in appendix 8.

Braun and Clarke (2006) and Aronson (1994) suggest various phases in conducting thematic analysis. I derived the following protocol from adapting their work to my data and to the purpose of my analysis.

The first stage was to transcribe and become familiar with the data from the timelines, concept maps and storytelling discussions. The data were transcribed as soon as possible after the data collection sessions. Any non-verbal communication (such as laughing) was included as far as possible. Once I had transcribed the data I reviewed it in conjunction with the transcription to check that the transcript reflected the participants' voices as accurately as possible. Following transcription, the analysis involved listening to the taped material, reading and re-reading the transcripts, and making notes and brief ideas before I began the more formal analysis. The processes of transcription and familiarisation were inextricably linked— the detailed and laborious process of transcription meant that after several iterations I was very familiar with the data. These processes were key in getting a real sense of the 'beings and doings' of the participants during the development of their early careers.

The next stage of the analysis was an initial search for themes. Themes are derived from patterns such as "conversation topics, vocabulary, recurring activities, meanings, [or] feelings..." (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984, p.131). They are identified by "bringing together components or fragments of ideas or experiences, which often are meaningless when viewed alone" (Leininger, 1985b, p.60). The themes that emerged from my participants' data were synthesised to form a picture of their joint experience as each developed their professional identity as an early career teacher. In undertaking such work I had to be very aware of my own part in this analysis – as Leininger points out, the "coherence of ideas rests with the analyst who has rigorously studied how different ideas or components fit together in a meaningful way when linked

together" (Leininger, 1985b, p.60). Reflexivity is something I discuss later in this paper (page 47).

I felt that I needed some rigorous criteria to operationalise the concept of a theme, to guide me in 'what counted as a theme', in order to make my analysis more trustworthy. Trustworthiness can be defined in a variety of ways, but one useful way of thinking about it is:

'a matter of persuasion whereby the scientist is viewed as having made ... practices visible and, therefore, auditable.'

(Sandelowski, 1993, p.2).

In other words, do the processes and interpretations seem reasonable? To some extent I feel that this is a matter of commonsense, as Robson (2002) points out. Thematic analysis has been subject to the criticisms occasionally leveled at all qualitative methods of typically being very vague (Antaki et al., 2002). I was keen that my work should not be criticized on these grounds, and I also wanted to ensure that I remained true to the data I had collected. The criteria I used for the origination of themes were those framed by Owen (1984). Owen emphasises that the form of the narrative and how a story is told is as key as the content; in its own creation, narrative creates aspects of identity. In Owen's terms, recurrence and repetition of words and themes, and the pragmatics of narrative have their own importance. This is reflected in Owen's criteria which I chose to adopt rather than say, those of Leininger (1985a), where pragmatics carry less weight.

Table 1 below sets out the criteria which I used to identify my themes.

Table 1: Thematic Analysis Criteria (derived from Owen, 1984)	
Recurrence	At least two parts of narrative reflect the same thread of meaning.
Repetition	Key words, phrases or sentences are repeated in at least two parts of the narrative – explicit repeated use of the same wording (an extension of recurrence).
Forcefulness	For example; volume, inflection, positioning, dramatic pauses.
A theme was noted when all these criteria were present.	

I had originally thought that the process of generating themes would be both exhaustive and mutually exclusive. However, on reflection I realised that the complex intersectionality of the concepts identified in my framework would make mutual exclusivity improbable. In fact, if the concepts were found to be mutually exclusive then that said something worrying about the validity of my framework: given that the fundamental nature of the framework is its complex intersectionality, I should expect to find intersectionality in the data. In view of this, my criteria allowed for non-exclusivity of themes.

The initial part of the analysis was the task of underlining any potential answers or comments in the participants' narratives which were specifically relevant to the research questions; some of their comments were not relevant or were only incidental. I then highlighted relevant parts of the transcript- the part of the utterances that captured the gist of the theme -the first time a theme was observed. The theme was noted, using a unique colour and brief description. I completed four iterations of this process as I identified what I called 'protothemes' (my earliest forms or conceptions of themes that came

out of the initial analysis of the data) and then refined and synthesised the protothemes using the criteria (see appendix 8 for details). This resulted in eight major themes. Seven of these could be identified in the narratives of both participants; one (theme H- personal characteristics; see p.28 below) was only evident in Louise's narrative.

