Teacher Education,
Learning Innovation and Accountability
Series Editor: Claire Wyatt-Smith

Denise Mifsud
Stephen P. Day *Editors*

Teacher Education as an Ongoing Professional Trajectory

Implications for Policy and Practice

Teacher Education, Learning Innovation and Accountability

Series Editor

Claire Wyatt-Smith, Institute for Learning Sciences and Teacher Education, Australian Catholic University, Brisbane, QLD, Australia

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Denise Mifsud · Stephen P. Day
Editors

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Contents

1 Rethinking the Concept of Teacher Education: A Problematization and Critique of Current Policies and Practices 1
Denise Mifsud

2 Policy Turns in Teacher Education: The Case of Ontario, Canada, During the Twenty-First Century 25
Carol Campbell

3 Teacher Education in a Postcolonial Hong Kong: Forms, Drivers, Influences, and Agency 47
Paul Campbell

4 Pre-service Teachers' Self-efficacy Beliefs on Their Role as Teachers During the *Practicum* 71
Juanjo Mena, Cristina Peinado, and Inmaculada Hernández

5 Mind the Gap: Teacher Induction in Scotland 97
Stephen P. Day and Rachel Shanks

6 Exploring Teacher Professional Identity and Agency in Local, National and Global Policy Contexts 119
Janet Lord

7 Reading Towards a School for All? Comparing Course Literature Lists in Academic Swedish Special Education Teacher Training Between the 1980s and 2010s 143
Heidi Wimmer, Gabriella Höstfält, and Wieland Wermke

8 Leadership Preparation and Development Policies in England, Sweden and Russia: Exploring Policy and Practice 161
Mark T. Gibson, Deborah Outhwaite, Susanne Sahlin, Natalia Isaeva, and Marina Tsatrian

9 The Changing Role of the Headteacher in Scottish Education: Implications for Career-Long Teacher Education 181
Alison Mitchell, Deirdre Torrance, Julie Harvie, Christine Forde, and Margery McMahon

10 Teacher Education as a Complex Professional Practice: Reflecting on the Contributions and the Way Forward... 205
Stephen P. Day

Index 223

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Chapter 1
Rethinking the Concept of Teacher Education: A Problematization and Critique of Current Policies and Practices

Denise Mifsud

Abstract This introduction aims to set the context for the subsequent chapters that provide a critical re-reading of the concept of teacher education from various countries. Supporting Europe's teachers is one of the EU priorities that were bolstered by confirmation of the importance of revising and strengthening the professional profile of the teaching profession. Teachers are regarded as key players in the enactment of accountability systems at the local level, at times being forced to vindicate their professional status and judgement which ultimately affects their professional identity and their perception of self-efficacy as education professionals. Besides being lifelong learners, teachers are also regarded as valued professionals, with the notion of professional teachers thus evolving to address the challenges emerging in twenty-first-century education. This chapter thus seeks to problematize how the concept of teacher education is being understood by policymakers, teacher education providers, and the teachers themselves. Teaching and teacher education are a deeply contested field within education and within different national contexts, with research on teacher education still a 'messy' and somewhat young research field.

Keywords Accountability · OECD · Policy problem · Professionalism · Teacher education · Teacher quality

1.1 The Concept of Teacher Education

1.1.1 Introduction

Supporting Europe's teachers is one of the EU priorities (European Commission, 2012) due to the perceived impact of 'high-quality and well-trained' teachers (OECD, 2014, p. 4) on the development of learners' skills and competences adequate for a rapidly changing global labour market, further suggesting that policies to attract the 'best resources into teaching … are likely to bring the greatest returns for better

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education' (p. 9). Given powerful evidence that the calibre of teachers is the most considerable in-school determinant of student achievement, concerted efforts must be made to attract top talent to the teaching profession, in addition to the provision of high-quality training (OECD, 2015). Nonetheless, the demand for teachers depends on a range of factors, including average class size, required instruction time for students, the use of teaching assistants and other non-classroom staff in schools, enrolment rates at different levels of education, and the starting and ending age of compulsory education. Consequently, with large proportions of teachers in several OECD countries set to reach retirement age in the next decade, coupled with projected increases in the school-age population size in some countries, governments will be under pressure to recruit and train new teachers (OECD, 2019). This EU priority was bolstered by confirmation of the importance of revising and strengthening the professional profile of the teaching profession (Council of the European Union, 2013).

1.1.2 The Teacher Education Policyscape and Reform Movements

The emergence of and colonization by 'The Global Education Reform Movement' (GERM) (Sahlberg, 2011, p. 175) experienced across a wide number of OECD countries, as well as the construction of teacher education as a 'policy problem' (Cochran-Smith, 2004, p. 297) has led to a teaching standards reform movement that has in turn focused its gaze on the effectiveness of teacher education programmes (White & Forgasz, 2016), with a particular focus on outcomes-based reform. The widespread undertaking of international assessments of pupil achievement such as PISA, PIRLS, and TIMMS, and the consequent comparative studies to identify the 'success factors', re-affirmed the importance of teacher effectiveness and the quality of teaching as factors to close the attainment gap by influencing student achievement (Mourshed et al., 2007, 2010; OECD, 2004, 2005; Mincu, 2015). This, in turn, leads to the critical questioning of the effectiveness of ITE and the kind of teacher education needed for our present education system. It has also been stated that education reforms that neglect to take teacher education into account are 'condemned to inefficiency' (OECD, 2011, p. 12).

Consequently, the importance of teacher and teaching quality on policy agendas internationally arose due to the recognition of the teacher as the primary driving force towards the contribution to knowledge-based economies and societies, social inclusion, cultural participation and citizenship; the success of education; mediation of the complex and uncertain world in which the students learn; as well as mitigating teacher recruitment and supply shortages in terms of their impact on the teaching workforce quality (Istance 2001, as cited in Jasman, 2009). This, in turn, led to accountability mandates that might shape the ITE programmes approach in the particular countries involved. Four common statements of principle emerged

from within the Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications (European Commission, 2005). Teachers had to be graduates supporting lifelong learning in a global context of professional partnerships. Research literature projects the influence of policy and vision in teacher education practice in the pursuit of quality as evident in the programmes' approach, selectivity, and curricular demand; the locus of control; as well as the role of research in ITE (Tatto, 2015). What kind of teacher education is needed for our education system today? Beauchamp et al. (2015) provide a partial reply when suggesting that 'in these times of economic austerity, opportunities for maintaining research-informed and enquiry-led professional learning are welcome, as is debate on the contribution of the rich variety of research undertaken in universities in partnership with the teachers, schools and communities they serve' (p. 166).

Dominant narratives in ITE policy discourse focus on both teacher quantity and quality (Istance, 2001, as cited in Jasman, 2009). Consequently, teachers' work is regarded as pivotal in the provision of a well-qualified labour force to drive forward the nation's position in the global economy, thus reflecting the rampant influence of neoliberal governance. According to Tang (2015), 'While policy means and ends are shaped by neoliberal influences, policies appear in forms mediated by circumstances of local contexts of different countries' (p. 271). 'Decentralized centralism' constitutes the major trend of neoliberal governance in ITE around the globe, with both processes of centralization and decentralization unfolding concurrently. Mayer et al. (2011) highlight the augmenting schism of the policy debates around teacher education governance, identifying two competing agendas in ITE reform that revolve around the promotion of professionalization and the deregulation of teacher preparation. This debate points to the need of 'engagement with teachers as professional partners' in order for education reform to transpire as a move away 'from transient government rhetoric to sustainable school reality' (Tang 2015, p. 281).

Teacher education as a field of study has garnered a considerable amount of popularity, for various reasons, more specifically because:

> in the politics of teacher education is a simple paradox about our practice as teacher educators: Teaching (and be extension, teaching people how to teach) is an extraordinarily difficult form of professional practice that looks easy. Consider some of the elements that make it so difficult for people to learn how to teach effectively. First, teachers can succeed only by convincing students to cooperate with them; or to put it another way, students learn only if they are motivated to do so … Second, students are in the classroom against their will … Third, teaching involves a complex emotional relationship with students … Fourth, teachers have to practise their profession under conditions of isolation from fellow practitioners … Fifth, teachers have to function with a degree of uncertainty that is greater than any other profession … Finally, there is even uncertainty about who the client is … simultaneously meet[ing] the needs and demands of students, parents, and community … Unfortunately, however, neither teachers nor teacher educators get credit for the difficult circumstances under which they labour. (Labaree, 2005, p. 188–9, as cited in Loughran & Hamilton, 2016, p. 18)

Townsend (2011) queries the existence of 'a world class teacher education programme' for institutions involved in 'the initial preparation or the ongoing development of the teachers who are expected to provide a world class education for *all* students' (p. 374, emphasis added).

Table 1.1 Teacher education reform initiatives (Mifsud, 2018, p. 25)

Global teacher education reform initiatives
Explicit standards for ITE
Minimum requirements for ITE programmes
Research-based ITE
Assessment and accountability in ITE
Alternative routes into teaching
Emphasis on subject knowledge
Relating theory to practice: connecting the campus to the school
Emphasis on continuing professional development

ITE is ideally positioned to achieve two major goals: improve the development of teaching practices and attract more high-quality candidates to the teaching profession. Since these changes require flexible teacher education policies, three main areas have been identified as policy targets: viewing ITE as a continuum, with ITE as the take-off phase; including collaborative learning; and bolstering ITE's governance through the recognition of new participation structures and novel stakeholder responsibilities (European Commission, 2015). Mifsud (2018) explains how numerous efforts are under way in various countries across the globe in order to reform ITE. This is being carried out for various reasons, mainly due to claimed shortcomings in ITE programmes centring round issues of excessive theory; subject knowledge; campus versus classroom; preparedness level of faculty members; in addition to perceived student needs around poor performance in international tests; literacy and numeracy levels; the provision of 'employability' skills; coping in the digital age; and the acquisition of soft skills.

Mifsud (2018) presents a table with eight types of teacher education reform initiatives (adapted from Kosnik, et al., 2016, p. 269–75) that have been drawn up to address the above clamouring issues. These are unfolding in distinct ways and at a gradual pace around the globe, according to individual country needs and agendas (Table 1.1).

As illustrated in the global teacher education reform initiatives outlined in the previous section, teacher quality has recently been at the forefront of policy activity across all the continents, namely North America, Australasia, the UK, and other European countries, in addition to Asia, Africa, and South America, especially in the wake of international assessment programmes such as the Programme of International Student Assessment (PISA). In this section, I give a very brief outline of teacher education policy in three stages, as outlined by Mayer and Reid (2016), in order to juxtapose this with the current wave of reform in ITE. Teacher education policies are projected in three phases, namely as 'training', as 'learning to teach', and finally, as a 'problem that needs to be fixed'.

(i) Teacher Education as Training

In this policy period prior to the 1980s, teacher education was focused on training, that is, on the acquisition of effective skills for teaching in the

classroom. Recruitment into teacher education programmes was controlled by schooling systems, who thus regulated supply and employment issues. Research on teaching focused on a definition of teacher effectiveness through an examination of classroom behaviour in relation to student learning.

(ii) Teacher Education as Learning to Teach
The 1980s and early 1990s witnessed the emergence of a novel wave of preparation for a professional teaching workforce. More attention was paid to the nature of teachers' knowledge, as well as their values, beliefs, motives, goals, and perceptions. This was accompanied by an increasing interest in reflexivity in teaching. Nationwide reviews of teacher education highlighted a growing concern of ITE programmes. Growing criticism of teacher education, concerns of globalization and economic competitiveness led to the third phase of teacher education as a policy problem.

(iii) Teacher Education as a 'problem that needs to be fixed'
It is widespread and accepted common knowledge in international circles that the quality of teachers and ITE determine the quality of any nation's education system. This has resulted in changing statutory requirements for ITE, following commissioned reviews of teacher education in various nations, namely Australia, the USA, England, Ireland, Canada, and Scotland. Moreover, 'Promoting teacher education as a "policy problem" promotes the view that teacher education can be "fixed" through government intervention' (Mayer & Reid, 2016, p. 11). These evolving positionings have translated into the subsequent major reform agendas within the policyscape: alternative pathways into teaching; tighter regulations and standards; a theory of practice in ITE which led to attempts at the construction of a professionalization agenda through an evaluation of teaching, together with research into the effectiveness of teacher education.

ITE is therefore high on the agenda of national policyscapes, due to the ultimate importance given to economic development and the recognized vital role of education in bringing this forward. When drawing up national programmes for ITE, policymakers must bear in mind the sociocultural parameters, economic goals, and value judgements of the context within which the teaching ought to unfold (Stephens et al., 2004). Notwithstanding, the ITE policy narrative reveals 'different voices jockeying for position … among them teacher unions, parent groups and student organizations. But policymakers create the official discourse …' (ibid, p. 118).

Teacher education policies across the globe exhibit striking convergences and divergences on a variety of criteria, among which are state control; specifications and entitlements; desired teacher image; implied pupil image; prescribed theory; and prescribed practice skills (Stephens et al., 2004). The way these criteria unfold in different contexts very much depends on the national goals of education, together with related policies for funding, governance, and regulation shaping the current context that is positioning ITE as a 'policy problem'. Consequently, 'When teacher

education is defined as a policy problem, the goal is to determine which of the broad parameters that can be controlled by policymakers (e.g., teacher testing, subject matter requirements, alternate entry pathways) is most likely to enhance teacher quality' (Cochran-Smith, 2008, p. 273, cited in Mayer, 2014, p. 462).

Whitty (2017) problematizes the 'dominant mantra' as perpetrated by the OECD and McKinsey, and taken up by governments worldwide, in the blind belief that enhancement of the schooling efficiency and equity depends solely on the attrition and retention of 'good' teachers. The consequent drive to improve the quality of teacher education programmes has been translated into various initiatives, namely: the recruitment of better qualified students to teacher training courses; lengthening such courses; increasing their academic rigour; incorporating teacher training colleges into universities; as well as tightening professional regulation of the system. This resulted in the creation of hybrid teacher education systems worldwide, with distinct degrees of simultaneous marketization and central regulation, that despite being regarded as a threat to university-based teacher education may open up novel opportunities for teacher educators who voiced their concerns about innovation and creativity constraints and lack of trust due to excessive and unnecessary standardization and accountability. With the 'conventional wisdom' [in initial teacher education] 'no longer sacrosant' and 'the orthodox trajectory is still a distant dream' (p. 380), Whitty (2017) calls for research into both the 'conventional' and the 'new' teacher education routes. Skourdoumbis (2017) states that this policy rationale for teacher education reform is driven by economic imperatives with a drift towards a narrow teacher effectiveness notion of student achievement that will overcome capital insecurities. Is this overt policy storyline a by-product of a new sharper-edged phase of late capitalism as applied to the field of teacher education?

1.1.3 Themes in Teacher Education and Challenges for the Teaching Profession

Despite the prominence given to the teaching profession by the European Union, in terms of recognition for the need of 'quality' teachers, the proliferation of policy documents, the numerous priorities set, and definition of common objectives, there is little visibility in policy priority shifts related to compulsory teacher education. Apparently, these challenges have not shifted, remaining insufficiently addressed despite policy attention, the ambitions of which have not been matched by the equivalent financial resources. Budgets for education, and in particular teacher education, have been under severe pressure in many Member States (ETUCE, 2012). These emerging themes have been identified (European Parliament, 2014): quality of teacher educators; teacher induction programmes and recruitment procedures; turning teachers into lifelong learners; budget allocation for quality education and teacher development in times of crisis; and the increased focus on international benchmarks and measurable outcomes as proxies for quality education.

Teacher effectiveness drives the debate around proposed policy reforms that would harmonize the much-coveted ‘knowledge-economy’ being sought in the OECD countries. However, teacher effectiveness is subject to a number of obstacles at classroom, organization, and system levels (European Parliament, 2014). Teachers focus first and foremost on their immediate working environment in the classroom, where they feel intimidated by the pupils’ disruptive behaviour; the heterogeneous classroom population; special educational needs, in addition to parental involvement. At school organization level, teachers have been burdened by new tasks leading to more bureaucracy, while facing budget cuts that may lead to larger classes, higher pupil-teacher ratios, longer working hours, or fewer assistants in schools. Teachers are not supported in their pursuit for further learning and development, while having to work in schools lacking an adequate ICT infrastructure. Additional macro-, system-, or national-level structures may also influence the quality of teaching. These are the perceived status of the profession, the lack of ability to influence pay rises, the lack of professional autonomy, as well as demographics and labour market effects exhibited as declining pupil numbers, depressed employment prospects for the younger generation of teachers, as well as the ageing of the current teacher workforce.

The European Commission has identified three main areas as policy targets: viewing initial teacher education as a continuum, with initial teacher education as the take-off phase; including collaborative learning; and bolstering initial teacher education’s governance through recognition of new participation structures and novel stakeholder responsibilities. Notwithstanding, an evident gap exists between ‘classroom reality’ and policy debates at national and international level regarding education and teaching that do not find their way back to the classroom. Have teacher education systems succeeded over the years in providing teachers with the necessary skills and awareness to critically assess and adapt their teaching for the twenty-first century? Is this being done at the stages of initial teacher training, early career support, and continuous professional development at policy *and* practice level?

1.2 Policy Drivers in Teacher Education: Whereby the Governance of Discourses?

1.2.1 OECD and Its Influence on European and Global Education Policy

If the teachers’ voices are missing from the policy debates that are behind the reform in teacher education, who is governing the policy discourses that are meant to be enacted by these same teachers and translated in their actual classroom settings?

Teacher education, more specifically initial teacher education, is re-formed and positioned as a 'solution', and at times, simultaneously as a 'problem' within the European and international policy context. The OECD has strongly influenced European education policy and the entire global neo-liberally toned discourse, governance of which is based on overall and supranational information management. Both the OECD and the European Union have had an influential sway on the global discourse that governs the framing of national education policy and the implementation of educational reforms under the guise of popular concepts such as globalization, information society, accountability, quality monitoring, and results, among others. The steering power of the OECD comes about through its publication of analyses, statistics, indicators, country reviews, and thematic surveys that revolve around the management of information. In fact, Rinne et al. (2004) refer to the OECD as 'an *eminence grise*' (p. 476) in European education policy, due to its dominance in the policy and education reform discourses. Despite the OECD's lack of legal decision-making power, member countries accept OECD recommendations on the premise of 'easy, effective and reliable solutions' (ibid) apparently offered to common problems. Thus, global schemes and instruments of accountability are integrated into national governance patterns, with the resulting tensions between nation states and the global policy field (Barbana et al., 2020), as superficial similarities in the adoption of a policy can obscure very contrasting realities from one country to another, both in the meaning of what is being promoted and in the adoption of new instruments by the actors concerned.

Esteves (2016) attempts to problematize the global dimension of being a teacher in the twenty-first century, based on the four pillars of education established by UNESCO: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be. The twenty-first-century teacher has a global identity, with new roles set out by international organizations such as UNESCO and OECD thus influencing teacher training programmes in general and initial teacher education in particular. However, the implementation of these international recommendations in national policies unfolds to varying degrees in the nation states concerned. Trippestad (2017) puts forward 'the parallel and paradoxical agencies teachers are offered, and limited by, under discourses of globalization within education' (p. 359), synthesizing these issues into the 'global teacher' concept working within a milieu where both educators and pupils are positioned within overlapping meanings and texts, simultaneously implied in the personal, local, and global.