The next stage of the analysis was to review the themes which were identified from the transcripts. Braun and Clarke (2006) and other researchers (e.g. Reason and Rowan, 1981) suggest using respondent checking to do this. I decided not to do this respondent checking for two reasons. Firstly, it was not necessary. Analysis of my participants' concept maps had shown that my themes were trustworthy; the concepts identified on the participants' concept maps echoed the themes which I had drawn out of the narratives. Secondly, it may not be the case that respondent checking produces valid data. If a participant says that a theme does – or does not – resonate with them, this is their perception, which may reflect social desirability or a change of perspective or context, rather than a reflection of the voice and story of the participant at the time of data collection. Hence, there may be little reason to assume that my participants in some way had 'privileged status' as commentators on their own action. The supposed validation that I may, or may not have achieved in this way could perhaps better be seen as another source of data and insight (Fielding and Fielding, 1986). I decided that participant validation as another source of insight on top of my elicitation techniques was not necessary, given the constraints of this study.

Ethics

The School of Education ethical procedures were followed. Relevant permissions and paperwork are included in appendix 2. For both participants, the Participant Information Sheet (which they had previously received by email to give them time to consider it) was discussed, any questions answered and their informed consent was obtained. The participants' managers were also asked for consent. The participants were reminded of their right to withdraw at any time and assured that the information they provided was confidential and anonymous.

Consuela is a friend of mine; I know Louise from observing a few of her lessons some years ago, but we are not particular friends. One of the reasons for choosing Consuela was that I suspected from my knowledge of her that she would be reflective, open and engaged in the research process. However, I was aware that our friendship would change the nature of this process. It was important that I was explicit about this from the outset. The area of relational ethics – the ethics of using 'intimate others' in ethnographic research- is one which Ellis (2007) discusses. She makes the point that there are both challenges and advantages to using friends or relatives in research. For example, the use of a conversational partner, someone one knows well, may increase the internal validity of the work. It can be useful in building up a research relationship. As Elliott (2005) points out, research is by its very nature a social relationship; using friends as participants may facilitate the research relationship as both individuals are likely to have a familiarity

with the discourses of (in this case) education. However, I was aware of the need to ensure that the evidence 'speaks for itself' rather than for me or for my research agenda. The experience of asking participants to contribute to determining what may be some of the most salient themes in my research might have been empowering for them; however, I was careful to consider the issues of anonymity and confidentiality, as well as the fact that there may have been an element of coercion, however subtle, in asking the participants to take part. The degree of potential social harm is difficult to estimate. For this reason I needed to be explicit with my participants about the fact that they were free to withdraw themselves or their data at any time and to ensure that they were happy about confidentiality and anonymity. I reiterated this to them frequently.

After the data collection process, the participants were thanked, reassured that all data would be anonymised and that they had the right to withdraw at any time. I informed them that I would destroy the data recording of the session after transcription and that the anonymised transcription would be kept securely. They were asked if they would like to receive a copy of their transcript and the report.

Analysis, results and discussion

Characteristics of the narratives

The narratives were derived from data from the three narrative elicitation techniques I used:

- the construction of their timeline and what the participants said as they constructed it;
- the construction of concept maps and the discussions as they did this, and
- the story-telling discussions.

These techniques were designed to elicit what the participants felt were the factors that had an effect on what they think and do as teachers in the early stages of their careers. This was how I operationalized professional identity. The results of my analyses are summarised below. The detail of the process can be found in appendix 8.

The two narratives (transcripts in appendix 7) were very different in form. Consuela's narrative was more chronological and less thematic; Louise, on the other hand, talked in themes both for her timeline and her concept map. In Consuela's case the data collection session was more of a focused discussion, whereas Louise's was more of a monologue. This feature may be related to the different relationships that I have with each of the participants; Consuela and I are used to talking as friends, whereas I know Louise less well and we are less fully at ease with each other.

Themes and description of themes

The analytic process as described above generated certain themes in the narratives. I named and described the eight themes as follows (table 2).

A Support networks	Relates to individuals and factors that are mentioned as key in giving support to the participants.
B External validation	Concerns others' perceptions of the individual's performance. Includes OFSTED, institutions' observation policies, success in getting first job, promotion and responsibility.
C Work experience	Includes placements on teaching practice.
D Classes and students taught	Being in the classroom and interacting with students.
E Personal values	Participants' own ideology about the nature of teaching or about personal values which had an impact on career decisions.
F Social Background	Family background (as opposed to family as support network which is included in A above).
G Formal Education	School, college, degree, teaching qualifications, higher degree.
H Personal characteristics	Demographics such as age and gender.

Description of themes

A Support networks

This theme relates to individuals and factors which are mentioned as key in giving support to the participants; for example, their families, managers and mentors. Marso and Pigge (1994) found that some of the reasons most often

cited as influences on decisions about becoming teachers were associated with the influences of other people such as former teachers and parents.