The emergence of and colonization by the 'Global Education Reform Movement' (GERM) (Sahlberg, 2011, p. 175) experienced across a wide number of OECD countries, whose main aim is to improve countries' competitiveness by upgrading students' learning achievement while simultaneously enhancing the efficiency of education systems, led to the widespread undertaking of international assessments of pupil achievement and the consequent comparative studies. This, in turn, directs stakeholders to the kind of teacher education needed to achieve these aims since teachers' performance is regarded as a key determinant of education

quality, with teachers being put at the centre of the GERM policy ideas and interventions. Consequently, Verger and Altinyelken (2013) identify a multitude of paradoxes in the way teachers are perceived and treated in Global Managerial Education Reforms (GMERs). GMERs stress the importance of teachers while simultaneously disempowering them by ignoring their voices in policy processes, treating them as assets to be managed, and undermining their autonomy. Moreover, these managerial reforms shoulder teachers with additional responsibilities while advocating their deprofessionalization. GMERs advocates also tend to use evidence in a very 'selective' way, while additionally expecting teachers and schools to assume more multifarious directives without considering whether the adequate material and technical conditions are in place. On a similar note, Gale and Parker (2017) expose the flaws of the prevailing teacher education logic prevalent in the framing of teacher education policies in OECD countries, by identifying and problematizing four assumptions evident in and constitutive of the prevailing logic. These revolve around four premises, mainly that: students are underperforming; teaching is *all* that matters in the students' learning process; teachers' performance is poor with teacher education to blame; and proven approaches to teacher education are needed. These flaws within the teacher education logic propagated in OECD countries emerge due to the decontextualized testing regimes; an absolute belief in cause-effect relations between teaching and learning; and that 'poor' teachers are to blame for 'poor' students' results, thus 'improved' teacher education is needed …

1.2.2 The European Commission's Policy Drive

Such is the critical case of teacher education as analysed within the European Higher Education Arena, with its' characteristic display of national and cultural features and constraints, often jostling with European recommendations about the competences and preparation for quality teachers. This results in changes and reforms at a diverse pace, or even with contradictory trends, in different national contexts, with the complexity of teacher education increasing when it aims to qualify itself within a European dimension (Caena & Margiotta, 2010). In fact, Biesta (2017) raises questions over the extent of influence the European Commission exerts on policy development, via the publication of documents which despite lacking any legal power in themselves tend to be very persuasive. The attention from policymakers and politicians for teacher education can also be an issue of concern if this is used as a means by governments to establish total control over the educational system (ultimately realized through teacher education). Biesta (2017) problematizes the 'competence' notion that has monopolized the discourse about teaching and teacher education, drawing on the fact that 'PISA and similar systems create the illusion that a wide range of different educational practices *is* comparable and that, by implication, these practices therefore *ought to* be comparable' (p. 437). Moreover, through the discourse about competence, about the competent teacher, and about the competencies that teacher education should cultivate in teachers, 'a very particular

view about education is being repeated, promoted and being *multiplied*' (p. 438). Shouldn't we be concerned about this increased uniformity, or reduction of diversity in education thought and practice, as propagated by the OECD, closely followed by the European Union? Hummrich (2018) points out a discourse shift in the understanding of 'internationalization' and 'I am European', with the education profession being challenged to balance the ambivalences of the Europeanization process as simultaneously one of internationalization and boundary setting. On another note, despite its' focus on decentralization, deregulation, privatization, and marketization, contemporary research on the European policy space has failed to focus on how these processes and policies are actually played out in education (Simons et al., 2013).

1.3 Professional Standards for Professional Teachers?

1.3.1 Teachers as Active Agents and Professional Standards

'The concept of standardized teacher education feeds into the idea that there is some convergence towards a uniform teacher ideal' (Page, 2015, p. 180). Over the last decade, the introduction of professional standards in ITE, translating in a quantifiable set of skills for teachers, have been problematized by the various stakeholders involved, namely policymakers, teacher educators, student-teachers, and teachers in the profession. This trend in ITE, which moves beyond probation and induction stage in one's teaching career, is unfolding at both a European and global level. In fact, EU Member States were encouraged to review the academic and pedagogical quality of ITE as a priority via 'Rethinking Education' (European Commission, 2012). A framework of 'standards' is aligned with the EC's concern that all citizens possess twenty-first-century knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Consequently, Ministers of Education in Europe are all committed to the improvement of ITE, while simultaneously acknowledging the importance of having a definite profile of prospective teachers and school leaders (EC). According to the EC, ITE reform needs to be.

> founded upon a shared agreement in each education system about what it takes to be a high quality teacher: what competences (knowledge, skills and attitudes) they need, how these can be understood, described and deployed—and what policies and practical provisions can support teachers to acquire and develop them throughout their careers. (EC, 2013, p. 5)

Teachers worldwide are functioning within a controversial professional terrain, due to the intensity of accountability policies that highlight performance and responsibility for student outcomes. The current policy era that is pervaded by this new discourse of accountability is distinct due to its 'instrumentalist notions of what it means to be a teacher', while the dominant accountability policies can be regarded as both *cause* and *effect* of ways that teachers understand themselves' (ibid, p. 700, original emphasis).

Consequently, literature reveals that issues of teacher professionalism and teacher professional identity are a bone of contention at both a political and professional level following recent education reforms across several countries in Europe, Australia, and the USA. Sachs (2001) identifies two main discourses revolving around teacher professionalism, managerial and democratic. Clarke and Newman (1997) argue how professionalism operates as both an occupational strategy and an organizational strategy, with hegemonic discourses in teacher professionalism defining specific certainties and concerns. The traditional notion of professionalism revolves around the interrelated concepts of knowledge, autonomy, and responsibility (Furlong et al., 2000). The managerialist discourse that came about following recent policies promoting devolution and decentralization has made visible the teachers' ability to reach measurable outcomes through stricter accountability measures. On the other hand, democratic discourses foster collaboration among teachers and other stakeholders, granting the former more decision-making power when it comes to policy implementation and reform agendas. Among the various factors that shape teacher professionalism, performance cultures, increased accountability, and standards stand out as shapers of policy and practice, exercising both positive and negative effects on its political intent (Sachs, 2016). Performance cultures utilize performance indicators to measure both accountability and the alignment of outcomes with strategy, with the main function in school education being to raise student learning outcomes through the quality and standard of teaching. Moreover, performance cultures can be beneficial for the teaching profession through the provision of a shared language about practice and a systematic approach for the celebration of teaching. Notwithstanding, accountability is described as 'a two-sided sword' (Sachs, 2016, p. 415) due to the distinct accountabilities pinpointed by both the teachers and the government. It is the huge financial investment by governments, coupled with policy priorities of raising learning outcomes that call for this focus on accountability, a focus which at times threatens to lead to 'accountability overload' (Levitt, Janta & Wegrich, 2008, p. 16). Standards are regarded as the tool for overseeing teacher accountability to ensure compliance, with a possible focus on the development and enhancement of teacher quality.

The global interest in defining the quality of teachers' work through teacher standards has been attributed to the hegemonic neoliberal political ideologies of these Western economies, mainly due to the increased focus on the work of schools and their vital role in the production of human capital. With measures of school effectiveness reflected in global education competitions, pressure was put on teacher standards as the key to improving teacher quality (Forde et al., 2016). Nevertheless, as Darling-Hammond (1999) claims:

> Teaching standards are not a magic bullet. By themselves, they cannot solve the problems of dysfunctional school organizations … Standards, like all reforms, hold their own dangers. Standard setting in all professions must be vigilant against the possibilities that practice could become constrained by the codification of knowledge. (p. 39)

Consequently, Torrance and Forde (2017) outline how professional standards can be interpreted as 'one element in the policy "technologies", the tools, artefacts and practices used in the process of teacher workforce development as part of a wider policy drive for improvement' (p. 111), while drawing out the three main functions served by these standards with specific references to the Scottish context. The 'reprofessionalization' agenda for teacher attrition and retention is a pressing theme in international policy (OECD, 2015), although tensions may arise in cases of conflicts between policy prescriptions and teachers' expertise and vision. Standards may also aid in promoting consistency of practice across educational settings, thus exerting a powerful influence throughout an educational system but at times constraining teachers in limiting the space for them to generate their own teacher narratives (Kennedy, 2005). Standards can also serve a developmental function as self-evaluation tools or systemwide professional learning, thus rendering the philosophy of teaching underpinning a particular set of standards as critical (Torrance & Forde, 2017). Andrew (1997) argues that 'in this era of standards, writers use the term in many different ways, seldom bothering to unpack the differences in meaning; standards become the answer to all questions. They are thought to provide the magic ingredient to restructuring all education' (p. 168). Sachs (2003) thus identifies four uses of professional standards as they are used in educational policy documents and popular discourses, namely as common sense; quality assurance; quality improvement, in addition to certification and control. Mayer and Reid (2016) challenge the authorship of professional standards due to the fact that they mirror the philosophy of their authors and proofreaders/commentators at a particular point in time. Besides the lack of evidence of empirical research based on effective teaching in the professional standards, they reflect a market-oriented problematization of teacher education with what counts as present 'effective' school systems determining future teacher generations. Sachs (2003) challenges the uncritical use of standards which may at times work against the professionalization agenda in terms of improving teacher performance, teacher learning, and the standing of teachers, concluding that 'Standards cannot and should not be frozen in time; they must be flexible to the changing conditions of teaching and learning as they occur inside and outside of schools' (Sachs, 2003, p. 176). The design of the standards also determines how this will be received by the teachers, with a number of issues coming into question, namely the level of detail required for standardization and the authenticity and accuracy of these practice specifications (Forde et al., 2016).

Literature around professional standards reveals two general positions—those against and those for. They can be regarded as static and reductionist due to the problems that are generated over the years due to them being time- and context-specific. Nonetheless, they can be looked upon as positive and empowering when used as a means of promotion and enrichment by the profession itself (Adoniou & Gallagher, 2017). Likewise, Mayer et al (2005) identify two discourses in the emerging policy

developments surrounding standards setting in the Australian education landscape—the 'standards for professional learning' discourse and the 'standards for accountability/appraisal' discourse (p. 162). Moreover, the balance between ambition and directive has been identified as an additional competing dimension of professional standards (Torrance & Forde, 2017).

This perennial polarization of positions, which is difficult to eradicate, calls for an exploratory dialogue with the policymaking community to open up discursive spaces that allow accountability and standardization to co-exist with personal teacher narratives. As McNally et al. (2008) put it,

> What is not easy to resolve is the extent to which personal qualities and an individual's capacity to do a particular job well, including the ability to teach children well, could be captured in any quantifiable way—or whether certain qualities remain unmeasurable. (p. 296)

The reform in teacher professionalism has brought about countless benefits which have simultaneously created several challenges for teachers to adapt, to be retrained, and to deal with reform fatigue. The focus on 'meeting a standard' has resulted in tensions among autonomy, accountability, and agency, with consequent effects on teacher leadership potential and development, both at ITE level and further along one's professional career trajectory. As a matter of fact,

> The modernization of teachers through the remodelling of the school workforce is acknowledging the functional and organizational position of the teacher as leader of a classroom, who is to be externally motivated by a hierarchical superior and is used as a resource to deliver organizational outcomes. (Gunter, 2005, p.17)

Policymakers widely recognize the crucial role of teachers for the successful implementation of reforms. Therefore, not surprisingly, most reform efforts are directed at teachers in order to improve their knowledge, skills, and capacities. Positioning around teachers as policymakers is established on the organization of their work, as well as the relationship between teachers as employees and the state (Ozga, 1995; Smyth, 2001). Classroom practice choices are determined by context rather than pedagogy, 'the thrust toward school reform appears to be predicated on a degradation of the work of teachers, with the craft of teaching being replaced by a panoply of technical rational procedures' (Smyth, 2001, p.9 as cited in Gunter, 2005, p. 33). Gunter (2005) argues that the teacher leadership literature consolidates this 'because through the optimism of the teacher as change agent reform can be smoothly delivered … consequently, teachers have been simultaneously sedated and stimulated' (p. 34). Notwithstanding, leading teachers as policymakers is 'an ethical stance' (Crowther, 1997, p. 15) based on the exercise of agency rather than accepting work as 'ventriloquists for transnational capital' (Smyth, 2001, p. 156). Due to the intense focus on teacher quality in the global policyscape, links between schooling and the economy have identified the teachers as the key players in increasing a country's global competitiveness. Large-scale reform agendas are thus justified as vital to address the issue of raising student attainment—what is perceived as a major problem for government (Mayer & Reid, 2016). The resultant global education reform movement (Sahlberg 2007) has witnessed increased standardization, a narrowing of curriculum,

and greater accountability which has inevitably led to reform in teacher education policy, with these same graduates being looked upon as policy translators in the classroom, thus affecting the major stakeholders—the students. The involvement of teachers in wider school reform is seen as critical. Teachers are also important institutional agents because their day-to-day instructional choices shape the implementation of reform. Teacher agency, and their capacity to make effective school reform decisions, is paramount for successful school improvement. The conditions in which teachers work influence the actualization of these reforms.

Research over the past several decades has reinforced the fact that teachers are required to be active agents in educational reform in order to realize improvements in the processes of teaching and learning. Teachers' agency is part of a complex dynamic, interwoven with the structural and cultural features of the school, the national education landscape, and the larger policy environment. Moreover, the present age of accountability has moulded both the teaching culture and teacher agency in significant ways, mainly that of pressuring teachers to improve their students' performance on standardized test measures (Datnow, 2012). Teachers are recognized as 'institutional agents' (Bridwell-Mitchell, 2015, p. 141) as their daily instructional choices shape the implementation of reform, with the resulting persistence or change in institutionalized instructional practices. This micro-institutional change in schools can thus be replicated at a national policy and curricular level.

According to Priestley et al. (2015), 'teachers seem to matter once more' (p. 1), following decades of policies that have actively deprofessionalized teachers through highly prescriptive curricula and strict regimes of inspection and control. Teachers are thus being constructed explicitly as agents of change—there has been a growing realization that it is impossible to have a teacher-proof curriculum since teachers mediate the curriculum in ways which are often adversative to policy intentions, leading to an implementation gap and to unintended consequences (ibid). Priestley et al. (2015) argue that 'it is problematic for policy to demand that teachers exercise agency in their working practices, and then simultaneously deny them the means to do so, effectively disabling them' (p. 4). Agency is thus regarded as an emergent phenomenon where people engage with their ecological context, 'Agency, in other words, is not something that people can *have*; it is something that people *do'* (Priestley et al., 2012, p. 3, original emphasis). Teachers cannot remain positioned as implementers of someone else's policy, as curricular reform does place teachers outside of their usual comfort zones, working in new and often unfamiliar ways.

Literature reveals an intricate interconnection between professional identity, accountability demands, and teacher agency (Sloan, 2006), with authoritative discourses limiting and gradually shaping the mode by which teachers measure their own effectiveness (Britzman, 1991). Accountability demands interact with teachers' professional identities, rather than simply being internalized by them. It is also evident that policies developed outside the school have an impact on teacher practices and identities, sacrificing teacher professionalism in the process, due to a loss of professional autonomy. In a nutshell, 'Accountability discourses have reshaped the landscape of teacher professionalism, and altered the way that reformers, policymakers, administrators, and even teachers define what it means to be successful. It has become

the episteme of our time … more and more teachers' professional identities and constructions of agency will be formed within this discourse' (Buchanan, 2015, p. 716).

There is an ongoing tension within educational policy worldwide between countries that seek to reduce the opportunities for teachers to exert judgement and control over their own work, and those who seek to promote it. 'Some see teacher agency as a weakness within the operation of schools … whereas others argue that because of the complexities of situated educational practices, teacher agency is an indispensable element of good and meaningful education' (Biesta et al., 2015, p. 624). Bringing the professional standards closer to the teachers, or the teachers closer to the professional standards, enables the fostering of a sense of ownership which leads to a feeling of achievement rather than of formal appraisal. This is a way of enhancing teacher agency, thus empowering them as policy owners, not solely as policy translators and implementers at school and classroom level.

Any teacher's professional identity is 'formed and re-formed constantly over the course of a career and mediated by a complex interplay of personal, professional, and political dimensions of teachers' lives' (Mockler, 2011, p. 518). Mifsud (2018) demonstrates how the 'Standards for Registration' in Scotland contribute to all three dimensions in her exploration of student-teachers' perceptions of these standards and their eventual translation, contributed to the construction of their professional identities. At initial teacher education stage, these standards act as a gatekeeper to the profession, while exhibiting both managerialist and democratic teacher professionalism discourses, promoting accountability and collaboration. The student-teachers are subjected by the Standards, with the latter being internalized as a practice of the self, as their main focus is on how to achieve competences to continue beyond the probationer stage, as structure takes priority over agency in the lack of importance attributed to teacher leadership and professional reflection and communication. The complexities of standards and their inherent tensions warrant recognition, therefore, both in initial teacher education and beyond, with the need to be treated 'as discursive texts, where meaning is unclear', thus enabling teachers as professionals 'to question endorsed policy and become better informed in their practice' (Torrance & Forde, 2017, p. 123).

Teachers are regarded as key players in the enactment of accountability systems at the local level, at times being forced to vindicate their professional status and judgement which ultimately affects their professional identity and their perception of self-efficacy as education professionals. Verger and Parcerisa (2017) position teachers' interactions with accountability schemes 'as enactors, as conditions, and as results' (p. 450). Moreover, the way they are re-invented and regarded within accountability schemes as well as their modes of perception, interaction, and performance within such schemes provides an insight into the differential and contradictory consequences of accountability in education. Notwithstanding, 'professional identity is often interpreted in terms of individuals' perceptions of themselves as a teacher and as the teacher they wish to become' (Canrinus, 2011, p. 3). Teacher identity 'provides a framework for teachers to construct their own ideas of *how to be, how to act* and *how to understand* their work and their place in society' (Sachs, 2005,

p. 15, original emphasis). Teachers identify a gap between pedagogical vision and practice, thus calling for teaching that needs to be made financially and intellectually more attractive, hence providing better opportunities to prepare for tomorrow's world (OECD, 2019). Besides being lifelong learners, teachers are also regarded as valued professionals, with the notion of professional teachers thus evolving to address the challenges emerging in twenty-first-century education (OECD, 2020).

1.4 Developing Teachers as 'Professionals': Reconfiguring Teacher Education as a Continuum?

Traditionally, teacher education has focused mostly on initial teacher education, with Musset (2009) suggesting that both the philosophy behind teacher education and the ensuring policy should be structured as 'a continuum of teacher learning', with teacher education being 'a life-long experience that goes from their initial education to their retirement' (p. 8)—a continuum composed of both the formal preparation received and the informal influences throughout their career trajectory. Notwithstanding, 'One of the main stakes is that teacher education is not perceived, by policy designers and teacher education providers, but even by the teachers themselves, as being a continuum, and the linkages that should be weaved between initial education and continuing training are often missing, which means that the different parts of teacher education are not articulated to each other' (ibid, p. 12).

A continuum approach to teacher education requires co-operation and dialogue between policymakers, education institutions, and professional communities, bolstered by a shift from piecemeal policy actions to reliable, regular and inclusive overarching teacher policy. The following cornerstones of teacher policy would thus encompass the teacher education as a continuum perspective: a clear reference framework for teacher competences; multiple selection mechanisms situated at various stages of the teachers' professional continuum; consistency in teacher assessment and feedback across different career stages, with clear definitions of what, how, why, and when to assess and by whom; conscientious selection, preparation, professional development, and support of teacher educators; and a common policy framework for effective school leadership for effectual support of teachers' careers (Caena, 2014).

These policy cornerstones are further enhanced/bolstered by the European Commission's (2015) overarching policy outlook, based on five perspectives that are outlined in the Table 1.2.

Consequently, removing barriers to teachers' engagement in CPD has been acknowledged as a priority issue for policies to enhance teacher quality (OECD 2014). Stakeholders and responsible authorities acting within education systems are duty bound to accurately identify the teachers' professional needs and secure access to relevant training (OECD, 2005), while teachers and school leaders simultaneously have the professional responsibility to pursue, distinguish, and get involved in these development activities. CPD activities have been identified as an essential

Table 1.2 Five perspectives on the continuum of the teaching profession (adapted from European Commission, 2015, p. 19)

	Perspectives	Initial Teacher Education (ITE)	Induction	Continuous Professional Development (CPD)
1	Pedagogical [teachers' learning needs]	'Becoming a teacher'	'Being a teacher'	'Staying and growing as a teacher'
2	Instrumental [support structures]	Supporting student-teachers	Mentoring programmes	Learning activities supporting career-long CPD
3	Career [job market/career pathway]	Obtaining a teacher qualification	Probation period	Teacher appraisal and feedback; identification of personal development goals; career phase moves
4	Professional [competence levels]	NQT competences	Probationer teacher competences	Middle leadership competences
5	Cultural [local school culture]	Influenced by the involvement of education providers and training schools	The extent to which teacher education is integrated and stimulated through professional learning communities; team teaching; and action research projects	

component determining the success or otherwise of any major education reform in OECD countries (OECD, 2015). In fact, the inclusion of participation in CPD as an indicator for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) is evidence of the increasing relevance that continuous training has on the development of teachers (United Nations, 2015). UNESCO gives importance to both pre-service and in-service teacher training (UNESCO, 2016).