This was a key feature in Consuela's narrative – when she talks about her decision to go to university, she says:

If it hadn't have been for L [her husband] I don't think I'd have got there in the first place and I don't think I could, couldn't imagine myself carrying on there. (96)

Similarly, her relationship with her mother was key in convincing her of the importance of teaching as a job; here she explains why 'family' is a highlight of her concept map:

I am the only person to have gone to uni, and achieved learning, I am dead proud of being a teacher and what comes with it, I am thrilled and so is my mum. (241)

Relationships with mentors, both formally appointed and those who find themselves in a more informal relationship are also included in this theme.

Elliott and Calderhead (1995) found that new teachers' confidence in their teaching was a natural corollary of confidence in their mentors, who had to be supportive and positive so that effective learning by the new teacher could take place. Louise, talking about being invited to a training session for a select few members of staff, exemplifies this:

And they said oh well come and the director of student services at college is very supportive and she said you can come if you want (76).

Louise's mentor gives her confidence and hence changes how she feels about her job:

So he is definitely influential in the way that I feel about my job because he makes me feel more confident that, that they're my classes (147).

To summarise, the relationships described by Consuela and Louise exhibit many of the factors (such as friendship, honesty and mutual respect) which are reported by researchers as being key to supportive relationships which influence how early career teachers think as teachers (e.g. Anderson and Shannon, 1988; Elliott and Calderhead, 1995).

B External validation

This theme concerns others' perceptions of the individual teacher's performance. This includes Ofsted inspections; particular institutions' observation and quality assurance policies; and successes in getting first jobs and responsibility points.

Early career teachers see external validation by others or by quality assurance systems and institutions as important in the construction of their professional identities. For example, Findlay (2006) found that most of the five early career teachers whom she studied in their first 'induction' year regretted the fact that they no longer had the regular observations and lesson feedback which they had had when they were PGCE students. Smethem and Adey (2005) also noted that the reinforcement available from external observers seemed to be key to the professional development, feelings of self-efficacy and the identity of early career teachers.

The importance of these factors to Consuela can be seen in this extract where she is talking about how Ofsted awarded her a grade 1 ('Outstanding') for her teaching:

C- ...Ofsted come ten weeks in...the second half of that term, so I think I've, yeah, ten weeks it was, yeah, I'd done six weeks, then four weeks after that...was amazing. To get that.

J- To get a 1 then yeah.

C- Was I think, observed once officially and another two, another two times, sort of unofficially but they give you the feedback...

And to hear it in all the different lessons...especially ...the outstanding came from a streamed lesson with really low ability people.

J- Oh right!

C- And that was a really big boost ...(33-43).

Louise puts similar emphasis on appraisal:

Erm, I've put appraisal here cos that, that IS important, and I need feedback....erm and I like to know that, that sort of comes from your own exam results as well, that's your kind of feedback, isn't it, but it's nice when I get feedback from my manager, or from tutors or whatever, to say how I'm doing. So that's still important. (258-260).

To summarise, the reinforcement that Consuela and Louise got from external agencies was crucial to them feeling that they were doing well and teaching 'properly'. These feelings are key to their evolving professional identities.

C Work experience - includes placements on teaching practice.

This theme includes work experience and the participants' experiences of their teaching practice placements. An early literature review concerning professional growth in early-career teachers suggested that externally validating experiences such as work experience are seen as important in the construction of beginning teachers' self image (Kagan, 1992). The later work of Guile and Griffiths (2001) describes how work experience has value as a basis for the development of identity in young people seriously considering a

career in teaching. This is because it facilitates the development of knowledge, skills, and encourages early participation in communities of practice. Marso and Pigge (1994) suggest that when teachers are unsure of what to do, they fall back on the things they have seen in their teaching practice when they themselves were students. In these ways, work experience may have a key mediating effect on teacher identity and agency.

Consuela felt that her work experience was key to what she now thinks and does as a teacher, much more so than her college and schoolwork was. Here she talks about the work experience she did when she was 14:

J- Whereas these things, your work experience and stuff like that?

C- Yeah, even at 14 that, that, they were all important. I used to go every holiday.

J- Yeah?

C- When my school was out and when college was out and so on I used to go back all the time. And that was important to me.

Experience meant more to me than the academic side of things. (84-87).

Louise had a similar experience. Here she is talking about one episode of work experience she did as an undergraduate:

L- So when I was at university I thought I wanted to be an ed. psych, I thought I would have to deal with students of that age, so I did work experience

J- At uni?

L- In a secondary school, yeah. In the holidays and loved it.

J- Interesting

L- So yeah from doing that and doing the work experience and secondary I thought I can do that (14-19).