The TALIS 2018 survey (OECD, 2019) presents barriers to teachers' participation in CPD, which are listed in order of importance (in descending order of the percentage of teachers reporting these as an impediment). The highest reported barrier is that of conflicts with their work schedule, closely followed by lack of incentives for participation, as well as the high expenses involved. Lack of relevant professional development available poses another obstacle. Teachers also stated lack of time due to family commitments, lack of employer support, and not possessing the prerequisites as additional hurdles to participation in CPD.

1.5 Concluding Remarks: The 'Messy' Field of Teacher Education Research

Teaching and teacher education is a deeply contested field within both European and global education, as well as within the different national contexts of Europe and the OECD countries, mainly due to the fact that 'as governments increasingly

look to education to shore up the tattered fabric of public life, the gaze trained on teacher education becomes even more intense', with the latter thus finding it 'increasingly difficult to resist the ever-expanding regulatory encroachments of its political "masters"' (Hoveid & Conroy, 2008, p. 452).

Paniagua and Sanchez-Marti (2018) illustrate teaching as a profession with the 'most inequitable professional expectations' towards newly-recruited teachers who are envisaged to accomplish and achieve as ably as their experienced counterparts, with their professional needs as beginners remaining unacknowledged. Moreover, their early years of teaching are most likely spent in a variety of challenging schools, which also proves to be challenging for their early career development and teacher identity formation. 'The enthusiasm, idealism, and recent training of early career teachers makes them an invaluable source for innovation, but *only if* successfully aligned with proper school environments and a rigorous system of scaffolding to support their in-service process of learning' (ibid, p. 41, original emphasis).

Research on teacher education is a 'messy' and somewhat young research field, 'interpolated with many strands of educational research and many different approaches to research ... hence, research on teaching ... does not constitute research on teacher education' (Hoveid & Conroy, 2008, p. 453). A narrowing of focus will thus contribute to our understanding of what it is that teacher education actually does. In this respect, new investigations are needed to explore the concept of teacher education as a continuum, and how this is being enacted in the various distinct global education contexts. The main rationale behind this edited volume is to provide a critical re-reading of the concept of teacher education, while re-thinking the sole focus on initial teacher education, with particular implications for education policy, theory, and practice.

1.5.1 Overview of the Book

The first chapter aims to set the context for the subsequent chapters that provide a critical re-reading of the concept of teacher education from various countries. Mifsud demonstrates how teaching and teacher education are a deeply contested field within European education and within the different national contexts of Europe, with research on teacher education still being a 'messy' and somewhat young research field, thus calling for new investigations to explore the concept of teacher education from ITE to retirement and how this is being enacted within the various distinct international education contexts. Chapter 2 takes us to Canada, where Campbell traces the 'policy turn' in teacher education in Ontario during the twenty-first century. In Chap. 3, Campbell explores teacher education in a post-colonial Hong Kong, by discussing new ways of understanding the role of teacher agency in the context of teacher education and the implications of this for policy, practice, and research as we imagine the future possibilities of teacher education and education more broadly. Chapter 4 is located in Spain, where Mena, Peinado, and Hernandez explore pre-service teachers' self-efficacy beliefs on their role as teachers during the practicum

via a quantitative study. In Chap. 5, Day and Shanks explore teacher induction in Scotland via a critique of the national Teacher Induction Scheme and the Flexible Route to Registration as a teacher, thus highlighting both the benefits and weaknesses of these two pathways into the teaching profession. In Chap. 6, Lord demonstrates how teachers' professional lives are situated at the intersection of local, national, and global educational policy contexts while exploring the interplay between their professional identity and agency. In Chap. 7, Wimmer, Hostfalt, and Wermke focus on the empirical value of the selected course literature in teacher education in order to understand paradigm shifts in teacher education over time via a presentation of the example of Swedish special education teachers. In Chap. 8, Gibson, Outhwaite, Sahlin, Isaeva, and Tsatrian focus on the different national interpretations of leadership preparation and development, and the links between this and the support of principals in schools in England, Sweden, and Russia. Chapter 9 takes us to Scotland, where Mitchell, Torrance, Harvie, Forde, and McMahon critically explore educational policy directives related to the changing role of headteachers (principals) and consider the implications for career-long teacher education in Scotland. In Chap. 10, Day draws together the key themes emerging in the preceding chapters and reflects on where some of the theoretical and practical tensions exist within national and transnational policy.

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Chapter 2
Policy Turns in Teacher Education: The Case of Ontario, Canada, During the Twenty-First Century

Carol Campbell

Abstract This chapter traces the "policy turn" in teacher education in Ontario during the twenty-first century. Initial Teacher Education (ITE) was reformed to become a two-year programme, including aspects of international trends: considering the role of universities, an emphasis on practicum and clinical practice, and increasing government regulation of ITE curricula. In 2018, the newly elected government introduced a Math Proficiency Test (MPT) which all teacher candidates were to pass. The Ontario Teacher Candidates' Council won a legal case against the government which resulted in the ruling that the MPT contravened the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. A further argument against teacher testing was that ITE and continuing professional development (CPD) were best placed to support teachers' capacity. For in-service teachers, the chapter examines the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) for beginning teachers and the Teacher Learning and Leadership Program (TLLP) for experienced teachers. Both programmes have been beneficial; however, there is a need to ensure all beginning teachers can access NTIP with quality mentorship and, following the ending of the TLLP, there is a need for a provincial strategy to support teacher leadership. Finally, the chapter considers the importance of partnership working and collaborative policy-making with teachers in teacher education.

Keywords Initial teacher education · Continuing professional development · Continuing professional learning and development · Teacher education policy · Ontario

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2.1 Introduction: Teacher and Teaching Quality, and Teacher Education

Attention to initial teacher education (ITE) and continuing professional development (CPD) has taken a "policy turn" (Cochran-Smith, 2016, p. 97) since the late twentieth century. Cochran-Smith (2004) explains the concept of "teacher education as a policy problem":

> In many of the major debates since the mid-to-late 1990s, teacher education has been defined as a policy problem. Here the goal is to identify which of the broad parameters of teacher education policy that can be controlled by institutional, state, or federal policy makers is most likely to have a positive effect. The point is to use empirical evidence to guide policymakers in their investment in finite human and fiscal resources in various aspects of the preparation and professional development of K-12 teachers. (p. 297)

This shift to a policy focus on the quest for effective ITE and CPD is associated with wider neoliberal shifts globally (Menter & Flores, 2021a) and an increased government focus on teacher quality. In 2007, Barber and Mourshed (2007, p.13) coined the adage, "the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers". This emphasis on individual teachers as responsible for education quality, primarily defined in terms of student achievement outcomes, is problematic. Therefore, further adaptations and nuances to the understanding of the relationships between teachers and education quality are required (Campbell et al., 2022). First, it is necessary to recognize that: "Both teacher quality—the professional—and teaching quality – teachers' day-to-day practices in specific contexts—matter" (Campbell et al., 2022, p. 5). Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) explain "*Teacher quality* might be thought of as the bundle of personal traits, skills, and understanding an individual brings to teaching" (p. 17), whereas:

> *Teaching quality* refers to strong instruction that enables a wide range of students to learn. Such instruction meets the demands of the discipline, the goals of instruction, and the needs of students in a particular context. *Teaching quality* is in part a function of *teacher quality*—teachers' knowledge, skills and dispositions—but it is also strongly influenced by the context of instruction, including factors external to what the teacher brings. (p. 18)

The quality of an education system is not simply about the quality of individual teachers, but rather a more complex understanding of teachers' professional knowledge, skills and practices, the needs of their particular students, and the influence and priorities of their local contexts of practice, including relationships and work with professional colleagues, parents/guardians and community members. Hence, a further adaptation of the adage is: "Teaching quality is influenced by teachers' working contexts and conditions within their education system, school, and classroom" (Campbell et al., 2022, p. 7). Furthermore, the policy context which teachers work in can be more or less supportive of teachers' professionalism, development, working conditions and practices. Hence, Thompson (2021 p.114) proposed it "is time to recalculate" the adage about education quality to become: "the quality of an education system cannot exceed the extent to which it supports, sustains, and invests in the status of its teachers".

This chapter concerns this focus on how an education system "supports, sustains, and invests" in teachers through analyses of policies concerning ITE and CPD in the province of Ontario, Canada. As Menter and Flores (2021a p. 1) explained:

> Teacher education continues to be a key focus of education policy concerns around the world as the influences of neoliberalism and globalization continue to have significant effects. But as we have noted before (e.g. Menter 2019) the national cultures and histories of each country still retain a strong shaping influence on them reinforcing the now popular thesis of 'vernacular globalisation'.

Therefore, while connecting to wider international trends and debates concerning teacher education across the career trajectory, this chapter aims to provide what Livingston and Flores (2017, p. 557) have described as a "contribution as an historical account of teacher education at a particular moment in the reform and development process in that country".

2.2 Initial Teacher Education and Continuing Professional Development in Ontario, Canada

There is not a national school education system in Canada; rather, as established by the *Constitution Act* of 1867*,* K-12 education is the responsibility of ten provinces and three territories. Unlike many countries, the federal government does not have a direct role in policy-making for school education in Canada (with the exception of First Nations schools on reserves). While provinces and territories must comply with relevant federal legislation and regulations, including the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom stipulating that all school-age children have access to publicly funded education in either English or French language, each province and territory has the responsibility for the governance, design, funding, implementation and monitoring of their local education systems (Campbell et al., 2017a). There are some commonalities across Canada, including the importance of education and a teaching profession that is a university-trained graduate profession and unionized. However, there are variations in policies and practices, and this is considered to be a strength for recognizing the diversity of local contexts, communities and needs. There is currently no advocacy for school education to be transferred to federal government responsibility. It is not possible, therefore, to talk of a Canadian school education system or national school and/or teacher education policies—they do not exist; rather, Canada is a mosaic of provincial and territorial education systems with the respective governments overseeing various "policy turns" over times.

This chapter focuses on developments in teacher education in the province of Ontario during the early twenty-first century. I have selected Ontario because it is the largest province with approximately 40% of the Canadian population as residents and it is a province that has gained international attention for its education reforms, including for teacher education and professional development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). At the start of the 2000s, a Conservative government, elected

in 1995, was implementing substantial cuts in education programmes, services and staffing. The government's education policies included implementing a standards-based core curriculum, the creation of the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) for provincial testing, and an "Ontario Teacher Testing Program" to test teachers for certification, recertification and performance evaluation (Anderson & Ben Jaffar, 2006). These policy shifts are consistent with the approaches Cochran-Smith (2004) warned against as a political response to a focus on education quality defined primarily by measurable outcomes: "Increasingly, then, the focus is on training and testing to ensure that all teachers have basic subject matter knowledge and the technical skills to bring pupils' test scores to minimum thresholds" (p. 298). Such approaches ignore the complexity of teaching and learning, and the broader purposes of education for democratic societies. In the case of Ontario, this combination of financial cuts and education policies was unpopular with the education profession and resulted in strikes and significant professional and public disquiet about the changes to the education system.

The new Liberal government (elected in 2003) committed to prioritizing Ontario's publicly funded public education system. This included a policy focus on educational quality measured through raised student achievement results and reduced gaps in performance, and an emphasis on "capacity building with a focus on results" (Osmond-Johnson & Campbell, 2018). These foci remain consistent with Cochran-Smith's (2004) conceptualization of teacher education as a "policy problem" with a political assumption "that the right policies can simultaneously solve the problems of teacher retention, teacher quality, and pupil achievement" (p. 298). Therefore, the Ontario policy shifts can be seen as part of a wider international focus on education quality defined in terms of teachers' teaching and students' achievements.

However, what was different in Ontario was the way these policies were to be co-developed *with* the education profession through a commitment to partnership working, trust and respect (Campbell, 2021). Symbolic of this policy shift was one of the first actions of the new government to cancel the previously reviled "Ontario Teacher Testing Program". The funding ($25 million CDN) saved by ending the test was re-allocated to the teacher federations to work in partnership with the Ministry to provide a range of professional learning opportunities for teachers.

A Partnership Table was established "bringing together groups and associations representing students, parents, trustees, directors of education, supervisory officers, teachers, early childhood educators, support workers, principals, and relevant provincial organizations to meet with the Minister of Education and senior government officials" to provide insights early in new policy developments (Campbell et al., 2017a, p. 105). Representatives of the education profession involved in these shifts to partnership working spoke favourably about being included in policy discussions and development; for example, a teacher federation staff member explained:

> The fact that we are at the table with the Ministry regularly and with all the stakeholders, I think really says that we are valued for the work that we do. We may not always agree, but we can usually come up with some form of consensus or an agreement around how things might roll out. So, I think that we are regarded as professionals…that makes a big difference.

> We are trusted with our professional development of our teachers…We are trusted to make those professional judgments. (Quoted in Campbell et al., 2017a, p. 106)

This approach to partnership working for policy development was also applied for teacher education, through the establishment, in 2005, of a Working Table on Teacher Development. Over the next decade, major transformations of initial teacher education and continuing professional development were introduced, as outlined in Fig. 2.1. A government official involved throughout these developments explained:

> It's worth mentioning that it wasn't just a change in policy, but it was also change in how we do policy. This suite of programs was developed over a ten-year period and each program grew out of the work that we did collaboratively with our stakeholders. This work was done through a working table, which included the Teacher Federations, the Ontario College of Teachers, parent groups, student groups, and school boards all around the table working out these programs. (Quoted in Campbell et al., 2017a, p. 120)

Therefore, when considering policy shifts in teacher education, it is important to consider the approaches to policy initiation, co-design and co-development, as well as the substantive content and outcomes of specific policies.

Unfortunately, after the decade of partnership working outlined above, relationships between the government and education sector deteriorated with education stakeholder organizations feeling they were increasingly "consulted" on policies already decided and developed, rather than from the outset of policy considerations. Consequently, a new process bringing together all education stakeholder groups and the government was initiated, which resulted in the development of a specific

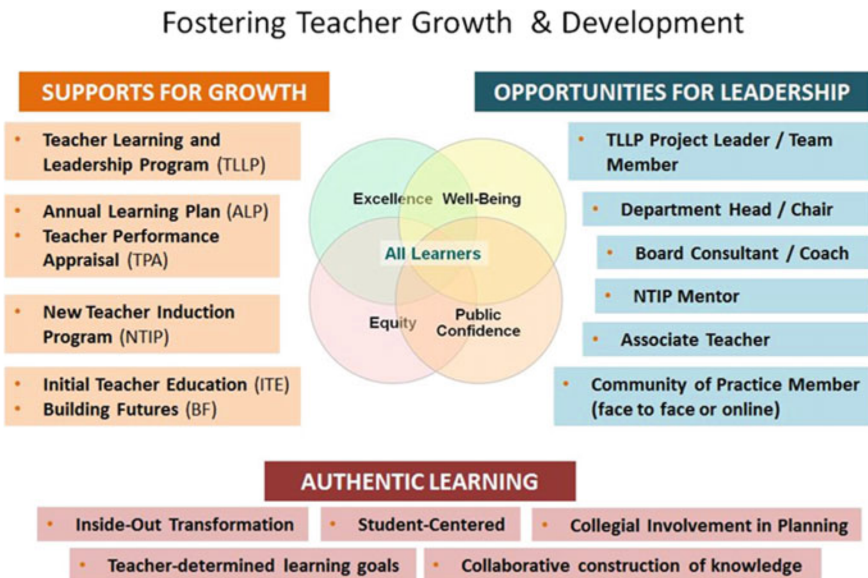

Fig. 2.1 Teacher development policies in Ontario. *Source Ontario Ministry of Education, Teaching Policy and Standards Branch (2017)*

Policy and Program Memorandum detailing an approach to Collaborative Professionalism for partnership working going forward (Campbell, 2021). With a change of government in 2018, there has been a further erosion of partnership working with the education sector and mechanisms such as the Partnership Table are no longer operational and no equivalent mechanism has been created.

2.2.1 Initial Teacher Education

In contrast to political interpretations of simplistic notions of teacher quality and linked shifts in teacher education policy, teaching is a highly complex professional practice. As Grossman, Hammerness and MacDonald (2009) commented: "One of the challenges faced by efforts to gain professional status for teachers is that teaching is complex work that looks deceptively simple" (p. 273). Relatedly, the question of "how best to educate teachers" (Livingston & Flores, 2017 p. 555) is complex and highly contested. In this section, I discuss shifts in ITE policy in Ontario and connections to persisting debates about the role of universities and schools in teacher education, the content of teacher education curricula, and the balance between theory and practices with increasing attention to clinical practice.

Teaching has generally been considered an attractive career in Canada, including Ontario (Campbell et al., 2017a), although this has shifted more recently with the combination of the impact of the pandemic and of the current Conservative government's approaches to education having negative consequences for teachers' professional lives (Bocking, 2022). As is in the case in other high-performing education systems such as Finland and Singapore, Ontario faculties of education are selective about entry into ITE. Selection is based on a combination of high academic achievements, plus evidence of personal and professional attributes suitable to becoming a teacher, and equity statements and policies intended to diversify recruitment to teacher education (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Holden & Kitchen, 2016).

While ITE was part of the continua of training and professional development considered by the Working Table on Teacher Education, it was actually one of the last parts of the system to be reformed. The established model of ITE involved a one-year B.Ed. programme following completion of an undergraduate degree or a concurrent B.Ed. taken alongside a subject-specific undergraduate degree (totalling three years). However, following an election commitment and a period of consultation, the provincial government announced significant changes to teacher education, with the introduction of a four-semester (two-year) programme to begin in September 2015. These ITE policy shifts included a combination of educational and fiscal arguments.

There was a renewed emphasis on ensuring teachers were effectively trained to become high-quality teachers; although the approach taken combined notions of teacher education both as training and as a professional learning experience (Cochran-Smith, 2004). In particular, the decision was taken to lengthen the ITE programme to increase time for practical training in schools and to include further attention on areas identified as particular needs in their professional learning and

practice. The previous B.Ed. involved 40 days of practicum experience, which was the shortest required practicum period in Canada (Gambhir et al., 2008). In the words of one of the teachers interviewed for our *Empowered Educators in Canada* study, the previous B.Ed. programme was not sufficient preparation for the “real life” of a classroom teacher (Campbell et al., 2017a, p. 124).

The Ontario College of Teachers (OCT)—a professional regulatory body—sets out the specific requirements for provision of current ITE in Ontario:

> An acceptable programme of teacher education must be at least four semesters of postsecondary study. Please note that in the Canadian postsecondary system, an academic year is usually comprised of two semesters.

The four-semester teacher education programme generally consists of the following:

- 10% focused on education foundations (i.e. the history, philosophy and psychology of education);
- 20% focused on teaching methods suitable for two teaching qualifications in Ontario (i.e. how to teach students in particular grades or subjects);
- 20% in practice teaching—a minimum of 80 days of practice teaching supervised by the programme provider;
- 50% in any other areas of education to support methodology coursework, such as classroom management, how to use research data and new technology, supporting students with special learning needs and those from diverse communities.

> Your teacher education programme must be academic, not employment-based and completed at the postsecondary level. It must also lead to certification or authorization to teach in the jurisdiction where you completed the programme. (OCT n.d. p. 1)

The above allocation of topics and time clearly prioritizes a focus on teaching practice, versus education foundations and more theoretical orientations. Yet, a clear message from the consultation prior to the new teacher education programme being launched was also that ITE should be the purview of university faculties of education, as this was perceived as appropriate for the professional status and work of teachers. There was not support for alternative teacher education pathways. Reviewing developments across Europe, Livingston and Flores (2017) note a wider shift to the importance of universities being responsible for ITE; however, this contrasts with the policy shift to alternative, and often faster, pathways into teaching in countries such as the USA and England.

The linked consultation on the reform of ITE resulted in identification of a wide range of topics to be included in future programmes:

Regulation 347/02, *Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs* (Ontario College of Teachers, 2014) also lists the following new core content requirements that Ontario programmes must contain:

- Ontario curriculum;
- Use of educational research and data analysis;
- Inquiry-based research, data and assessment to address student learning;
- Use of technology as a teaching and learning tool;
- Theories of learning and teaching and differentiated instruction;
- Classroom management and organization;
- Child and adolescent development and student transitions;
- Student observation, assessment and evaluation;
- Supporting English language learners;
- Supporting French language learners;
- Pedagogy, assessment and evaluation for specific curriculum areas;
- Special education;
- Mental health, addictions and well-being;
- Education law and Standards of Practice;
- Professional relationships with colleagues;
- Knowledge of the Ontario context;
- First Nation, Metis and Inuit perspectives, cultures, histories and ways of knowing;
- Politique d'amenagement linguistique (PAL) de l'Ontario;
- Safe and accepting schools / creation of a positive school climate; and
- Parent engagement and communication (Petrarca & Kitchen, 2017 p. 10).

Although generated through consultation, the codification of an extensive core content for teacher education into regulation could be an example of shifts towards "the tightening grip" of government's over teacher education identified by Childs and Menter (2013) in England; and a troubling wider move to government intervention in what is considered appropriate teacher knowledge, practice and professionalism (Menter & Flores, 2021b). As Cochran-Smith (2004 p.298) elaborated, teacher education is not a neutral "policy problem", it "is a political problem" with "values and ideology" and "systems of power and privilege" influencing the intended purpose, content and outcomes of ITE. Universities in Ontario also had concerns about the details of extensive content to be covered and that this could lead to provincial standardization of ITE (Petrarca & Kitchen, 2017). Faculties of education have sought to retain some diversity and differentiation in their ITE programmes. However, the combination of the new ITE requirements, and reduced funding linked to reduced ITE students per year (discussed further below), has resulted in some specialist teacher education programmes closing, for example, to support Indigenous teacher education.

Consistent with international trends, the Ontario changes have been part of a wider "practicum turn" (Mattson et al. 2011), with a belief that expanding practicum

to a minimum of 80 days would support improved teacher education and, therefore, teacher and teaching quality. The extended practicum is intended to utilize clinical practice approaches. However, as Burn and Mutton (2015) have explained research-informed clinical practice is not simply about extended practicum time or new university-school partnerships; it involves:

… the intention of ITE programmes:

(a) To facilitate and deepen the *interplay* between the different kinds of knowledge generated and validated within the different contexts of school and university and
(b) To provide scope for beginning teachers to interrogate each in the light of the other, bringing both to bear on the interpreting and responding to their classroom experiences (p. 219).

While this is the intent of ITE in Ontario, there are challenges in finding school placements and experienced Associate Teachers to support teacher candidates. In particular, there is an absence of—and need for—support, development and mentoring of Associate Teachers to, in turn, be able to support, develop and mentor teacher candidates. Furthermore, like many education systems (e.g. Moorhouse, 2020), ensuring high-quality practicum experiences, based on a model of placements in-person in schools, became problematic during the COVID-19 pandemic. The OCT temporarily revoked the need for teacher candidates to complete 80 days of practicum to graduate and be certified as an Ontario teacher. While teacher candidates appreciated this flexibility, some expressed concern about the loss of valuable practical experience and working collaboratively with their Associate Teacher (Van Nuland et al., 2020). Alternative approaches to experiential learning and clinical practice were sought, for example in online learning environments and through wider educational opportunities in organizations and communities. Going forward, attention to a range of ways to learn and demonstrate practical experience—in person and online—will be needed.

Alongside professional development arguments for reformed ITE, the government also used labour market and budgetary rationales. The government subsidizes the cost of ITE by providing per student funding to universities. In the early twenty-first century, the government was funding 9000 ITE places per year. However, while the labour market fluctuated, a considerable oversupply of trained teachers versus available positions had resulted by the 2010s (with some exceptions for French language teachers, specific subject specialisms, and rural or remote locations). For example, in 2011, the OCT reported: “Almost one in three of the teacher education graduates of 2010 who sought teaching jobs during the 2010–11 school year were unemployed” (OCT, 2011, p. 3). According to the OCTs’ annual *Transitions to Teaching* survey, a balance between supply of newly qualified teachers and demand from teacher retirements had been reached by 2021. In the 2020–2021 school year, there was a 4% unemployment rate for newly qualified teachers in their first year of teaching and an average of 1% unemployment rate for teachers in their two to five years’ post-graduation (OCT, 2021).

The revised ITE programme clearly had an intended impact on reducing oversupply of newly qualified teachers. However, there are now shortages for teachers working in the French language systems. Furthermore, teachers trained outside of Canada have to go through an evaluation of their existing qualifications, may be required to retrain, and need to meet requirements for certification by the OCT. This group of teachers currently has the highest unemployment rate at 37% in 2021 (OCT, 2021). In addition, now in the third year of responses to schooling during the pandemic, increasing numbers of teachers are retiring, taking a period of leave or resigning from the profession (Campbell et al., 2022). The OCT is now warning of a teacher shortage.

Achieving qualified teaching status and the supply of teachers has also been affected by the current Conservative government introducing a new Math Proficiency Test (MPT) which all teacher candidates were to successfully pass before being able to achieve Ontario Certified Teacher Status. The MPT was administered by the provincial assessment agency as an online test beginning in 2020. The government's rationale was that the overall provincial Grade 6 math test results had declined in recent years—with 47% of students achieving the provincial standard in 2018–2019 (EQAO, 2019). In many ways, this heralds a return to the previous Conservative government's unpopular policy shifts to an emphasis on testing teachers and students. While the political and media rhetoric was that the majority of Ontario students were "failing math", this was a misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the provincial assessment system. For example, provincial results are calculated based on all students in a Grade not just the students who sit the test (so there will never be a 100% result) and the provincial standard had originally been established at a high level of 70% or B to achieve the standard (Level 3 and above); however, students at Level 2 (below standard) still have general levels of proficiency. Furthermore, provincial math results in other assessed grades (three and nine) were not declining and Ontario continued to perform relatively highly in national (O'Grady et al., 2021) and international (OECD, 2019) mathematics tests.

The government used one data point, the EQAO Grade 6 Math results, as reason for significant reforms of teacher certification and they laid the responsibility of "failure in math" with teacher education. Reid et al., (2018 p. 1) had conducted a study of "the math content knowledge (MCK) and math anxiety (MA) levels of 99 elementary teacher candidates (TCs) before and 97 TCs after a math methods course". Their study indicated that teacher candidates experienced math anxiety and concerns about math content knowledge, but these were improved through participating in math courses during their ITE. The government latched on to the findings about teacher candidates struggling with math, rather than the conclusion that ITE had a positive impact, and decided that all future teacher candidates would require passing a provincial math test. There was considerable controversy about this move, EQAO released their own research paper indicating that online math tests of the type proposed were not effective for developing math pedagogical expertise. Issues were confounded by implementation issues where teacher candidates could not register for the test or find a testing location near them. The Ontario Teacher Candidates' Council took legal action against the government and won a ruling by the Ontario Superior Court

of Justice that the MPT contravened the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms on grounds of the potentially inequitable impact of standardized testing, especially for racialized teacher candidates, and that B.Ed. programmes were better placed to support mathematics proficiency. The MPT is no longer required.

2.2.2 Continuing Professional Development

Thompson's (2021, p. 114) recalculation of the adage about quality education and teachers to "the quality of an education system cannot exceed the extent to which it supports, sustains, and invests in the status of its teachers", includes a priority focus on continuing professional development and professional learning opportunities for teachers. Cordingley et al. (2019 p. 20) clarify the distinction between:

Continuous Professional Development (CPD): The sustained support offered to teachers to develop their skills, knowledge and experience, beyond their initial teacher training.

Continuous Professional Learning and Development (CPLD): The processes and activities teachers undertake as they participate in and respond to CPD.

Both the formal CPD opportunities available for teachers and teachers continuing learning through their professional work are vitally important. Indeed, the necessity of CPD is recognized in the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015) and specifically in the Framework for Action for Sustainable Development Goal 4: towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all (UNESCO, 2016). Education systems that tend to be higher performing, in terms of student achievement and equity outcomes, also tend to invest in and support teachers' development throughout their careers (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Therefore, there has been considerable attention to the features of effective CPD that can support improvements in teachers' knowledge, understanding and practices, with benefits for supporting students' learning also (e.g. Garrett et al., 2021; Sims et al., 2021).

There has been considerable policy and professional attention to CPD and CPLD in Ontario. As indicated in Fig. 2.2, Ontario educators actively participate in a range of CPD and CPLD activities. Under the Ontario *Education Act,* the Minister of Education may "establish policies and guidelines respecting criteria and topics for the professional activity days that are required by regulation and require boards to comply with the policies and guidelines" (subsection 8(1), paragraph 28). There is currently a requirement for three mandatory professional activity days during the school year on priority topics identified by the government. In addition, school districts and schools may identify priority CPD needs linked to their improvement plans and priorities. Teachers can also select to complete Advanced Qualifications (AQ) linked to their professional needs and career development. As well as formal CPD, Ontario educators are active in a range of self-directed and collaborative CPLD. There is

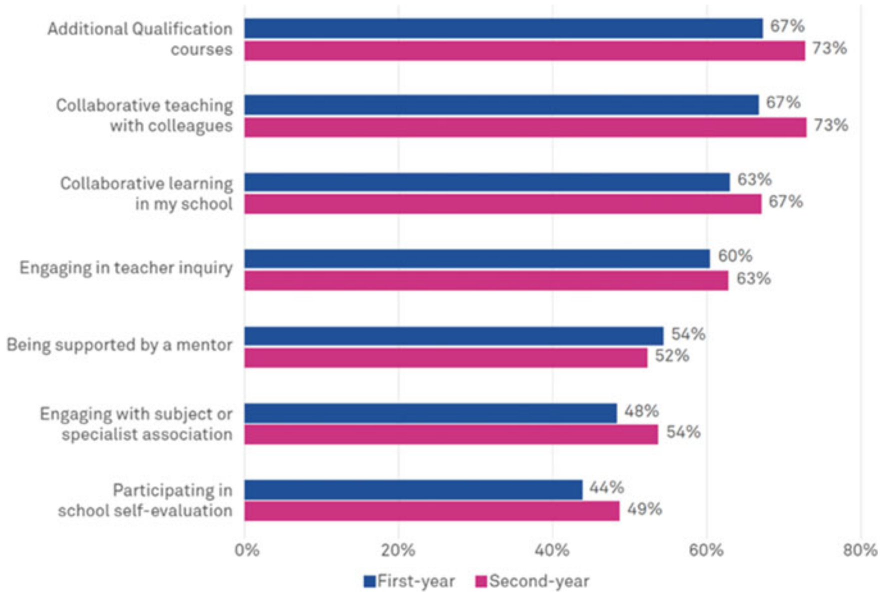

Fig. 2.2 Professional development engagement: first- and second-year Ontario teachers (*Source* OCT, 2020, p. 62)

particular support for teacher-led CPLD with, by, and for teachers (Campbell et al., 2017b).

Nevertheless, despite active support for, and engagement with, CPD and CPLD, in a 2018 survey, only 44% of teachers reported being able to do as much continuing professional learning as they would like to (Cordingley et al., 2019). A major issue identified was workload with teachers reporting they worked an average 50 h per week (Cordingley et al., 2019). Previous research also identified issues of workload and insufficient time for CPD activities in the regular school day (Campbell et al., 2017b). Issues of workload, work intensification and insufficient time for professional learning have all been exacerbated since the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (CTF, 2020). Below, I highlight two provincial initiatives to support teachers at different stages of their career that include allocation of time and resources for effective CPD.

2.2.2.1 Beginning Teachers: The New Teacher Induction Program

The transition from ITE to a newly qualified teachers' first in-service teaching experiences can be challenging. The need for mentoring and induction for beginning teachers is frequently identified (Gordon, 2020). As part of the suite of teacher

development reforms, the Ontario Ministry of Education introduced the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) in 2006. The teachers eligible for NTIP have evolved over the years from first-year newly hired teachers on permanent contracts, to expand to newly hired long-term occasional teachers, and now to include other teachers who may not meet the previous criteria but would benefit from NTIP. There are three core elements to NTIP:

- Orientation for all new teachers to the school and school board;
- Mentoring for new teachers by experienced teachers;
- Professional learning relevant to the individual needs of new teachers (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2022).

Initially, NTIP was a one-year programme, but an option for a second-year was added. The Ministry funds NTIP, school boards and schools are expected to identify experienced teachers to be mentors, and school leaders are expected to support, oversee and evaluate the NTIP within their schools.

Crucial to the effectiveness of NTIP is the quality of mentorship provided and the appropriateness of relationships developed with the mentee. Mentors can receive a range of training from the Ministry of Education's NTIP team in collaboration with their school board NTIP lead/team. Examples of topics for mentorship development include: creating a mentoring web; building relational trust; facilitating learning focused conversations; providing meaningful feedback; and utilizing powerful mentoring designs. In our research on NTIP (Campbell et al., 2017a, b), mentors spoke positively about the importance of CPD to support their role and mentorship practices, as well as the powerful co-learning of collaborating with mentees. Both mentors and mentees particularly valued collaborative professional learning in classrooms, such as observations, co-planning and co-teaching lessons, and opportunities to debrief and improve on practices. Mentees appreciated mentors' educational experience and expertise and the practical and emotional supports mentors could provide, for example sitting together at the start of the school day to go over plans for the day ahead. However, an issue was that not all newly hired teachers had access to an individual mentor; for example, particular challenges were identified for French language teachers in remote locations.

Over time the concept of a mentoring web has become part of NTIP, where newly hired teachers draw on a range of mentors and colleagues for different supports. The NTIP lead in the Ministry of Education explained to us:

> We think of building a mentoring web. It can be one to one, but it could also be online, it could be a group, it could be a community of practice, it could be informal. Mentorship can be customized based on a person's individual needs. To me it's the ultimate personalization of learning. When the mentor and the new teacher meet, the agenda for the learning are the needs of the new teacher. And that's really powerful. (Participant interview)

More recently, further research has indicated the power of mentoring webs:

> In their longitudinal research of the NTIP, Christine Frank & Associates found that high growth new teachers accessed 5 to 7 different mentorship supports. In other words, they built a mentoring web of personalized growth opportunities with the support of multiple

> mentors. Each web is unique, constructed by the learner based on their authentic learning needs. The more strands in the web, the stronger and more resilient it is. One of the most helpful things mentors can do is help a new teacher build their web by fostering connections with colleagues, administrators and other mentors. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2021, p. 10)

The expectation is that the specific work within NTIP will be individualized and personalized as appropriate to each mentee. Mentors and mentees select activities based on the professional learning plan they co-create.

While the pandemic placed additional challenges and strains on newly qualified teachers and experienced teachers, according to a survey of newly qualified teachers by the OCT, NTIP participants in 2020–21 continued to highly value the support of their mentor(s). However, there were concerningly variable experiences in terms of having access to a mentor and opportunities to engage and learn with a mentor—in 2020–2021, 20% of first-year NTIP respondents indicated that they did not have a specific assigned mentor and only 17% of NTIP respondents reported meeting with their mentor(s) for three or more hours per month (OCT, 2021). Furthermore, in 2020–21, 70% of first-year NTIP participants reported that their teaching had not been observed during that school year and 76% responded that they had not had the opportunity to observe another teacher's classroom practices (OCT, 2021). While this may have been exacerbated by shifts to remote learning during the pandemic, there have been longer-standing issues of ensuring time and access to observe teaching practices (Campbell et al., 2017a, b; OCT, 2020). These findings are concerning because the most powerful elements of NTIP include effective and appropriate mentoring and opportunities for peer observation and feedback. Furthermore, in 2020–21, 9% of first-year teachers on a permanent contract and 64% of first-year long-term occasional teachers did not participate in NTIP at all (OCT, 2021). Long-term occasional teachers are a significant part of the Ontario education workforce and have been on high demand during the pandemic; it is concerning and inequitable if they do not have access to induction and CPD opportunities. It is important to ensure all newly qualified teachers have access to, and support for, induction and mentoring.

2.2.2.2 Experienced Teachers: Ontario's Teacher Learning and Leadership Program

Having established NTIP, the *Working Table on Teacher Development* turned their attention to the needs of experienced teachers. The Teacher Learning and Leadership Program (TLLP) was formed through a partnership between the Ministry of Education and the Ontario Teachers' Federation (and affiliates) in 2007. Three shared goals underpinned the TLLP:

- Support experienced teachers to undertake self-directed advanced professional development;
- Develop teachers' leadership skills for sharing their professional learning and exemplary practices; and

- Facilitate knowledge exchange for spread and sustainability of effective and innovative practices.

In response to an annual call for TLLP proposals from the Ministry, during 2007–2017, teachers could submit a TLLP proposal. The process was highly competitive—over the nine cohorts of the TLLP, a total of 788 projects were selected for funding (Campbell et al., 2017c).

Teacher leaders from the successful projects received training before beginning their TLLP:

> The *Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers* training includes project development and management, managing a TLLP project budget, using the TLLP online platform and social media, gathering evidence from the TLLP and preparing for their Final Report, and an overview of the *Sharing the Learning Summit* which is the culmination of the TLLP project. (Campbell et al., 2018, p. 8)

A key finding from our evaluation of the TLLP is that teachers learn leadership by doing leadership! In the TLLP, teacher leaders implemented their projects over a full school year and shared their learning during this process. They then came together again as a TLLP community the following school year for the *Sharing the Learning Summit* to showcase their learning and to further spread their practices.

Our longitudinal evaluation of the TLLP (2012–2018) identified considerable benefits and positive impacts of the TLLP. For the teacher leaders who were directly involved:

> By providing the conditions (funding, training, and ongoing support) for a self-selected and self-directed professional development effort, the TLLP facilitates active, collaborative learning that is embedded in teachers' work, informed by evidence, and provides opportunities for authentic leadership experiences. Vitally, TLLP supports and values teacher voice and choice in their professional learning. The TLLP professional learning and leadership experiences, our research demonstrates, have significant benefits for TLLP participants' professional growth as learners, educators, and leaders. The vast majority of TLLP participants experience improvements in their knowledge and teaching practices. The majority of TLLP teacher leaders also report growth in their leadership confidence and improvements in their leadership skills… As their projects progress, TLLP participants become more confident in implementing new practices, sharing knowledge and practices, leading own and others' professional learning, leading a team, and being a teacher leader. (Campbell et al., 2018, p. 44)

In addition to benefiting the teachers directly involved in the TLLP teams; the majority of TLLP projects' final reports indicated benefits for engaging other educators and sharing learning with improvements for this wider group's knowledge, skills and practices. While the majority of TLLP projects primarily shared their learning within their own school(s) and/or school boards, some projects shared more widely across school boards, Canadian provinces, nationally, and internationally. The main mechanisms for shared professional learning were in person activities and online resources and interactions. Students were also reported to benefit; for example, TLLP final reports noted gains in students' learning experiences, skills, engagement, and attitude. Of particular note: "The vast majority of TLLP teacher

leaders report sustaining implementation of practices, professional learning, collaboration, and sharing of resources beyond the initial funding of their TLLP project" (Campbell et al., 2018, p. 45). While TLLP participants encountered challenges in developing and implementing their projects and in collaborating with peers and superiors to innovate change, the infrastructure of the TLLP providing training and supports from the Ministry and from teacher unions, plus a project extending over 18 months with funding, especially for release time, and a TLLP design based on professional learning with, by, and for teachers all contributed to the success of the TLLP (Lieberman et al., 2017).