To summarise, the work experiences of Consuela and Louise gave meaning as well as reinforcement to their ideas of wanting to be teachers; through work experience they were able to gain the reinforcement that their aspirations

were achievable and confirmation that teaching was indeed what they wanted to do.

D Classes and students taught

This theme is about being in the classroom and interacting with students. Flores and Day (2006) found that interactions with students, both positive and negative, were key elements which impacted on the development of teacher identity. Some of their teacher participants could explain how and why interactions with learners changed what they felt, thought and did as teachers – for example they understood that behaviour management issues might have an impact on their beliefs about students and about themselves. Similarly, Findlay's respondents felt that their interactions with students were key to professional identity. One of Findlay's respondents said,

'The most rewarding aspect of the job has been positive feedback from pupils, 'seeing them all smiling and getting into it, a 'cheers miss' when they walk out of the room or something like that, little things really.'
(Findlay, 2006, p.51).

Another explicitly stated that feedback from his students and a good relationship with them were key to how he felt and thought as a teacher.

The narratives of my participants echo those of the respondents in Findlay's (2006) study and the work of Flores and Day (2006). Consuela and Louise both expressed how they see being in the classroom and working with students as key to their identities as teachers. This was a strong recurring theme in Consuela's narrative. Here she emphasises how much she enjoys being with students (rather than doing paperwork):

I only like being in the classroom and I like making a difference. In classes, what I do or think is determined by the class. (247)

She makes explicit the fact that her classes change how she feels, and she makes a link with what she does as a result. She says,

Classes I teach, changes how you feel, because you change what you do... (235)

Louise is similarly forthright:

I like being with the young people and the, interacting with them directly. (170)

She explicitly identifies her belief that her classes are an influence on what she thinks and does as a teacher:

The classes I teach is definitely erm, an influencing factor, erm in my NQT year the classes that I taught were just fantastic, really good (190).

To summarise, the influence that the classes and students have on my respondents' identity development is clear; it may be that this is through the interplay of identity and agency – both Louise and Consuela say that they change what they do, as well as how they feel, as a result of their interactions with students.

E Personal values and attributes

Personal values are key to professional identity development. For example, Flores and Day (2006) state that pre-teaching identity, values and implicit theories about the nature of teachers and teaching are a key set of mediating influences on the formation of teacher identity. In my study the participants

often explicitly identified that their personal values, both intrinsic and extrinsic, were significant in the evolution of their professional identity. The relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic values and identity is likely to be a complex one which I should like to investigate further.

My participants narrated stories about how their personal values and their ideologies about the nature of teaching had an impact on their career decisions and were influential in the development of professional identity.

Consuela discusses how equality is one of her key values and how she sees it feeding in to her identity as a teacher.

Values -what is important to me is equality. Being firm but fair – that is how I like to be...that is important – it is about me wanting to help (230).

Consuela denies being a 'political animal' but her political stance is made very clear, as she continues to talk about equality and education provision.

I am not a political animal, but my skin crawls at the current situation. I have always been Labour and this current Tory/LibDem stuff has solidified that view. I went to uni on Labour. (248)

Louise talks about an extrinsic value; she describes how money is important to her. Her desire for what she calls the 'nice things in life' affected her decision to be a teacher; she tempers this with 'I've always wanted to be a teacher since I was 5'. For Louise, money, as an extrinsic reward, does interact with the more intrinsic rewards related to teaching, such as her enjoyment of being with students, which is the first value that she mentions.

Subsequently she talks about the importance of money, too:

...I'll put money on one side cos obviously the salary was, obviously when I was looking at careers, although I've always wanted to be a teacher since I was five, that's obviously an influential factor...cos it's not a, bad salary....
erm I've always wanted nice things in life, so that contributes towards that, er, what else. (172-176)

In summary, my respondents reflected on and were aware of how their personal values have an impact on their professional lives. In addition, they understood that there were a number of extrinsic and intrinsic rewards that interacted in influencing them and their identities as teachers.

F Social and family background

This theme is different from theme A, which also concerns family but as a support network rather than as background.

In their longitudinal study of the contexts which shape new teachers' identities, Flores and Day (2006) suggest that personal biographies, mediated by contexts, can be instrumental in shaping and reshaping new teachers' identities. Goodson (1991) describes how background and social class can be an important dynamic in the development of identity; he illustrates this with his description of a teacher from a working class background who used the cockney working class vernacular and got on superbly well with the learners.

The teacher explains it in this way;

'coz I come from round 'ere don't I?' (Goodson, 1991, p.40).

Consuela, who works in a school with a largely working class catchment area, makes a similar point:

My social background has had a massive effect on me as a teacher - I see myself as a caregiver, a kind of parent. Coming from a broken home, not affluent, an 'odd' family. Affects how I am with the kids.
(229)

Louise, talking about her disrupted early family life, echoes this as she describes the factors that she thinks have impacted on her professional identity:

L- But I don't think much of my personal life from being an NQT. Definitely when I was younger (was relevant), what I was going through, mum...
J- your mum and what was going on in the family, but not once you'd kind of left home. (132-133).

To summarise, both my respondents readily identified their family and social backgrounds – in particular the fact that they felt they were first generation in HE or that their family backgrounds had been difficult – as significant in the development of their identity as teachers.

G Formal Education – school, college, degree, teaching qualifications, higher degree.

Eick and Reed (2002) suggest that personal histories in education affect the development of early career teachers' pedagogies and how they think as teachers. Consuela exemplifies this, talking about her university education and how it is of little personal relevance in comparison to her work experience;

C- No that was part of my uni yeah
J- Yes
C- My first degree but I wouldn't have even mentioned it. I didn't.

J- No, so you haven't mentioned [name of university], or any
C- Interesting that init?
J- Really interesting.
C- How bizarre!
J- Yeah. Mm.
C- I don't feel like it was contributory.
J- Yeah, it was just something you had to do to get...get to what you wanted to do?
C- Yeah
J- Whereas these things, your work experience and stuff like that?
C- Yeah, even at 14 that, that, they were all important...And that was important to me. Experience meant more to me than the academic side of things.
(73-87)

Louise, on the other hand, sees university as key in her decision to become a teacher. I believe that this is because she is a subject specialist in post-16 education and so her first degree has more relevance than does Consuela's as a Foundation/Key Stage 1 practitioner.

L -Erm, I'll put university and my degree together,
J -Yeah
L -Sort of, for obvious reasons, erm, with me obviously doing psychology, so that's why I've gone down that route, I think the university played a big part in me becoming a teacher
J -Mm
L -Erm, but I did the educational psychology option in my final year, erm and that made me want to continue sort of
(154-158)

In summary, it is interesting how Louise and Consuela interpret and value their HE and PGCE experiences very differently; this may be partly to do with the fact that they work in different phases of the education system. However, in both cases, the relevance of their personal histories in education and the interactions of these histories with their work experiences, is clear.

H – Personal characteristics.

This theme is different from theme E (Personal values and attributes), as it is more concerned with demographic characteristics. Hasinoff and Mandzuk (2005) call such factors (for example, age and gender) ‘teacher identity variables’. They suggest that these variables are likely to have an impact on the generation of social capital and that that in itself may have an important effect on how early-career teachers develop their identities.

Louise talks about how one of these identity variables, age, affects how she feels as a teacher- as she does her concept map, she notes it as a significant factor which impacts on her professional identity:

Erm, I think, my age, my age, cos at first, when I first started teaching, I think that’s maybe why I didn’t feel like a teacher until I’d sort of got those results is because I am quite young, and the students say oh you’re quite young how old are you and I’m saying, I never tell them.
(139)

To summarise, Louise acknowledges the effect of age on how she feels as a teacher; Consuela does not mention such factors.

There are similarities and differences between the two participants in the factors which they consider to be influential on the development of their espoused/narrated identity. For example, both participants expressed similar sentiments as far as support from family is concerned (Theme A). However, Louise also sees managers and mentor as key sources of support, whereas Consuela did not mention either of these. Family was also important in

another way for both Consuela and Louise – as a key part of their social background or as the source of their similar views on the importance of helping people, as Consuela described.

For both Consuela and Louise, personal values are closely linked in to social background and support networks. For example, as we have seen, money is important to Louise, but Consuela does not mention money or any rewards that would be traditionally perceived as extrinsic. However, she and Louise both value being able to support young people, as Louise makes explicit:

‘Yeah, and that’s what I always wanted to do really, to support young people, as well as helping them learn, and that you know sort of facilitating learning and that helping them pass exams and helping them succeed with their future, but also being like a pastoral ... confident person that they could come to.’ (Louise, 108-110, 2012)

This caring for and supporting young people is a key feature of both narratives, derived not only from timelines and from the concept maps but also from the discussion; it is central to the espoused professional identity of the teachers in this study.

As I have said, one difference between the narratives is that Consuela does not mention any personal characteristics such as her gender or age; nor does she choose them as being significant concepts for her concept map. In contrast, age is significant for Louise, and she talks about how it affects how her students perceive her and (possibly consequentially) her identity as a teacher. Possible reasons for this are discussed below.

Discussion of themes in relation to literatures and my framework

In this section of my paper I will discuss the themes I described in the analysis section in more detail, and show how they relate to each other, thus illustrating the dynamic intersectionality of the conceptual framework which I proposed in RP1 (Lord, 2012; see Figure 1 above). The advantages of the methods and methodology will also be discussed, and implications of my work for my conceptual framework will be considered.