Unfortunately, the current government has not continued implementation of the TLLP. Soon after the 2018 election, the newly elected government put TLLP on pause. In response to advocacy from the education profession and, notably, individual teachers speaking out on social media, the government reversed course and decided to re-instate the TLLP. However, a period of labour action in 2019–2020, followed by the impact of the pandemic from 2020 onwards, has resulted in the TLLP not being implemented since 2018. This is a concern, as international research has demonstrated the importance of developing and supporting teacher leadership:

> It is notable that it is in the very high performing jurisdictions that teacher leadership has most prominence and where the development of teachers' leadership skills is supported extensively and substantively… focussing on teacher leadership and explicitly developing teachers' leadership skills can pay dividends in increasing education capacity and enhancing system vitality and that both unions and policy makers would be well advised to consider ways of promoting teacher leadership. (Cordingley et al., 2019, p. 107)

There continues to be professional interest and support for TLLP-like professional learning activities and teacher leadership development in Ontario.

2.3 Conclusions

This chapter seeks to provide "an historical account of teacher education at a particular moment in the reform and development process" (Livingston & Flores2017, p. 557) through the case of Ontario during the early twenty-first century. During this period, the "policy turn" in teacher education identified by Cochran-Smith (2004, 2016) is very evident in Ontario. Through shifts from a Conservative government to a Liberal government in 2003 (re-elected three times) and a return to a Conservative government in 2018 (re-elected in 2022), it is clear that teacher education has been treated as a "policy problem" and a "political problem" with different governments being active and interventionist in reforms intended to raise the quality of education, measured primarily by test score outcomes.

At the start of the twenty-first century, the Conservative government had introduced the controversial Ontario Teacher Testing Program, which required teachers to successfully complete this test throughout their career in order to retain official Ontario Certified Teacher Status. The current Conservative government returned to

the concept of teacher testing with a new Math Proficiency Test (MPT), administered through the provincial testing agency, which all teacher candidates were to pass before becoming newly qualified teachers. Of note, the Ontario Teacher Candidates' Council successfully won a legal case against the government which resulted in the ruling that the MPT contravened the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. A main argument was that standardized teacher testing was inequitable and could be discriminatory, for example, for racialized teacher candidates. This opens up larger questions about the intended purpose, implementation, and outcomes of teacher testing, and also linkages to student testing. A further argument against teacher testing was that ITE (and CPD) were best placed to support teachers' development and capacity.

The Liberal government (2003–2018) placed a priority focus on capacity building for all educators. Through a Working Table on Teacher Development, initiated by the government and involving all relevant education stakeholders, a decade of reforms to teacher education was co-developed and implemented. During this period, Ontario became recognized internationally for its work to support teachers' professional development (Cordingley et al., 2019; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; OECD, 2010). Ontario also drew on international evidence in designing their reforms, for example, Finland's approaches to ITE and Singapore's approaches to CPD.

The reform of ITE from a one-year to a two-year programme resonates with many aspects of international trends. Differing from the USA and England, but more consistent with the European trends (Livingston & Flores, 2017), ITE is university based in Ontario. An educational argument for the extended ITE programme with more practicum time was consistent with the "practicum turn" (Mattson et al., 2011) and an emphasis on "research-informed clinical practice" (Burn & Mutton, 2015) that has been identified in other teacher education research and reforms. Generally, teacher candidates appreciate this extended practicum time (although this has become challenging during the pandemic). Of more concern, however, were regulations specifying an extensive and detailed list of topics to be covered in teacher education. Menter and colleagues (Childs & Menter, 2013; Menter & Flores, 2021b) have brought attention to how government intervention in ITE content can seek to control and shape what teachers know and do. In Ontario, ITE providers were concerned about a perceived shift to standardization of programmes, although there have been deliberate attempts by individual faculties of education to provide distinctive emphases and approaches within the ITE regulatory framework. Unfortunately, however, the shift in the requirements of the new ITE programme combined with the government funding half the number of previous ITE students resulting in reduced revenue has meant that smaller faculties of education and specialist programming have been negatively affected. This is worrying when programmes, such as those supporting Indigenous ITE, have been cut at a time when there is an urgent need to attend to the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC, 2015).

It is recognized that teachers require CPD and CPLD throughout their career. Ontario educators are active in ongoing professional learning and development, including government-, district-, school- and self-directed opportunities. The NTIP

provides needed support for beginning teachers. Participating teachers and mentors are positive about their learning and experiences through NTIP. However, not all beginning teachers are actively receiving the opportunity to participate. Finding and supporting available mentors has also been a challenge. These issues have been further exacerbated during the pandemic and require addressing. For experienced teachers, the TLLP provided a beneficial opportunity for teachers to lead their own and their colleagues' professional learning, and to share the knowledge and practices developed more widely. Unfortunately, the TLLP has not been implemented since the election of the Conservative government in 2018. There is a need for some form of provincial strategy to support teacher leadership. As international research on teachers' professional lives and education system performance has demonstrated, support for teachers' CPD and CPLD throughout their career trajectory must be paramount (Cordingley et al., 2019).

Finally, a lesson from the Ontario case is that considering teacher education requires not only researching the substance of reforms, but also the policy-making processes used for those reforms. The Liberal government explicitly and actively sought to work in partnership with the education profession to co-develop teacher education policies. This was welcomed and resulted in policies that generally garnered support from teachers. However, the introduction of Bill 115 in 2012 placed restrictions on teacher federations' collective bargaining rights. Deteriorating relations with the government occurred. In the next round of collective bargaining, it was agreed that the government in partnership with education stakeholders would co-develop a new way of working together with mutual respect. This resulted in the co-development of Policy and Program Memorandum 159 on Collaborative Professionalism (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016), which set out the expectations for working relationships between the educators, employers and government. Consistent with Thompson's (2021 p. 5) call for "intelligent professionalism", involving a shift *from* professional autonomy being conceived as the downloading of government mandates to a shift *to* teachers having professional agency to develop and apply their professional knowledge and judgement, teachers must be engaged in policy-making and decision-taking concerning appropriate teacher education.

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Chapter 3
Teacher Education in a Postcolonial Hong Kong: Forms, Drivers, Influences, and Agency

Paul Campbell

Abstract With the unique character of Hong Kong in a postcolonial context, where eastern philosophies and approaches meet those of the west, it could be presumed that it is an ideal system for generating innovative ideas and practices (Bautista et al. in Int J Res Educ 46:203–260, 2022; Lu and Campbell in Practice 3:67–72, 2021). However, understanding the role, influence, and impact of teacher education as a career-long pursuit in Hong Kong remains both contested and under-theorised (Bautista et al. in Int J Res Educ 46:203–260, 2022). While Hong Kong enjoys a complex and sophisticated teacher education infrastructure which includes a range of opportunities and legislated time to dedicate to the varied forms of teacher education throughout a teachers' career, such opportunities are frequently reported on as a being too demanding, rigid, or unrelated to practice (Lu and Campbell in Practice 3:67–72, 2021; Pang et al. in Asia Pac J Educ 36:231–247, 2016). This chapter begins by exploring the context of Hong Kong, and the nature and functions of teacher education. Following this, varying conceptualisations of teacher education, professional learning, and agency, with a particular focus on Hong Kong, are explored. Finally, this chapter explores new ways of understanding the role of teacher agency in the context of teacher education and the implications of this for policy, practice, and research as we imagine the future possibilities of teacher education and education more broadly.

Keywords Teacher agency · Postcolonial · Forms · Drivers · Influences

3.1 Introduction

Hong Kong, as one of the Special Administrative Regions (SAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC), has a population of 7.47 million (Census and Statistics Department, 2021). Despite the shifting constitutional context after the reunification of Hong Kong with the PRC in 1997, the SAR has continued to develop

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as a mixed capitalist economy which enjoys low taxation and minimal government market intervention, thus enjoying the status of a key global financial centre (Chang, 2018).

With this global status have also come a perception and portrayal of Hong Kong's education system as being high performing (Ho, 2014). With the unique character of Hong Kong in a postcolonial context, where eastern philosophies and approaches meet those of the west, it could be presumed that it is an ideal system for generating innovative ideas and practices (Bautista et al., 2022; Lu & Campbell, 2021). The success of the system is often attributed to the combination of economic prosperity, the success of education policy, and common socio-cultural values that underpin societal views of education, combined with the quality of schools, family engagement, leadership, and teacher education (Gopinathan & Lee, 2018; Lee & Gopinathan, 2020).

However, understanding the role, influence, and impact of teacher education as a career-long pursuit in Hong Kong remains both contested and under-theorised (Bautista et al., 2022). While Hong Kong enjoys a complex and sophisticated teacher education infrastructure which includes a range of opportunities and legislated time to dedicate to the varied forms of teacher education throughout a teachers' career, such opportunities are frequently reported on as a being too demanding, rigid, or unrelated to practice (Lu & Campbell, 2021; Pang et al., 2016).

As such, critical questions remain as to how teacher education in a postcolonial Hong Kong is understood, and how the future of it is imagined. Central to this is illuminating not only the possibilities for how teacher education may look or change throughout a teachers' career, but also the varied purposes, functions, and values that may underpin teacher education, and how this might reflect the complex, multiple, and intersecting needs and desires of the teaching profession (Tsang, 2019). In considering teacher education in Hong Kong and how this relates to teacher education as an ongoing professional trajectory, the imperatives identified by Ellis et al. (2018) are applicable. Ellis et al. (2018) emphasise the need to critically address the historical link between teacher education and schooling as an instrument of colonialism and the reliance of teacher education on hegemonic knowledge, experiences, values, and voices belonging to dominant or dominating communities. In addition to this, Ellis et al. (2018) highlight the importance of agency and the relational dimensions in the work of teachers and teacher educators as a means through which we counter dehumanising forces that can come with dominant global ideologies, frequently characterised by neoliberalism.

In the context of Hong Kong where the professional lives of teachers in the SAR have come to include long working hours and demanding workloads, there are persistent and important challenges for how teacher education is both engaged in and seen as an ongoing professional trajectory (Cheng & Walker, 2008; Cheung & Wong, 2012). A focus on the relational dimensions of teachers' work and teacher education more broadly, as well as the need for agency, enables a critical examination of how the intensification of the work of teachers, reliant on hegemonic norms and dominant

ideologies characteristic of a colonised past, can be challenged, and how space can be opened up for new ideas, practices, and innovation. This can be a challenge though for a system with an established global standing like Hong Kong (Ho & Lu, 2019).

This chapter begins by exploring the context of Hong Kong, and the nature and functions of teacher education. The chapter goes onto consider varying conceptualisations of teacher education, professional learning, and agency, with a particular focus on Hong Kong, with connection and application to other postcolonial contexts. The final section of this chapter explores new ways of understanding the role of teacher agency in the context of teacher education and the implications of this for policy, practice, and research.

3.2 Teacher Education in Hong Kong

Teacher education can be understood within the context of the systemic structures, mechanisms, and political tools that frame both the form teacher education takes and the outcomes of it. In Hong Kong, society, public systems, and associated policy development can be understood through the political and cultural proximity to both China and the Western World (Lo et al., 2022). Within such a political and societal context, what becomes apparent is the coming together of seemingly opposing ideological systems, socialism and capitalism, and the tensions and possibilities of this. Lo et al. (2022, p. 141) highlight how an east meets west policy system can illuminate 'the inherent tensions between "becoming Chinese" and "remaining global" in the evolution of the international status of Hong Kong'. The shifting political and cultural configurations that come with forces of globalisation, and the strength of principles, values, and traditions that can characterise the diverse communities that make up Hong Kong society, lay bare an important space to understand how these come together and interact in the context of a postcolonial Hong Kong (Forestier et al., 2016; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010).

Reflecting the legacy of the preunification system of education in Hong Kong, as well as periods of reform since, the education system in Hong Kong is made up of a complex infrastructure which includes both government-funded schools and international schools. This chapter focuses on government-funded schools. In the academic year 2020–21, there were 589 primary schools and 506 secondary schools. There were 28,069 primary teachers and 29,602 secondary teachers in the system, with 95.8% of teachers in the system having academic qualifications related to education. The Education Bureau (EDB), a government department led by the Secretary for Education, is responsible for education policy development and implementation across the SAR. Within their remit, the EDB has sought to reach a teaching population of 100% with qualifications related to education. Currently, teachers are able to be registered to teach in schools either as 'registered teachers' who hold recognised teaching qualifications obtained from a university, or as 'permitted teachers' who while being degree holders, or equivalent, may not have a teaching qualification from a university, but hold a permit to teach awarded by a specific school (see Education

Bureau, 2008). Reaching a point where 100% of teachers have recognised teaching qualifications comes with the stated intent of enhancing the quality of teaching and increasing the social status of the teaching profession in the SAR. This is viewed as being possible through compulsory teacher education programmes, strengthened teacher education programmes with higher admission requirements, and extending the range of, and access to, career-long professional learning opportunities (Cheng, 2017; Gopinathan & Lee, 2018).

The possibilities of extending the range of, and access to, professional learning are influenced by the make-up of the school system. The system includes three major school types. Two of these are government and aided schools; both of which are funded by the government. The Hong Kong Education Bureau (EDB) retains oversight of government schools, whereas aided schools are operated by sponsoring charitable or religious organisations (Education Bureau, 2019). Both school types are required to follow curriculum frameworks and policies as stipulated by the EDB. A third type of schools is operated under the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS). DSS and aided schools are run by their own management committees; however, DSS schools are able to exercise autonomy over the curriculum, language of instruction, fees, and entrance requirements.

Within this structure, the education system of Hong Kong has developed, particularly in recent decades, a reputation for being one of the world's top performing school systems (Tucker, 2019). However, the complex drivers and influences that characterise the realities of Hong Kong's education system have been shown to lead to acceptance of unequal distribution of power and a system-wide emphasis on and competition for high academic performance (Chiu & Kwan, 2010; Ho & Lu, 2019). With this come possible inhibitors to innovation, creativity, and change across the education system (Lu & Campbell, 2021).

These systemic influences, as well as the associated drivers of professional learning, such as academic attainment and improved instructional practices, have an important role in legitimising or rationalising the form that teacher education and forms of career-long professional learning can take (Adamson et al., 2016). In the context of Hong Kong, the government is the most powerful single influence on both what is required of teachers and the sites or places within which legitimised forms of teacher education can take place; legitimised being those stipulated, initiated, or evaluated at a political level in the pursuit of systemic goals (Morris, 2008).

While the post-reunification period has been characterised with policy focused on systemic improvement in relation to the quality of schooling, with this has come a focus on accountability and quality assurance as it relates to the teaching profession (Morris, 2008). This includes an orientation towards global trends of managerial accountability mechanisms, as well as constructivist principles of teaching and learning, centred on the notion of student-centeredness, seen as an essential paradigmatic shift to meet contemporary demands on society in a globalised world (Chang, 2018; Coniam & Falvey, 2016). Part of this has been the articulation of professional standards for teachers and principals in Hong Kong through the Committee

on Teacher Education and Qualifications (COTAP). These standards rely on a foundation of professional learning that nurtures high-quality teaching and by consequence, intends to uplift teachers' professional image and support the recruitment and retention of teachers (Bautista et al., 2022). This has been supported by what the EDB has articulated as a Professional Ladder, setting expectations and requirements of teachers in primary and secondary schools for their professional learning and development connected to the professional standards (Education Bureau, 2020). This includes a requirement, dependant on role, of 90–150 h of professional learning which encompasses a blend of both compulsory and elective opportunities—a requirement that is significantly higher than most OECD countries, while less than other Asian societies such as Singapore and Japan (Bautista et al., 2022).

The career-long professional learning that teachers engage in in Hong Kong has been classified by Bautista et al. (2022) as:

- **Structured**: workshops, conferences, and formalised courses.
- **On-the-job**: school-based peer learning, mentoring, and induction processes.
- **Project-based**: formal partnerships, such as with universities or businesses with a particular focus.
- **Whole school**: school-wide professional learning with a shared focus.
- **Individual**: professional learning driven by individuals utilising learning networks, professional reading, and social media.

With such an infrastructure in place, it would be easy to assume that teacher education and its surrounding infrastructure is of high quality, enables ease of access for teachers, and results in significant impact for learners and outcomes. However, teachers in Hong Kong have come to see professional learning framed in this way as being a compulsory requirement rather than an entitlement of autonomous professionals (Chang, 2018). Lam (2015) describes how organisational characteristics of hierarchical top-down societies that have come to be reflected in schools result in limited autonomy throughout a teacher's career-long professional learning journey (Lu & Campbell, 2021). As such, compliance with professional learning initiatives is viewed as being prioritised over autonomous or agentic forms of professional learning that may be driven by teachers themselves (Ho & Lu, 2019).

As part of a broader neoliberal culture, and with Hong Kong having to navigate the complexity of maintaining and extending the region's reach as a global financial centre as well as its status as a SAR of the PRC, neoliberal utopian ideals come to characterise policy responses in the SAR as it related to teachers, teaching, and education more broadly (Choi, 2005). The reliance on blueprints or recipes articulated through policy, used to achieve systemic goals, means what is too often missed is the opportunity to critically imagine educational possibilities that serve to renew how we talk about and understand education through and with the teaching profession (Phelan, 2022).

With this comes the need to critically examine the implications of the varied forms teacher education does take in Hong Kong throughout a teacher's career, the influences on this, and the drivers behind it. In doing so, illumination of the consequences for whether or not teacher education can be an integral part of a teacher's ongoing professional trajectory is possible, as is an exploration of what the possibilities of this could be.

3.3 Teacher Education as an Ongoing Professional Trajectory

3.3.1 The Postcolonial Context

This chapter which focuses on teacher education in a postcolonial Hong Kong uses the term 'postcolonial' in reference to the period after reunification with the PRC when British rule ended in 1997. However, the term 'postcolonial' was first utilised in the late 1960s in discussion around the post-world war period that resulted in significant decolonisation globally (Brydon, 2000). With that came a range of meanings attributed to it. Young (2003, p. 1–2) describes it as:

> An interdisciplinary political, theoretical and historical academic work that sets out to serve as a transnational forum for studies grounded in the historical context of colonialism, as well as the political context of contemporary problems of globalization.

Utilising these conceptualisations of the term 'postcolonial', in this chapter I posit that colonial rule, and the aftermath of it, paved the way for international influence in education in Hong Kong, with significant implications for how the purposes and underpinning values of education are understood, and how this is reflected in teacher education. This results in political decision-making in relation to education privileging what Rizvi (2007) articulates as metropolitan education institutions and norms of practice in the colonised world. This has come to be reflected in dominating discourses of education centred on capitalist notions of human capital and progress, and how education systems come to understand the possibilities of change and associated alternatives (Choi, 2005).

Within what could be described as a performative policy space, framed by dominant global influences, in the context of Hong Kong characterised by neoliberalism, the critical examination and imagining of possibilities for teacher education is no easy task. Hoyte et al. (2020, p. 160) contend that:

> teacher educators have borne the brunt of political pressure to reform, but their voices have been increasingly marginalized from those now privileged in policy formation.

While historically education policy development was often a manifestation of the values of those actors within a nation-state, globalisation has transformed national policy spheres into transnational and globally networked spaces (Rizvi & Lingard,

2010). Globalisation remains a highly contested notion. Early definitions within the context of education articulate globalisation as a change in 'the rules of eligibility, engagement and wealth creation' (Ball, 1998, p. 119). Globalisation theory does not act as explanatory tool when analysing policy development, but it contributes to building an understanding of policy drivers, stimuli for initiation and design of policy, and the broader contextual influences on the various stages of policy development (Dale, 1999).

3.3.2 Teacher Education and Policy Responses

In the context of education policy, globalisation does not signal a shift of education policymaking into the hands of economic actors or those in the private sector within nation states and beyond following a global neoliberal culture; rather, it signifies an alteration of the economic and political conditions, based on the dominant global socio-political culture, currently neoliberalism, that frames the processes of problem setting, choosing responses, the interventions made, and the scope of choices nations themselves have (Bonal, 2003; Verger et al., 2012). These global economic and societal demands are spread through globalisation forces, such as the shifting markets, political and cultural configurations, and advancements in information and communication technologies (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). This has consequences for the problems that are recognised as being important by nations and the breadth of their repertoire of responses (Muhr, 2010; Robertson, 2012).