As I anticipated, coming though strongly in both the narratives are the proximal factors from my conceptual framework. These include personal and psychological factors and direct interactions with peers, managers and students. These factors are reflected in all the themes - for example 'support networks', 'personal values', and 'social and family background'. Such factors clearly have very direct effects on the teachers' constructions of narratives of their 'beings and doings'.

Even from the few factors which I have investigated it is already clear that my emphasis on the complex intersectionality of factors, themes and clusters of factors is correct. There is a dynamic intersectionality of the concepts and of the 'beings' and 'doings' of the participants. The themes I have identified are separate, but they integrate and support each other in a number of ways.

There are many examples of this throughout the corpus of data, but I will only

use a couple here. For example, Consuela explains how external validation interacts with the students she was teaching.

C- And to hear it in all the different lessons...especially...the 'outstanding' came from a streamed lesson with really low ability people.

J- Oh right?

C-And that was a really big boost because that group's, dear god, no one wanted that group unfortunately, no (41-43)

Another example of how the themes support each other and demonstrate intersectionality comes from Louise's explanation of how she feels that her identity as a professional is compromised by Ofsted and the way her college has responded to the new Ofsted framework (Ofsted, 2013) although she has earlier commented on how useful feedback and lesson observation is. In this extract the complexity and impact of the discourse involving the relationship with her manager, Mike (who she has previously described as being supportive), the government agenda on standards and college policy, are clearly seen. The proximal factors related to Louise's manager and to validation by external agencies, such as Ofsted, interact in a complex way with more distal factors such as government policy and attitudes to professionalism.

L- ... they're changing everything this year, er, I'll put that, I was going to leave my head or the principal, but I'll actually put that on there because they've changed the observation thing this year, erm

J- in college?

L Yes, college policy

J – to match the new OFSTED?

L- Well, they've basically said, we're not going to tell you when you're being observed, we're going to tell you it'll be in this week and we could come in at any time. So I feel like they're trying to catch you out, but when I did, when I had my observation last year, it was my curriculum manager, and he said to me, look, you always get 'outstandings', I always get 'outstandings', if we just came into a lesson would you be

outstanding? And I said, well, to be...probably not, no, not all the time, no, some days maybe, and some lessons maybe, but some days, no, I'm not outstanding all the time, no, and he said, well that's what we're going to find out next year. And basically they're trying to catch you out, so that, that, I think that, and the way this new government in, I was going to leave politicians, but I'm not, I'm gonna put that on as well, by the head and principal, I think with the way the new government is I feel sometimes like they are trying to catch you out or somehow they are trying to set you up to fail. In some respects.

[Intervening comments about Louise's sense of dissatisfaction]

J- So you've, so you sound as if you feel it's undermining your professionalism.... The fact they're saying not only do you have to get the results but we want you to get them in that particular way...?

L- Yeah, yeah, yeah

J – which is completely AGAINST what Mike's [Louise's head of department] saying isn't it?

L- Yeah

J- I don't care how you get the results as long as you get them...

[Intervening comments about the nature of shared lesson planning]

L- Yeah, so I feel that the way that sort of the government, the principal, the way everything is going, they are responding to, the government and OFSTED.

J- Mm

L- Erm and I don't think

J – not happy

(214-248)

As is mentioned above, Consuela does not discuss any personal characteristics such as her gender or her age; nor does she chose them as being significant concepts for her concept map. In contrast, age is significant for Louise, and she talks about how it affects the ways that her students perceive her and her identity as a teacher. This differential in emphasis illuminates the intersectionality of my conceptual framework quite clearly. Louise mentions the fact that age is significant to her in relation to her espoused identity because of her students' perceptions. She is at a similar

age and developmental stage of social development (say, in terms of Erikson's stages of social development (1963)) as the students she teaches, being only a few years older than them. I believe that, as a consequence, there is a conflict between her personal identity as a young female, and her professional identity as a teacher in an educational setting. This dilemma, of feeling like a student versus the expectation to act like an adult, is a dilemma that Volkmann and Anderson (1998) suggest is one of a number that teachers in their early careers might encounter.

Exploring this a little further helps to illuminate the way in which various factors in my framework interact. Volkmann and Anderson (1998) suggest that one way for young teachers to resolve this dilemma is to see themselves as role models. This is precisely what Louise described herself as doing. In this extract she explicitly identified herself as a role model for her students;

L- ...from my personal tutor side, was a girl came to me, she hadn't been in college for a couple of days, she was an A grade student, a brilliant student, I thought 'there is something not right' so I rang her up and she burst into tears on the phone and said 'oh I'm pregnant, I haven't told anybody, you're the first person I've told...'

J-Ohh...

L-And then I think I realised I was sort of like a role model for them, and I think it was that, I always remember, I can remember where I was say, it was like one of those flashbulb memories. (102-106)

This self-view as an intermediate between parents and friend enabled Louise to build a relationship, which helped to resolve her internal identity conflict.

Playing this intermediate role – a sort of halfway house between 'parent' and 'friend' enabled her to dispense, at least partially, with the expectation to be an adult. Being a role model enabled Louise, as a young teacher, to use her

personal knowledge of what it was like to be a student to inform her of what her students needed to know to become adults. The interaction between various factors such as Louise's age, the discourses she had developed with her students, and (say) the culture of women talking to women, demonstrate the essential intersectionality of my framework. These exemplar factors are chosen to illustrate this. I also have a sense that within each level of my framework there will be other, as yet unidentified factors operating which are likely to interact in various ways.

I think that age is less of an issue for Consuela because as an adult in a primary school she is likely to feel like a student; her learners are, after all, more than twenty years younger than she is: in Louise's case the age difference is only a couple of years. In Bourdieusian terms, a traditional primary school habitus where being a young female is much more common and stereotypical is likely to make a young female teacher feel like a fish 'in' water; on the other hand, a traditional FE habitus may make a young female lecturer, even in the social sciences, feel if not 'out of water' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.127) then like 'a freshwater fish swimming in sea water', to coin Simmonds' analogy (1997).

To summarise, my themes and the intersectionality between them have highlighted the commonalities and differences between my participants, and the intersectionality of the concepts under investigation; this gives me a link to my conceptual framework through Gee's theoretical lenses. As I worked with

my data it became clear that Gee's work on identity as a lens in education was very relevant (Gee, 2001). Gee's notions of nature, institutional, discourse and affiliative identity speak most strongly to the proximal issues embodied in my framework so it was not a surprise that his ideas had particular resonance for me at this stage in my research. As I engage more fully and comprehensively with the more distal levels of my framework in my subsequent research I am expecting to find that other concepts and theoretical stances have resonance too.

Although Gee mainly focuses on identity in practice, he does discuss espoused identity – which is negotiated through discourses; he puts it into a context derived from Zygmund Bauman (2004), of a 'modern' world where what I will call 'identity work' – discovering or fashioning one's own identity is key (discourse identity). The links between identity in practice and espoused identity will be subject of my next paper.

Reflections on the methodology

The partial case study methodology has illuminated aspects of my framework but not others. For example, the mechanism by which some of the factors or clusters of factors interact (for example, personal identity variables of teachers and the phases of the education system within which they work) has come out as an important issue to be considered, but my partial case study has not made clear what the mechanism involved in this interaction might be.

In evaluating my methodology, I considered Yin's criteria (2009) for an exemplary case study. The ones that are relevant to a partial case study and to me at this stage of my work are:-

- 1) The case study must consider alternative perspectives; this is something that will develop as I develop my case study and as I augment the case study with the views of other people and stakeholders, such as mentors.
- 2) The case study must display sufficient evidence that the investigator knows the subject. This is shown by the chain of evidence I present here.
- 3) The case study must be composed in an engaging manner – a clear and enticing writing style. This is an unusual criterion – perhaps almost about passion. I hope my work has demonstrated the importance I put on the subject matter and on the implications that my thinking may have.

Use of narrative

I have found it interesting to work with qualitative data – the accepted wisdom of course is that such data is 'rich':

The term 'rich data' implies that the data is rich in detail and meaning, and avoids making additional assumptions that may be implicit in the word 'qualitative' (e.g. that statistical methods are not relevant)

(Wood and Welch, 2010, p.65)

Certainly, this rich qualitative data is not a mirror of the world 'out there', as Webster and Mertova (2007) point out. It has become very clear that I am dealing with espoused identity, and with narratives about individual perceptions of reality, rather than with one, even if only vaguely defined, monistic reality. As I have already discussed, the very use of narrative as a

technique may affect individuals' agency and thus their reality, in an iterative fashion.

Squire et al. (2008, p.2) suggest that qualitative data can be both 'exciting, compelling and insightful' but also at the same time, 'over-complex, over-simple' . In some ways, this is a paradox, but it became clear to me as I worked with my participants and the data that the silences, tensions and omissions are as interesting as the content (Ritchie and Wilson, 2000). It may be the case that my methodology was in fact not complex and exhaustive enough to expose some of these, and also that my analytic technique was not sophisticated enough to access these aspects of my data that did exist. For subsequent work, having exposed the strengths and limitations of my techniques in this pilot study, I intend to consider in more depth whether I should use analytic techniques other than a MS Word-based thematic analysis.