With this comes the need to critically examine the policy responses and ideas that frame how we understand teacher education in its current forms, as well as the future or possibilities of it (Choi, 2005). In conceptualising and mobilising professional learning, Lam (2015) notes that Hong Kong has followed similar trends and patterns to systems within the Anglosphere, with one critical difference being the lack of self-direction of professional learning in Hong Kong. Hargreaves et al. (2013) noted that teachers in Hong Kong, while attributing value to collaborative learning, reported lower levels of perceived autonomy in comparison with teachers in the Anglosphere. This was seen to be the result of, and served to reinforce, a greater emphasis and pressure being placed systemically on particular forms of professional learning, and greater competition between professional learning and teacher education providers (Lam, 2015). The lack of autonomy alongside high levels of work and workload-related stress among Hong Kong's teachers results in warranted concerns for the long-term consequences for teacher education as a career-long endeavour, as well as the future of the teaching profession in Hong Kong. This leaves spaces to examine the possibilities of teacher agency in professional learning in Hong Kong, and how this could contribute more broadly to reimagining teacher education as an ongoing professional trajectory (Bautista et al., 2022; Hamid & Nguyen, 2016).

3.4 Teacher Agency and Professional Trajectories

3.4.1 Understanding Teacher Agency

With forces of globalisation coming to influence the trends that are manifested across education systems, change can often be characterised by unequal power relations among professionals from different backgrounds (Lai et al., 2016). Change that can result from forces of globalisation and the hegemony of Western practices and ideals can lead to stereotypical attitudes applied to localised practices and approaches (Lee, 2012). To influence and transform practices as part of a career-long process, and to construct and reconstruct professional trajectories, agency is needed (Eteläpelto et al., 2013). Agency can be understood as being an emergent phenomenon that results from 'the ecological conditions through which it is enacted' (Priestley et al., 2015, p. 136). Eteläpelto et al. (2013, p. 61) define agency as the practices through which 'professional subjects and/or communities exert influence, make choices, and take stances in ways that affect their work and/or their professional identities'. Drawing upon this, for the purpose of this chapter, agency is defined as how individuals are able to act by means of their environment through the understanding and complex interplay of individual effort, available resources, and contextual and structural influences within the place and space of which an individual operates (Biesta & Tedder, 2007).

Agency can be understood as a complex interplay of influencing factors within and because of a teacher's environment. The process or observable outcomes of teacher agency can be the result of a combination of teachers' beliefs, self-perception, and judgements on the scope of their ability to act in an autonomous way and opportunities afforded to them in order to act with influence; each of which is influenced by the environment or professional context they find themselves in (Priestley et al. 2011; Vongalis-Macrow 2007). Ultimately, agency in the context of teachers and teaching can be understood as the capacity a teacher has to make professional judgements about elements of their practice and to be able to act upon that to affect change (Campbell, 2020). In Hong Kong, teacher agency is shaped by both the cultural plurality that has come to characterise the teaching profession and consequentially, teachers' professional and social positioning, and what Lai et al. (2016) describe as imposed identity and social roles, especially evident in cross-cultural teaching contexts.

Priestley et al. (2011) articulate a three-dimensional perspective necessary for understanding teacher agency and the factors that promote or inhibit its realisation. Drawing on the work of Emirbayer and Mische (1998), these three perspectives or aspects are the iterational, the practical-evaluative, and the projective. The iterational emphasises the role of teachers' personal and professional experiences and history, and the impact that these prior experiences, patterns of thought, and actions have on the repertoire of responses they have to hand when facing new professional challenges (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Priestley et al., 2011). It is these experiences that make a significant contribution to the qualities and attributes teachers need to develop to act with agency (Priestley et al., 2011). The practical-evaluative

relates directly to the day-to-day working environment for a teacher, including the day-to-day dialogue that takes place, the physical working environment, and the resources available to carry out the work. This includes the social structures at play through different roles, responsibilities, and perceptions of trust and authority (Priestley et al., 2011). These practical-evaluative forms can exert great influence over the decision-making and consequential action or non-action of teachers. They can manifest themselves in how teachers interpret and make meaning of policy or mandates, individually and collaboratively, and their subsequent decisions needed to implement or enact these changes (Bridwell-Mitchell, 2015). The projective element of agency alludes to the aspirations or goals that a teacher may have and how they reconfigure their current understandings and actions to achieve these goals (Priestley et al., 2011).

3.4.2 Teacher Agency in Uncertain Times

With territories, nations, and regions increasingly becoming characterised by shifting socio-economic climates, constitutional uncertainty, forced migration, and conflict of values, the complexity of understanding how teachers can exercise agency but also the need for it is worthy of exploration (Campbell, 2020). In recent decades, Hong Kong has been contending with social unrest and health emergencies, and with this, the role and function of schools have had to move beyond typical concerns of curriculum delivery and attainment (Ng et al., 2020). Instead, schools have become a central focus within the community in leading new forms and conceptions of civic engagement and responding to and supporting students and families in times of crisis and unrest (Ng et al., 2020). With this has come a need for teachers and school leaders to take on the role of key decision-makers within their communities (Barron et al., 2021). This has illustrated the possibilities of more locally responsive and diverse approaches to the day to work of schools in their communities and a rethink of traditional and more dominant models that have typically framed how teachers practice and learn (OECD, 2020).

In times of reimagining and change, more agentic forms of action that have emerged contextually rather than politically can be understood as resulting from both the urgency and necessity of the situations facing society (Heikkilä & Mankki, 2021). With this comes the possibility of constructing a shared understanding of the nature of the needs within our learning communities, the role of professional learning in this, and the consequential action that is required (Campbell, 2020). Contemporary demands placed on education and school systems to cater for an increasingly diverse range of student and community needs, the emphasis on effective school systems being self-improving and school led, and the complex diversity of knowledge, skills, and expertise needed by teachers is ever increasing (Brown & Flood, 2019). However, the power to act with agency, drawing upon the experience, expertise, knowledge, and tools teachers may have at their disposal, remains largely subject

to social norms, structures, cultural systems, and the power relations that sit alongside these, especially in the context of Hong Kong (Lai et al., 2016). Teachers able to exercise agency within their contexts are reliant on critical reflection on professional identity, self-positioning in social relationships within professional contexts, and the opportunities there are to develop these insights individually and collectively (Djerasimovic, 2014).

However, within the context of sustained neoliberal influence over political structuring and restructuring within education systems, questions remain as to the possibilities of teacher agency in systems, such as Hong Kong, where managerialist reform can serve to disempower rather than promote agency (Tsang, 2019), and where career-long teacher education emphasises compliance over collaboration (Ho & Lu, 2019). With a global emphasis on the economic purposes and outputs of education, teacher education and teachers' practice throughout their professional careers can be characterised less by collective responsibility, cooperation, and trust and increasingly by managerial control of teachers and their work through externally imposed priorities for professional learning and change, emphasising compliance over agency, and conformity over trust (Adamson et al., 2016; Tsang, 2019).

3.4.3 Imagining Professional Trajectories

Reflection on the professional experiences of teachers from early forms of teacher education through to those they engage in throughout their career can play a pivotal role in imagining their professional trajectories, understanding their experiences, and identifying goals (Guberman et al., 2021; Ye & Zhao, 2019). Through a teachers' patterns of thought, actions, and repertoire of responses to different professional challenges, developed through varied forms of teacher education, new possibilities of how learning, teaching, student engagement, and outcomes are understood are numerous in their possibilities (Phelan, 2022). The environments and expectations within which teachers are working day to day will influence their decision-making and actions. Teachers' interpretations and meaning making relating to how their practice is directed are framed by the goals and aspirations they have. Throughout their career, teachers continue to go through a defining and redefining process in order to reconfigure their current understandings and actions in order to achieve these goals (Bridwell-Mitchell, 2015; Priestley et al., 2011). Considering this, the context within which teachers are able to go through these learning and development processes is vital if systems are not only going to recruit and retain teachers, but if change and new possibilities are to be imagined and realised (Lai et al., 2016).

The role of teacher agency, and particularly conceptions that account for broader ecological influences, in professional learning and teacher education, more broadly has gained increasing attention in recent years (Lai et al., 2016). In many contexts, teachers are positioned as key actors in education reform and school improvement, with professional learning playing a pivotal role in this (Imants & Van der Wal, 2020). In addition, sustaining change across systems is increasingly understood as

being reliant on the agentic role teachers are able to play given the implications periods of change can have for professional identity and capacity within schools to develop and sustain change (Eteläpelto et al., 2013; Priestley et al., 2011).

While agency can be understood both as an individual capacity and as a form of action dependent on a collective, both emphasise interaction within contexts of practice. Bandura (2000, p. 1) defines agency as 'the capacity to exercise control over the nature and quality of one's life', while Eteläpelto et al. (2013, p. 16) affirm that 'professional agency is practiced when teachers and/or communities in schools influence, make choices, and take stances in ways that affect their work and their professional identity'. Both definitions highlight that agency is understood in relation to individuals who are able to take action independently or as part of a collective with intentionality, and with the aim of reaching a certain end (Imants & Van der Wal, 2020). As such, exploring teacher agency and how it relates to teacher education in a postcolonial Hong Kong is as much about understanding the ecological factors that influence individual teachers' capacity to act with agency, as it is about understanding the structural norms, practices, and influences that enable or establish barriers to agentic forms of action (Lai et al., 2016).

Teacher agency is arguably a critical concept in understanding how teacher education can become part of an ongoing professional trajectory that goes beyond systemic concerns of teacher quality and school improvement, reaching a collective critical consciousness as to the values, purposes, and ideas that underpin our education systems, and the role of teachers within that (Phelan, 2022). Agency in and through teacher education in complex times and spaces enables teachers to negotiate personal pathways in order to make sense of and to practice with efficacy in such dynamic contexts (Djerasimovic, 2014). The accountability mechanisms that sit alongside reform processes in the Hong Kong education system can manifest characteristics of managerialist approaches, in turn disempowering the practical and intrinsic dimensions of teachers' exercising of agency (Tsang, 2019). This can be challenged through an agency-orientated approach to system design with a focus on professional learning that accounts for not only the social structures and cultural systems, but teachers' sensemaking and opportunities to reflect on identity and social relationships that constitute their professional practice and learning (Lai et al., 2016). The self-positioning that can result through the emergence and exercise of agency can enable teachers to make sense of change, and how their professional selves relate to the influences and drivers of change and learning they may be experiencing (Ye & Zhao, 2019). In times of change, understanding the possibilities for change and a teacher's own practice within the parameters of the organisational conditions within which they work, and the personal autonomy they are able to exercise over this enables teachers to exercise creativity and enjoy enhanced motivation and feelings of self-fulfilment (Bandura, 2000). At the same time, schools and systems are able to ensure continuity of learning provisions while nurturing change and improvement at local and broader levels (Eteläpelto et al., 2013). Established patterns of thought and action which draw upon routines and norms of practice

can be mobilised in a teachers' practice through the sensemaking process characteristic of agency while simultaneously, during periods of change or professional learning, offering critical perspectives and new insights into what change and learning can mean for both school and systemic improvement, and individual professional trajectories (Lai et al., 2016; Ye & Zhao, 2019).

3.4.4 Conceptualising Agentic Career-Long Teacher Education

Given the dynamic nature of agency and its reliance on complex contextual factors such as individuals' sense of self, organisational culture, and relationships and networks individuals have access to, recommendations for specific actions at system and school levels may not result in transferable realities (Hamid & Nguyen, 2016). However, Imants and Van der Wal (2020) highlight that for teacher agency to characterise the professional dispositions and work of teachers, with a specific focus on how teachers learn and engage in change at localised and system levels, consideration must be given to:

1. **The role of individuals**: teachers are positioned as active participants rather than passive actors.
2. **The nature of relationships**: understanding the ongoing interaction between agency and structures at various levels of schools and systems, and how teachers make sense of what they are and can do, and how systems and structure enable that.
3. **The complexity of system-level interactions**: identifying and negotiating the nature of interaction needed across levels within a system to understand policy, decision-making, culture, and roles in relation to professional practice, learning, and change.
4. **The positioning of the content of professional learning and change agendas**: illuminating and enabling the processes of translation and enactment by teachers based on how they understand the form, nature, and scope of the focus of professional learning and change agendas.
5. **The role of outcomes of professional learning and change agendas**: rather than being characterised as a linear step-by-step plan, professional learning opportunities, and change agendas are evolving and continuous cycles through formal and informal feedback and reflection on gains, outcomes, and direction.

Considering these characteristics of what could be understood as teacher agency in the context of teacher education and educational change, there is a clear emphasis on the need to enable and encourage teachers to interact with the conditions of their professional contexts and the varied relationships at play at different levels of the system that influence their decision-making, impact, and practice (Imants & Van der Wal, 2020; Lai et al., 2016). This relies on an understanding of teachers being individuals with unique perspectives, trajectories, and insights that can drive learning

and change, with implications for themselves, the communities they are a part of, and broader systemic goals (Hamid & Nguyen, 2016). However, this raises questions as to the nature of agency, how it can be exercised as a result of or in spite of systemic barriers, the relationship between exercising autonomy as opposed to agency, and the possibilities of this in the context of teacher education and professional learning.

While in Hong Kong reform processes and the intricacies of the often related professional learning can be managerial in nature and expectation, there can also be opportunities to exercise agency or autonomy. Within the parameters of heavy specification which can characterise more managerialist reform processes, agency can be exercised in order to exert influence or make choices over the specifics of professional work, how these relate to professional goals and values, and the influence this has on an individual's sense of identity (Adamson et al., 2016; Eteläpelto et al., 2013). However, where policy does not account for the interplay of professional knowledge, practices, identities, and how social structures are used to inform decision-making and practice, autonomy can often still be exercised in the form of decision-making on how policy intentions are achieved at localised levels of the system (Hamid & Nguyen, 2016). The distinction, however, between autonomy and agency here relates to how they are conceptualised. In the context of market driven, neoliberal, and managerialist reform processes in Hong Kong, autonomy can be understood as the decision-making power to make choices within the parameters of a policy or focus of reform (Hamid & Nguyen, 2016). However, in such a context, agency can be understood as the capacity to critically examine both an individual's professional work and the policy goals that influence this, making connections with professional knowledge, experiences, and communities they are a part of and making choices or taking stances that go on to influence the construction and reconstruction of identity, and their related professional work (Eteläpelto et al., 2013; Lai et al., 2016).

What this also illustrates is the complexity from both a political and practical perspective in understanding and nurturing teacher agency in and through teacher education. However, with a commitment to teacher education that nurtures growth, and as well as change, an emphasis on teacher agency in and through teacher education enables all those with a stake to address the collective challenge of the role teachers and teacher education can, and will, play through research, practice, and policy in understanding how the future of education, including teacher education, is 'imagined, enacted and mobilised' (Couture, 2021, p. 2). In the context of Hong Kong, teachers have been able to exercise agency within and outside the parameters of policy change and reform through forms of co-learning within formal and information structures, and the exercising of non-positional teacher leadership that highlights the influence of new ideas and understandings on practice through the leveraging of social structures and cultural systems (Lai et al., 2016). In addition, where policy specification leaves space for decision-making on practice required to achieve policy goals, teachers are able to exercise agency that demonstrates decisions and practices deemed important for a policy purpose or goal reflective of student needs, or practice and approaches they deem necessary for meeting student needs, while conforming to the discursive parameters and goals stated in policy (Hamid & Nguyen, 2016).

Central to this is a process of researching and developing critical self-awareness through teacher education. Represented in Fig. 3.1, I contend that agentic career-long teacher education, whether it is explored through the lens of practice, research, or policy, requires:

- Consideration of the forms career-long teacher education may take, the purposes behind them, and the connections they have to each other, to systemic priorities, and to practice in a range of contexts.
  - Reflecting on, how do the systemic structures, mechanisms, and norms enable or act as barriers to the emergence of varied forms of teacher education that reflect varied purposes and outcomes?
- Understanding and accounting for the complex and multi-layered influences on how teachers engage in forms of teacher education throughout their career, based on their histories, experiences, values, and identities.

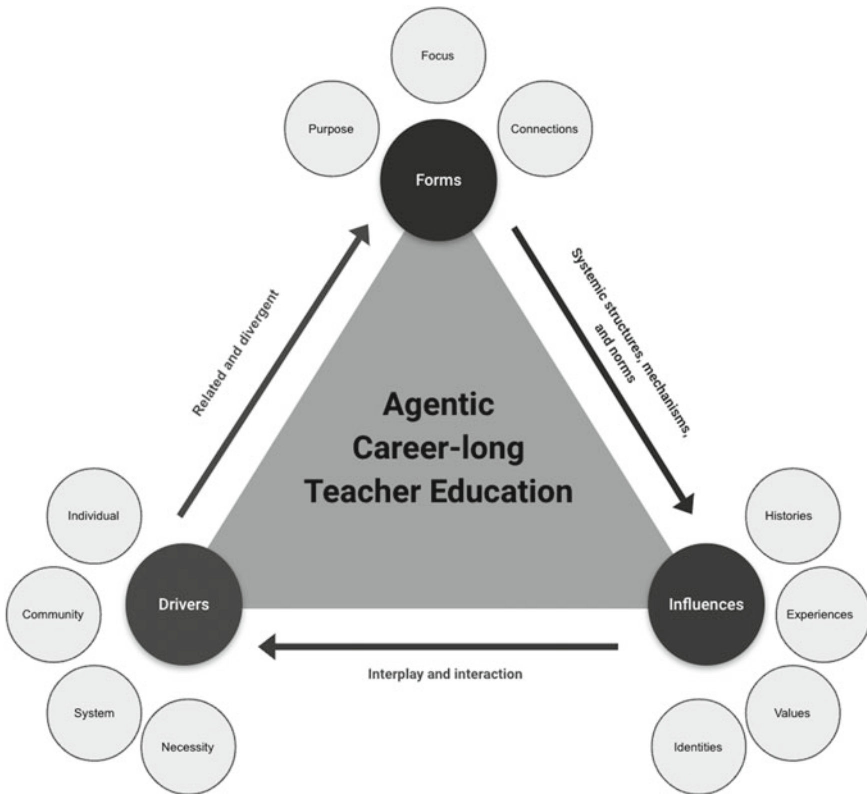

Fig. 3.1 Agentic career-long teacher education

  - Reflecting on how do histories, experiences, values, and identities interact with the varied drivers of teacher education at various stages of a teacher's career?

- Understanding and enabling individual, community-focused, and system-led priorities, as well as complex emerging community needs, to drive the forms and focus of teacher education.

  - Reflecting on how do these relate to and diverge from the forms that teacher education currently takes, and the role teachers might play in reimagining the possibilities of teacher education in their own professional trajectories?

3.5 Implications for Teacher Education, Policy, and Practice

For the future of teacher education in Hong Kong, this is not about deciding between agency, autonomy, or compliance in teacher education throughout a teacher's career. There is an opportunity to consider what an ethical reimagining of education may look like within the context of and through teacher education at all stages of a teacher's career. Carusi (2017, p. 636) argues that:

> The ethical undoes the context of the normative and actively interrupts the smooth operation of a normative order. The ethical displaces norms and normative orders in ways that 'go beyond that positivity' and by 'detect[ing] the points it [positivity] fails to constitute itself' (Laclau, 2014: 128) we can align the ethical with negativity. The ethical acts against the normative not as a competing positive expression, but as an active 'not that'. The ethical is precisely what is unimaginable by and does not follow from the normative.