Reflexivity

As Ritchie and Wilson (2000, p.27) suggest, 'narratives... are as much about us as they are about the participants in our research'. The stories are not neutral; they invite us into a relationship with the teller. Then in the retelling, the author – me in this case – does the same to the reader. As a result, it is key to consider my positioning. To a large extent I have been working within a heuristic of positivity; I was looking for confirmation of my conceptual framework. Being aware of this is an important part of my analysis. Similarly,

the fact that I was looking for meaning within a teaching context with which I am relatively familiar will have affected my positioning and interpretation. This can be seen from the way in which some of my questions, particularly follow up questions, were framed. Although experience in the field and knowing the participants gives me advantages, it has the accompanying potential disadvantages of preempting participants' answers and reading too much into the data.

Ethics

From an ethical point of view I have found that it helps to see that all social research is 'persuasive, purposive, positional and political' (Clough and Nutbrown, 2002, p.3). Transparency is therefore key. I believe that there is an ethical underpinning to my work in that I am committed to developing excellent teachers for the future of education; my work thus has at its heart a persuading purpose. I acknowledge this position from the outset.

Another ethical issue concerns the construction of narratives. If, as Goodson et al. (2010) assert, narrative is a tool for agency, then the translation of learning into action can be seen as a kind of narrative capital. In particular, when part of the narrative concerns the 'self', the narrative is what Goodson calls more 'open' – that is, there is more ongoing learning as a result of it. Consequently, as MacDaniels (2000) points out, careful consideration must be paid to ethics if inviting participants to construct narratives is likely to cause changes in identity and as a result, learning. Furthermore, narrative learning is very personal, as are the narratives of the participants. This can be seen

from participants' comments such as 'yes, interesting that I think like that'. I was aware of this from the outset and was careful to treat my participants and their narratives sensitively. I was also clear with my participants about the conclusions of my analysis and since then have discussed the study with them.

In doing this research I have been engaged in 'radical looking' and 'radical listening' – ideas about making the familiar strange; in my case, making my taken-for-granted understandings about new teachers' identities 'strange', in my search for meanings as well as evidence. The act of looking with new and different lenses may carry implications for ethics and for the seeking of informed consent from my participants. What narrative is present was in fact unknown until the moments of generation and then of interpretation as I reconsidered the stories away from the participants. Therefore the process of interpretation must be explained –I had an ethical responsibility so to do and was conscious that I could not allow a silence between data and findings to remain unarticulated. The appendices to this paper are evidence of the detailed analytical processes with which I engaged to avoid this silence.

Implications of the thematic analysis for my framework

The focus of this paper has been on espoused identity, and, as I have discussed above, it has become increasingly obvious that there are significant differences between this and identity in practice. I will need to develop my conceptual framework further to highlight this difference and to include the

factors which impinge on either or both of espoused identity and identity in practice.

As I have suggested, certain personal identity variables, such as age, and possibly gender, did seem to interact with factors which I had not previously considered, such as phase differences (where by phase I mean educational phase such as primary, secondary, FE, HE etc.) My conceptual framework does not directly acknowledge this interaction, nor one which I suspect may exist between 'type' of school or college (say, free school or academy) and various other factors. On the other hand, I need to be aware of the fact that type of school and sector seems to be relevant in my analysis may mean that there is one or more overarching concepts which transcend phases and sectors and which I need to look for. In addition, there are likely to be more factors which I will need to build into the intersectionality of my framework.

Conclusions

The themes I have identified in my analysis highlight that, as is highlighted in my RP1 (Lord, 2012) there is a complex intersectionality of factors involved in the mediation of the development of espoused professional identity. My data highlights commonalities between the key mediating factors discussed by my participants but some differences, too. This raises questions about my conceptual framework and suggests that there may be changes to it which I

will have to make as I work with teachers and the discourses with which they engage. The link to the conceptual framework which I developed in RP1 is particularly through Gee's work on theoretical lenses in education (2001); these have been useful and pertinent in my research and I may need to develop the emphasis which I have put on Gee's work still further.

In this paper, my methodology has produced some thought-provoking results. However, as I have only done a partial case study of aspects of two teachers' espoused professional identity I need to have a degree of caution and concern as to what might be meant by my results in wider terms.

I have also learned that describing and explaining the processes of espoused identity – the focus of this paper- and of identity in practice is an ongoing challenge. Developing appropriate and sensitive methodologies to enable me to illuminate aspects of the complex processes and discourses involved in identity development and to forge the links between these two aspects of identity will be of critical importance.

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