Through the application of this understanding of the ethical practice of challenging what may constitute the norm, teacher agency in and through teacher education is not about the adoption of an oppositional stance towards priorities for learning and change that emerge beyond the scope of the individual teacher. Instead, it is a response to and within what constitutes the current parameters of norms of practice and making sense of practice. In doing so, teachers and others across the system embrace the disruption to the 'normative order' so as to critically and meaningfully reimagine and understand the possibilities for change and seeing something anew within our schools and systems. While change can develop over time through intentional action, the norms or normative order that comes to characterise how we understand teachers and teaching have established their own continuity through policy mechanisms and their associated discursive parameters (Alexander & Bourke, 2021). As such, they can remain unquestioned and in place by means of repetition rather than resulting from longevity or suitability for purpose (Giddens, 1999).

3.5.1 Teacher Education

As Hong Kong society and the world more broadly has shifted and changed over time, the range of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and expertise required of teachers in order to meet the associated demands that come with these shifts has significantly grown (Brown & Flood, 2019). From this emerges a possibility for new forms of agency that could be exercised within the context of teacher education, given the diverse sensemaking processes and knowledge required in order to comprehensively meet the needs of the communities teachers serve (Brown & Flood, 2019). This was illustrated throughout the pandemic, as well as how the power teachers can have to respond meaningfully and quickly to shifting demands lies within the affordances or barriers to localised decision-making at a political level within systems.

To respond to this, teacher education would benefit from broader theoretical development as a systemic mechanism for change and sensemaking with a focus on broader concerns of power and agency in the context of Hong Kong. Through forms of teacher education throughout a teacher's career that emphasise the situating and understanding of the self within sites of practice, within broader policy contexts, and within complex systems, teacher education can be the medium through which teachers and leaders are able to make sense of and exercise individual and collective forms of agency in the pursuit of relevant and community informed improvement, learning, and change (Lai et al., 2016). Additionally, ensuring that varied forms of teacher education are accessible across the system through formal and informal means, designed with a focus on the unique interaction between systemic influences, drivers, and the forms teacher education takes, can result in more meaningful and relevant forms of teacher education emerging and being sustained (Ho & Lu, 2019).

Acknowledging the knowledge, skills, and shared purpose needed in order to engage in meaningful forms of teacher education throughout a teacher's career, further research informed insight into the motivational factors and readiness of individuals across systems is needed. In addition, a more nuanced understanding of the drivers of this, the influences on engagement and success, and how this could relate to the forms of teacher education that emerge could help sustain teacher education as a meaningful career-long process (Tsang, 2019).

3.5.2 Policy

Given the postcolonial context of Hong Kong, and how broader forces of globalisation come to set the discursive parameters around the form and function of teacher education across systems, sustained critical research, characterised by Alvesson and Deetz (2021) as challenging, disrupting, or encouraging productive dissension from the norms that have come to characterise systems, is needed. This could offer important understanding of the positioning of teachers within the system, the purpose of the

varied forms teacher education takes, and the relevance of forms of teacher education for the shifting nature and demands of the work of teachers and leaders (Lu & Campbell, 2021).

Additionally, in Hong Kong where eastern philosophies and approaches meet those of the west, further exploration through research is needed to understand the nature, dominance, and impact of the diversity of voices that make up practice, policy, and research communities, particularly in this period of Hong Kong's postcolonial history (Lai et al., 2016). From this diversity of ideas, voices, and related practices, innovative approaches can and do emerge, thanks to or in spite of systemic affordances or barriers and the agency teachers exercise as a result (Hamid & Nguyen, 2016). However, consideration has to be given to the extent to which teachers across the system are able to exercise agency in its varied forms in response to the sense-making process they engage in as a result of contextual influences and drivers of teacher education, and the related forms teacher education then takes. Further elaboration and evaluation of the forms that already exist and what is able to emerge through structural affordances within the system would enable more varied approaches to teacher education throughout a teacher's career to emerge across different parts and levels of the system (Lai et al., 2016).

Ultimately, with the managerialist educational reforms that have framed and structured the contemporary education policy and practice landscapes in Hong Kong, there is a renewed need for policy development, associated accountability mechanisms, and practical structures and cultures to better acknowledge the value and role for the moral agency of teachers (Avis, 2003). In emphasising community and collegiality over managerialism and performativity, teaching and education can better connect with the interests and needs of society in Hong Kong (Choi, 2005), rather than reflecting the forces and demands of globalisation and supranational neoliberal influences. Since Hong Kong's reunification with the PRC, the form and extent of consultative approaches to education policy development have been more extensive than what was employed by the preceding colonial governments; however, consultation has led to 'vague generalities' rather than agreement on values and goals that underpin both policy development and implementation (Morris & Scott, 2003, p. 74).

3.5.3 Practice

Managerialist educational reforms that have characterised the policy landscape since the return of Hong Kong to the PRC as an SAR have resulted in intensified teacher administrative workload and a central focus on documenting success and effectiveness and demonstrating related outcomes to both the government and the public (Lu & Campbell, 2021; Tsang, 2019). The value attributed to this which can end up being greater than aspects of a teacher's work focused on pedagogical practice has implications for both a teachers' sense of efficacy and growth, and their capacity to act with agency to attain broader moral or value-driven goals of teaching and education (Tsang, 2019). As such, consideration of how leaders within schools and across the

system are able to afford and attribute value to how teachers are able to make sense of the value of and values underpinning their work, and exercise decision-making power over what this looks like practically through more varied forms of teacher education, could result in more effective and sustainable pedagogical practices and associated learning outcomes (Tsang, 2019).

While it may not be possible to resist or refute the normative order that comes with dominant global ideologies, or how they come to frame the discursive parameters and the practices within education systems, Phelan (2022) suggests that research offers possibilities to claim spaces through which the norms of the system can be suspended in order for unaddressed possibilities of something different to be explored. Research can offer a space of imagination and fluidity within which teachers are able to come together free from the parameters that traditionally guide their engagement; free from perpetual consensus and compromise which can characterise present-day systems. Research enables teachers and teacher educators to see areas of conjunction, intersection, and discontinuity; free from the dependence on unity, continuity, and shared identity in how we understand teachers and their work. In the context of Hong Kong, a system-wide effort to establish a shared understanding of the values that underpin individual and collective work and the roles they play across the education system would help respond to the 'top-down' orientation of education policy development and the implications this can have for teachers' work and teacher education (Morris & Scott, 2003).

Through more varied fora, means of communication, and opportunities for collaboration between the groups that make up the system in Hong Kong, a more nuanced understanding of the varied professional learning needs and the most appropriate forms of teacher education that could support this may be possible, while also countering the well-embedded culture of managerialism and performativity with a greater sense of community and collegiality (Choi, 2005).

3.6 Concluding Remarks

The context of Hong Kong is complex and dynamic, and as an immigrant to Hong Kong, there are cultural histories and lived realities that influence how we make sense of a postcolonial Hong Kong that I am not able to address sufficiently. However, in seeking to understand the education system in Hong Kong, and the role of teachers and teacher education, it is clear there is so much more that does and will continue to exert influence. In a unique context like Hong Kong where eastern philosophies and approaches meet those of the west, there is more work to be done in understanding how Confucian-heritage culture, emphasising authority and hierarchical models, and Western philosophies that privilege the opposite come to life in what we understand as the purpose and underpinning values of education (Lee, 2013).

In addition to this, understanding the tensions that arise through the interaction of globalisation and nation-centred value systems will be important in any exploration of teacher education policy and practice in Hong Kong (Lo et al., 2022). This chapter is written after a period of social unrest in Hong Kong and during the aftermath of the heights of the COVID-19 pandemic. During periods of change, the contextual characteristics of education policy development in Hong Kong, articulated now two decades ago but with lasting application today, have been noted by Morris and Scott (2003) as a reluctance for genuinely open dialogue that influences policy development and implementation in order to avoid the risk of compromising government position, or leading to disagreement, and the fragmentation or lack of educational bodies and groups through which the government can gain authoritative and informative advice on specific policy areas and issues.

The focus in this chapter, while possibly being understood through an emancipatory lens, can also be understood as being focused on illuminating the complex and wide-ranging expertise that teachers develop and draw upon in and through their practice. Through considering the role of teacher agency in teacher education, and across systems more broadly, systems are able to demonstrate a commitment that goes beyond teachers and a recognition of their professional status and contribution. Instead, an emphasis on teacher agency can demonstrate a recognition of the complex and important contribution teachers' expertise and insights offer in meeting the needs of students, and for schools and education to contribute to society what is needed in times of uncertainty and change.

With a shifting socio-political context that has implications for society, and the role of education within that, the time is right for a critical examination as to the purposes and functions of education in Hong Kong. While Hong Kong may continue to enjoy a global standing as a successful education system with an ambitious and far-reaching professional learning infrastructure, further investigation is needed to understand how teachers and teacher education will enable schools and society more broadly to continue to meet the shifting demands placed upon them.

The last decade in Hong Kong has seen a rise in social movements that has been based on more localised forms of understanding and articulating identity, and can be understood in the context of a 'colonial history and regional geopolitics...a negotiation between the local, the national, and the global' (Wang, 2019, p. 420). This poses notable challenges for education and public policy making more broadly in Hong Kong in the years to come. Not only does this have consequences for the nature and focus of the work of schools and education systems, but also the role, function, and possibilities of teachers and their capacity to act with agency. This may be another example of either tensions or possibilities that emerge from potentially opposing ideological systems, at a time when current policy reform has been a response to 'the dynamic, contentious process of political construction in its production of new cultural/national identity' (Ho, 2020, p. 12).

In this chapter, I argue that greater attention needs to be paid to the linkage between teacher agency and teacher education in Hong Kong and beyond, and the possibilities that can result from this. The key themes explored could have significant implications

for both organisational and wider systemic culture and practice both in Hong Kong and in systems around the world.

Through the development of more varied forms of teacher education in Hong Kong, focused on making sense of the complex influences and drivers of the varied forms teacher learning and education can take, more relevant forms of teacher education may be able to emerge and be sustained through formal and informal means (Ho & Lu, 2019). In the policy context, further critical analysis of how teachers are positioned in the system, how this relates to the forms and purposes of teacher education, and whether or not this relates to shifting demands placed upon teachers and schools is needed (Lu & Campbell, 2021). Consideration is also needed of the means through which various groups with a stake in teacher education in Hong Kong are able to come together in order to build a more sophisticated understanding of the varied and emerging professional learning needs of teachers, and how this can and should influence the development of teacher education in the SAR.

Ultimately, through further theorisation of teacher agency and teacher education as a career-long professional trajectory, as well as greater empirical investigation into the forms this does and can take, it is possible to gain greater insight into the complexity of teacher education that goes beyond the systemic traditions of efficacy, efficiency, and the imposition of standards in Hong Kong.

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Chapter 4
Pre-service Teachers' Self-efficacy Beliefs on Their Role as Teachers During the *Practicum*

Juanjo Mena, Cristina Peinado, and Inmaculada Hernández

Abstract Teachers' self-efficacy is typically understood as the inner beliefs on their capabilities to perform teaching tasks. Student teachers (STs) typically built it on academic achievement as they have little professional experience. The teaching *practicum* provides student teachers with authentic, hands-on experience teaching in classrooms, and thus, it offers the opportunity to rebuild their prior beliefs system by controlled in-school practice. A validated instrument, originally constructed by Kaldi and Xafakos (Teach Teach Educ 67:246–258, 2017), was applied to the Spanish context to measure self-competence, motivation, and sources of support. A sample of 116 pre-service Spanish student teachers participated in the study. Data analysis compared the STs' perceptions according to their prior experience, the teaching program, and determination. Main results indicate that STs with prior experience in practice were more motivated toward the profession as well as the elementary education students. Secondly, the STs who chose the teaching career as a first choice perceived the school teachers' and faculty advisors' guidance and support more meaningful. Teacher education needs to know STs' beliefs around their self-perceptions on the *practicum* to better understand their predispositions toward the teaching practice.

Keywords Student teachers' self-efficacy · Teacher education · *Practicum* experience

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4.1 Introduction

One of the long-lasting challenges of teacher education is reducing the theory–practice divide (Anderson & Freebody, 2012). Researchers often scrutinize teaching and schools from an outsider view even though the action-research paradigm has been predominant in teacher education for around four decades. The teaching learning processes are by nature more complex than those teacher educators and educational researchers can assume because the student teacher learning does not only result from accumulating valuable concepts from educational theories. Conversely, it results as a part of an anthropological process rooted in participation in social practice (Korthagen, 2010) that combines theoretical approaches, personal traits, contextual factors, and dynamic transformations.

When pre-service teachers enroll in the teaching degrees, they carry prior beliefs, assumptions, or expectations. During the first months, they moderately adjust these inner aspects, through theoretical subjects, but when they go to the *Practicum*, they changed them. Usually, they emphasize the contact with the school students as the most positive aspect, and they also stress the relationship with their school mentors as positive. Nevertheless, they also witness teachers' working conditions: busy schedules, difficulties for coordination, increase of the teaching hours, lack of time to participate in research projects, etc. All of it configures the pre-service teachers' mind and their sense of efficacy toward the profession.

Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, understood as a set of personal attitudes toward how good they see themselves as teachers, play an important role in determining their professional identity, especially in the Initial Teacher Education (ITE) phase. Self-efficacy appears to be central to coping with stressful situations (Bandura, 1977; Beltman et al., 2011; Chan, 2008; Kaldi, 2009; Poulou, 2007; Yost, 2006) in which intrapersonal emotional skills could positively intervene. Bandura and Adams (1977) found that reducing subjects' levels of anxiety and fear contributed to improving their sense of self-efficacy. Similarly, a slight overestimation of our capabilities can have a positive effect on our professional performance. In addition, the efficacy beliefs of pre-service and in-service teachers are believed to be resistant to change.

The *practicum* gives opportunities to practice teaching under controlled conditions at the schools. This meaningful experience has an impact on student teachers' reconstruction of prior belief systems that were mostly based on academic achievement or classroom experiences as pupils. The classroom interaction schemes bring the opportunity to access an array of strategies to recognize, categorize, and predict typical situations in the classroom and cope with practical problems through transforming instruction (Heikonen et al., 2017). However, the teaching practicum is highly dependent on a presence-based modality. In fact, the COVID-19 pandemic has put universities to the test to find online solutions for face-to-face teaching. The search and designing of digital tools for this purpose is also enriching current programs nowadays.

The Bologna process implementation in Europe represented a juncture for the configuration of teacher education in Spain since it implied a new reorganization

of the teacher training programs. The higher education degrees were configured in three: Bachelor, Master, and Ph.D. In the first two professional training opportunities to (under)graduate students (Bologna Declaration, 1999) are provided by promoting the internship periods with enough duration and recognized places (e.g., schools, companies, etc.)

The teacher training model that stands in Spain for early childhood education and primary education is concurrent, whereas for secondary education the model is consecutive. The concurrent model combines theoretical knowledge about pedagogy and the teaching practice (practicum) in a four-year bachelor's degree of 240 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). The teachings are organized into three modules: basic, pedagogical, disciplinary, and the Practicum.

Thus, the teaching practicum organization is subjected to the educational reforms that occur at several levels. First, as a member of the European Union, Spain follows the European Parliament and European Council legislation. The Law 2018/958 (European Parliament, 2018) establishes the right for each member country to define the teaching profession although it recommends a harmonization following the principles of proportionality and non-discrimination. Second, the Ministry of Education in Spain adapts the European norms to the specificities of the country. Currently, the teaching profession at the ITE phase is regulated by two educational standards: (1) the preschool teachers degree framework, guidelines, and the syllabi that allow the undergraduates to complete the degree are described in Order ECI/2854/2007 (Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, 2007a); (2) the primary school teachers degree is regulated by the order ECI/3857/2007 (Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, 2007b). Both norms establish 50 ECTS equivalent to 500 h for the Practicum subjects to graduate as preschool or primary school teacher. These two regulations also standardize the competences that teachers should acquire during such period: 'knowing the subject areas and/or the objectives, curricular contents and evaluation criteria of the corresponding stage; acquiring practical knowledge, classroom management; design, plan and evaluate teaching and learning processes individually and in collaboration with other teachers; knowing and applying the processes of interaction and communication in the classroom and master the necessary skills to promote a classroom climate that facilitates learning and coexistence; control and monitor the educational process and, in particular, the teaching–learning process by mastering the necessary pedagogical strategies; participate in the teaching activity and learn how to act and reflect on practice; participate in the improvement proposals in the different areas of action that may be established in a center; regulate the processes of interaction and communication for elementary school students; know the school organization diversity; and learn about ways of collaborating with the different sectors of the educational community and the social environment' (Flores et al., 2022, p. 7).

Thirdly, the national regulation framework is adapted to the culture, language, and idiosyncrasy of each of the seventeen Autonomous Regions that have legislative power in education. Those regions' parliaments control student teachers' access and stays at the practicum schools during their internship periods. Each Region organizes their own procedures to manage the universities demands for their students. As a commonplace procedure, at the beginning of each academic year the schools and

their teachers notify the receiving schools to admit pre-service teachers in their classrooms. The administrative services of the Regional Government inform about these posts to the Faculties of Education that eventually offer these positions to the enrolled undergraduate students. When a particular Faculty of Education demands positions in jurisdictions outside of its Autonomous Region, a special procedure should be followed. Given the high levels of mobility among Spanish students and the fact of the low number of Practicum vacancies available in some regions, this issue might be problematic and therefore agreements among universities and faculties from different regions are scarce.

The main objective of this work is to describe Spanish student teachers' beliefs (Autonomous Region of Castille and Leon) about their teaching efficacy during the *practicum* experience (not before or after it) to better understand their predispositions 'in action' toward the teaching practice. In this regard, these attitudinal stances would remain closer to practice and therefore more meaningful in relation to learning to teach. The study presented is based on a survey-research that sheds light on aspects such as motivation, emotions, challenges, mentoring support, and teaching during the *practicum* period. Particular methodological assumptions were taken to accomplish the objectives set out in this work. The results obtained are organized into different topics such as demanding subjects of the teaching degrees, previous practical experience, perceptions of self-efficacy, or the student teachers' level of determination. Finally, the discussion and conclusion section wrap up the most important ideas that have characterized this study.

4.2 Theoretical Framework

4.2.1 Self-efficacy Beliefs as a Way to Forge Teachers' Professional Identity

Self-efficacy is often understood as one's perceived capability to execute behaviors that do not necessarily match the ability to perform a task (Artino, 2006). Dellinger et al. (2008) defined self-efficacy in the educational context, as 'teacher's individual beliefs in their capabilities to perform specific teaching tasks at a specified level of quality in a specified situation' (p. 752). From this definition, self-efficacy beliefs are thus linked to specific situations in such a way that these beliefs should not be considered as inner attributes. A growing number of educational researchers have highlighted the connections between teachers' efficacy beliefs and educational variables. For instance, they are positively correlated with decreased burnout, increased job satisfaction, student achievement, student sense of efficacy, and student motivation (Aydin & Woolfolk Hoy, 2005). Besides, teacher efficacy beliefs among in-service and pre-service teachers are thought to be resistant to change. Peacock (2001) carried out a research study where 146 student teachers did not experience any significant change after a three-year instructional program. However, there are several

works reporting changes in the pre-service teachers' beliefs after taking *practicum* subjects (Pendergast et al., 2011; Qiu et al., 2021) which is consistent with the principles of experiential learning that consider learning as a process mainly mediated by experience (Kolb, 1984). Since beliefs appear to play an important role in teachers' prospects (Bandura, 1986), and they tend to stay relatively stable, it seems important to address this issue in the education degrees syllabus to build awareness among the students' teachers. In this sense, experienced mentors and advisors can play an important role and it could be necessary to include specific tasks to help their students to recognize patterns when struggling with their own efficacy beliefs.

Nonetheless, little is known about the sources of higher efficacy. Teachers' personality traits have been related somehow to common sources of teacher stress. Self-efficacy appears to be fundamental to coping with stressful situations (Bandura, 1977; Beltman et al., 2011; Chan, 2008; Kaldi, 2009; Poulou, 2007; Yost, 2006) in which intrapersonal emotional skills could intervene positively. Observations of other teachers might construct their own sense of effectiveness as their actions can serve as 'vicarious experience'. For that reason, Bandura (1997) pointed out the importance of feedback and support from the environment in the cultivation of efficacy. He defined a self-efficacy model based on four sources of information: enactive mastery experiences, vicarious mastery experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological and affective states. The information received from situations that provide a successful experience is considered more powerful than that obtained from vicarious experiences; thus, it contributes to strengthening self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997). Similarly, Poulou (2007) found that teaching experience was considered an important source of efficacy for the student teachers, whereas vicarious experiences were not considered as important as mastery experiences. Verbal persuasion also plays an important role in this issue. Receiving feedback on their performance helps student teachers to adjust their sense of efficacy. As for the fourth source of information, Bandura and Adams (1977) found that lowering the anxiety and fear levels of the subjects contributed to improving their self-efficacy sense. In the same way, a slight overestimation of our capabilities may have a positive effect on our professional performance. The practicum subjects can be meaningful sources of positive or negative enactive experiences for student teachers. Even if they seem to be negative, they can also be an opportunity to go beyond the initial feelings and to delve into those events to help them to develop new strategies and to build understanding for future situations. Reflecting on insecurity feelings when facing difficult situations during practicum can help pre-service teachers to reframe their beliefs system.

Student teachers' self-efficacy is also influenced by the fact of choosing the teaching profession as their professional career (Chong & Low, 2009). Research suggests that most of the student teachers choose to teach based on internal motivations, such as the ability to teach, or altruistic reasons (shape children's life, make a social contribution) (Chong & Low, 2009; Watt et al., 2012) rather than external motivations (salary, job security, social respect, poor grades for other academic options). The Global Teacher Status Index 2018 (Dolton et al., 2018), which surveyed primary school teachers' beliefs from 35 countries, reported that the participants considered their profession as moderate status with 6.4 points and less than six points in Spain

(being 1 the lowest and 14 the highest). One of the main conclusions reported is that the higher perception of primary school teachers' status inside each country, the more probability for parents to promote an interest in their children choosing this career path. Consequently, it promotes inner motivation to become a teacher, which in turn results in better levels of satisfaction and, accordingly, commitment and positive career trajectories (Beltman et al., 2011). Nevertheless, this data should be read carefully, because some students may have chosen educational degrees as their first option taking into account their real options after their grades. In recent years, an interest in scientific or health fields have increased significantly, making the social sciences somehow less appealing for newcomers, although the pandemic might have raised a new interest in the educational degrees.

4.2.2 *The Practicum as Meaningful Learning Experience Impacting Student Teachers' Beliefs*

Many student teachers usually base their expectations on their academic performance prior to their first experiences in practice as teachers. However, the immersion in the school activity seems to be fundamental to the perceived changes in their teachers' beliefs (Qiu et al., 2021). As Williams and Sembiante (2022) affirm reflective teaching has an influence in developing a professional identity, as well as in modulating and modifying pre-service teachers' beliefs. The teaching *practicum is precisely structured to* provide student teachers with authentic, hands-on experience teaching in the classroom, offering them the opportunity to apply their knowledge of child development and curriculum content (Kim, 2020). In general, prospective teachers and teacher educators consider the teaching at the *practicum* to be the most beneficial component of their preparation, although the professional identity construction might start from the immersion at the school dynamics and from the open discussions with expert teachers. In this sense, the *practicum* offers the student teachers the opportunity to objectify and rebuild their prior beliefs system by reflection after controlled in-school practice. The practicum subjects are generally structured to offer pre-service teachers opportunities to build successful teaching experiences under their mentors' support and supervision. Eventually, they usually reflect on their experiences by writing on portfolios or holding critical discussions with their mentors. This path might lead them to delve into their own beliefs system and modulate their self-perceived sense of efficacy being more positive than expected for a particular topic, and more negative for others.

As for this work, Kaldi and Xafacos (2017) partly considered for their questionnaire the theory of the situated learning, postulated by Lave and Wenger (1991). From this perspective, situated learning requires: (1) content, mainly by reflection or problem-solving, (2) context, providing a platform to delve into experiences, (3) a community, and (4) participation, mostly through negotiation and renegotiation. All these aspects are key in the *practicum* subjects for the student teachers' learning

processes. The teaching *practicum* is often regarded as a crucial stage for student teachers to experiment with their classroom strategies, test what they know and can do, and try out working as a teacher in the classroom. Experimenting with classroom strategies requires that the teaching *practicum* provides safe surroundings and opportunities to practice the skills and strategies that are needed for successful teaching and management of classroom situations. In this safe and constructive environment, student teachers are more likely to try out novel strategies and test various approaches in classroom interaction. Learning proactive classroom strategies needs to be facilitated before, during, and after teaching *practicum* through using case descriptions, classroom simulations, and authentic problem-solving situations in which student teachers can observe their own and pupils' actions, collaboratively discuss alternative strategies, and actively experiment with new classroom practices. Furthermore, lesson study has been suggested to contribute to student teachers' understanding of the complexities of teaching in a holistic and situated way and enhance their classroom strategies by moving their focus from themselves to their pupils and the pupils' learning (Heikonen et al., 2017). In practice, mentor teachers play the most important role in supervision, and they are perceived as the most significant support in the student teacher's experiences (Aydin & Woolfolk Hoy, 2005). However, teaching internships can have both negative and positive influences. Poorly chosen internships lead to feelings of inadequacy, low teaching effectiveness, and an unfavorable attitude toward teaching; whereas extensive and well-planned field experiences can help prospective teachers develop confidence, self-esteem, and increased awareness of the profession. For the student teachers who are about to begin their university education, the expectations, thoughts, and previous knowledge create a set of beliefs on which the new contents to be learned during their education will be based. Since they begin their teacher training, they are already told about the presence and importance of the *practicum*, making them see that this is one of the most enriching experiences of their entire teacher training. They also tend to reject certain theoretical knowledge, giving greater importance to everything they can learn through practice and experience (Shkedi & Laron, 2004). Therefore, it is important to guide these future teachers from the beginning of their training, delving into the reasons they contemplate for choosing teaching, which can give us information to anticipate their future level of satisfaction in their training.

Additionally, La Paro and Crosby highlight the relevance of socio-emotional components, such as: intrapersonal feelings, general internship satisfaction, or the sense of teaching effectiveness. These are found to be highly influential in changing prior beliefs during the practicum since they automatically activate personal response and connection to previous experiences. According to Palmer (2006), who tested the durability of those changes in beliefs regarding insecurity feelings when facing sciences classes during practicum, changes remain after 8–11 months. Enactive experiences during practicum help student teachers to lessen their anxiety feelings when thinking about teaching sciences.

Another aspect to consider within the *practicum* period during these last years is online learning, as distance education has become ubiquitous because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on this situation, we must also consider this period as part of

an educational process that takes place through the internet as a form of distance education (Kim, 2020). In recent years, we have been able to see how online teaching and learning an indispensable role in education programs around the world have, although there is a debate as to whether it is beneficial for a certain part of the student body or students in early childhood education, as it involves prolonged exposure to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) (Konca et al., 2016). Finally, it is worth considering that online teaching experiences provided these trainee teachers with opportunities to interact with children when there was no other way to do so, which fostered the creation of a virtual space dedicated to reflecting on how best to promote students' development and learning with online communication tools (Kim, 2020).

All things considered, we should keep in mind that, as Qiu et al. (2021) asserted, '*the change from a student role to a teacher role can be one of the most abrupt and stressful transitions in working life*' (p. 3). Therefore, the objective of this chapter is twofold:

1. Describe student teachers' perceptions about their preferred teaching course in the *practicum* and the most challenging subjects (and related concepts) to teach in the *practicum.*
2. Compare whether there are significant differences in teaching self-efficacy in the five instrument dimensions between (a) student teachers with experience in the *Practicum* and those who do not; (b) student teachers from the elementary school education degree and the early childhood education program; and (c) student teachers who chose the teaching profession as their first choice (more determined) university studies versus those undergraduate students who chose it as a second or third choice (less determined).

4.3 Methodology

4.3.1 Context of the Study

Student teachers in Spain follow a concurrent model of teacher education for both early childhood education and elementary education. However, each one follows a different syllabus program within a four-year degree. This initial decision is important because each degree qualifies only to the chosen stage. Nowadays, student teachers can also enroll in a dual five-year degree program that qualifies them to teach at both educational levels.

The *Practicum* is a compulsory subject in each degree program. The *Practicum* at the University of Salamanca (Spain) is divided into two periods. The first *Practicum* is taken in the first semester of the third-year degree course. In the academic course 2019–2020, 197 student teachers (36.6% from early childhood teacher education degree and 63.4% from elementary teacher education degree) were enrolled in it.

During seven weeks, they were immersed in real school practices and were guided by one school mentor following the school schedules and daily teaching routines. This first year of the *practicum* is called the observational *Practicum* as it represents the first contact with the teaching practice, even if the student teachers prepare occasional lessons plans under mentoring supervision. At the same time, the student teachers are also assigned to a faculty advisor that helps them to reflect on their observations, revisit their beliefs, or understand their emotions during their first contact with the reality of a learning group.

In their fourth year, 186 student teachers (55.9% from elementary teacher education degree and 44.1% from early childhood teacher education degree) took the second period of the *practicum*, named *Practicum II*. The basics of this *Practicum* are the same as *Practicum I*. The student teachers are assigned to a school mentor and to a faculty supervisor. During nine weeks, the pre-service teachers stay in their internship schools closely collaborating with their mentors. It is considered as the 'action *Practicum*' as the student teachers must teach most of their time, demonstrate initiative, develop their ability to analyze and reflect on their own practice, and assess a teaching unit in collaboration with the teacher mentors. For both *Practicums,* the student teachers must attend a series of seminars conducted by faculty advisors at the Faculty of Education to reflect on critical issues related to their practice in the classrooms. Along with those seminars, they attend group meetings with the faculty advisor addressing key aspects such as classroom management, teaching experiences, school coordination, or educational events. Finally, they must complete a final assignment: write a portfolio about their school experience that is evaluated by the faculty advisors.

In Spain, the Regional Governments control the non-university education institutions. The University of Salamanca, as any other higher institution, must partner with the Regional Government to regulate the pre-service teachers' *practicum* experience. A Regional Education Board opens an annual call for schools to inform whether they will be opened to receiving student teachers. Concurrently, another call for teachers is waved to all the teachers' region working force to find expert teachers who volunteer to be school mentors. Once both calls are finished, the Regional Educational Board organizes a list with all the teachers willing to accept student teachers in their classrooms. The list included 114 public or private schools, from rural or urban areas and a total of 769 teachers willing to mentor pre-service teachers. Unfortunately, some teachers do not receive students, due to a variety of reasons such as lack of public transport to small villages, or long distances from the Faculty of Education to the destination school.

Moreover, a committee with representatives from the Regional Educational Administration, the universities, and the schools has been recently created to monitor the development of the *Practicum*, to suggest any improvements, manage possible conflicts, and act when required. The Regional Committee integrates representatives from all sectors, and it is composed of nine Province Committees. This structure makes the Province Committee highly managerial, being focused in the short term, whereas the Regional Committee is more long-term oriented, focusing on general orientations and paying attention to the big picture on how the *practicum* should

be better organized. This *Practicum* organization indicates a deep interest in guaranteeing the quality of the pre-service teachers' instruction because the Regional Government, as a future employer of part of those student teachers, boosts the transference of knowledge among professional teachers and future teachers.

4.3.2 Instrumentation

The instrument utilized in this study was a verbatim translation to Spanish of a questionnaire published by Kaldi and Xafakos (2017) to evaluate student teachers' beliefs about their *practicum* experiences. The instrument has been considered to construct the practicum profile tool within the PRAC3 ERASMUS+ project. We chose this tool because it extensively explores student teachers' self-efficacy beliefs according to the theory of situated learning and self-determination. The scale was originally composed of 43 items on a Likert scale (five degrees of response from 'agree' to 'completely disagree') and explores five dimensions: orientation during the time of the *practicum* (16 items), teachers' self-efficacy (31 items), challenges during teaching (13 items), motivation to teach (15 items), and management of emotions (with 40). The dimensions are based on a previous work by Kaldi (2009) in which the author highlights that the main aspects to be considered when exploring student teachers' perceptions are: self-competence in teaching; emotions, reactions to stress, and resilience; and the link between teaching practice and expectations.

4.3.3 Participants

A total number of 116 student teachers participated in this study (52 belonging to an elementary education teacher education program and 64 of early childhood teacher education program) in the Faculty of Education at the University of Salamanca (USAL) in Spain. The student teachers joined the *practicum* in primary and kindergarten schools for three months during the school year 2019–2020.

4.3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

The student teachers belonging to both programs participated on a voluntary basis in the study. The questionnaires were delivered in Google Forms to some participants as well as they were printed off for others who preferred to take it during a lesson at the Faculty of Education at the University of Salamanca, Spain. Data was used for the PRAC3 ERASMUS+ to ground the basic frame of one of its tools: the Practicum Profile Tool.

The responses collected were analyzed using the statistical software SPSS, v.21. Both descriptive (e.g., gender, number of students, programs, etc.) and inferential analysis were conducted. Data was also revised in the PRAC3 ERASMUS+ project to test the usefulness of the questionnaire for the (online) practicum.

Both elementary school and early childhood programs were compared using t-tests and Welch tests—when unequal variances were assumed or unequal group sample sizes—around the five dimensions of the questionnaire: student teachers' perceived teaching self-efficacy beliefs in relation to motivation to teach, emotional intelligence, and sources of support during school *practicum*.

4.3.5 Validation

Reliability analyses were conducted for the translated scale into Spanish. Cronbach Alpha showed consistency between the Spanish instrument and the original one used in Kaldi and Xafakos (2017). See Table 4.1.

As shown in Table 4.1, the overall Cronbach alpha was $a = 0.828$. The dimensions where reliability scores were higher are self-efficacy and challenges, whereas motivation was the lowest ($a = 0.604$) but acceptable.

4.4 Results

A total number of 116 student teachers participated in the study. Out of them, 52 (45.2% of the sample) belonged to the elementary school teacher education program at the University of Salamanca, whereas the other 63 (54.8%) at the early childhood education program at the same higher education institution. Most of the participants were female student teachers ($n = 103$) representing 88.8% of the sample. In the

Table 4.1 Reliability scores (Cronbach alpha)

	Cronbach's alpha	*N*	Percentage (%)
Part A—Orientation	0.794	100	86.2
Part B—Self-efficacy	0.930	102	87.9
Part C—Challenges	0.945	107	92.2
Part D—Motivation	0.606	105	90.5
Part E—Emotions	0.866	102	87.9
Total score	0.828	103	88.9

Taken from Mena et al. (2019)

Note Reliability scores for the self-reported questionnaire by Kaldi and Xafakos (2017). Part A: Orientation during the time of the *practicum*. Part B: Teacher's self-efficacy. Part C: Challenges during teaching. Part D: Motivation to teach. Part E: Management of emotions

elementary education school teaching program, 36.2% ($n = 42$) were women while 8.6% ($n = 10$) were men. A similar ratio was found in the early education school teaching program where 95.3% ($n = 61$) were females and just 4.7% ($n = 3$) were males. This is consistent with other data pointing out that, even among teenagers, girls are much more prone than boys to choose education degree programs (Sikora, 2021).

4.4.1 School Teaching Grade in the Practicum Versus Preferred Teaching Grade

As it is shown in Table 4.2, most of the Elementary School Student teachers taught in the 3° and 4° grades (26; 40.6%) when they preferred to be at the first level (27; 46.6%). For Early Childhood student teachers, many of them taught to four-year-old students (29, 43.3%) when the preferred level was in the three-year-old classrooms (33, 23.9%).

Finally, regarding the number of school student they taught per classroom we obtained the following numbers: up to 10 school pupils = 2 (1.7%); 11–15 = 10 (8.6%); 16–20; 27 (23.3%); 21–25 = 63 (54.3%); and 25 above = 14 (12.1%).

Table 4.2 Current teaching grade in the *practicum* versus preferred teaching grade by the student teachers

		Current teaching grade		Preferred teaching grade	
		f	%	*f*	%
Elementary school	1 (1°–2° grades)	17	26.5	27	46.6
	2 (3°–4° grades)	26	40.6	14	24.1
	3 (5°–6° grades)	21	32.8	17	29.3
	Subtotal	64	100	58	100
Early childhood	1 (3 years)	16	23.9	33	50
	2 (4 years)	29	43.3	22	33.3
	3 (5 years)	22	32.8	11	16.6
	Subtotal	67	100	66	100

Adapted from Mena et al. (2019)

4.4.2 Most Challenging Subjects in the Degree Where They Do the Practicum

The participants responded to the question ($n = 109$): 'Which curriculum subject did you find more difficult to prepare your lesson plans during the school teaching practice?' The main results indicated that the most difficult concepts to explain to the classroom students were natural sciences (41; 37.6%), followed by math (25; 22.93%), Spanish Language (11; 10.09%) and foreign language (7; 6.42%), and social sciences (4; 3.66%). A total of 15 student teachers indicated to have no problems with any. Other concepts from disciplines such as physical education, arts, and ethics had marginal scores (2 and 1) representing less than 2%. It is interesting to note that early childhood education student teachers majorly reacted to sciences as difficult to be taught at their level (40 out of 59; 67.79% of the sample), whereas only one student teacher signaled this subject in the elementary education teaching program.

4.4.3 Prior Practicum Experience

We compare those student teachers with experience in the *Practicum*, that is, the student teachers who enrolled in the *Practicum* II (they all had at least one year of previous *practicum* experience) and the ones who were in the Practicum I with no prior experience as school teachers apart from their current year at the *practicum*. Main results are shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Perceived teacher self-efficacy between student teachers with no teaching experience versus prior experience

	Practicum I (no prior experience)			*Practicum* II (prior experience)			Welch	Sig.
	N	Mean	Sd	*N*	Mean	Sd		
Part A—Guidance and Support	17	3.360	0.486	82	3.719	0.531	7.420	0.012*
Part B—Teaching efficacy	18	3.869	0.217	84	3.869	0.404	2.644	0.111
Part C—Challenges	19	3.408	1.052	87	3.408	1.039	0.045	0.834
Part D—Motivation	20	3.206	0.383	85	3.189	0.333	0.036	0.041*
Part E—Emotions	17	3.963	0.354	84	4.051	0.314	0.909	0.851

Note Part A: Orientation during the time of the *practicum*. Part B: Teacher's self-efficacy. Part C: Challenges during teaching. Part D: Motivation to teach. Part E: Management of emotions (Kaldi & Xafakos, 2017)

* Significant at the level $p < 0.05$

Data from Table 4.3 indicates that there were statistical differences in the dimensions of guidance and support (Welch = 7.420, df = 1; $p = 0.012$) and motivation (Welch = 0.20; df = 1; $p = 0.041$). The student teachers with prior experience felt they were better guided and advised during the *practicum* than their counterparts who had recently been immersed in the *practicum* I at the schools. Conversely, the student teachers with no prior experience in the *practicum* felt more motivated to accomplish teaching and other school tasks.

4.4.4 Elementary School Education Program and Early Childhood Education Program Self-efficacy Perceptions

Student teachers belonging to the two programs held different views on the *practicum.* The statistical analysis showed that significant differences (t test) were found in motivation ($p = 0.039$; $t = 1.359$). Results are shown in Table 4.4 where the mean scores (from 0 to 5) and standard deviation for each of the questionnaire dimensions are shown.

It is interesting to note that there were no significant differences on the rest of the dimensions which may indicate that either the early childhood or elementary school student teachers have similar perceptions of their efficacy as teachers when they are in the pre-service period of their education.

Table 4.4 Mean scores and standard deviation of the student teachers' responses to the items of the questionnaire

	Elementary school education group			Early childhood school education group			Sig.
	N	Mean	Sd	*N*	Mean	Sd	
Part A—Guidance and support	44	3.603	0.565	56	3.704	0.085	0.605
Part B—Teaching efficacy	44	3.858	0.365	58	4.036	0.375	0.304
Part C—Challenges	47	3.711	0.943	60	3.261	1.064	0.213
Part D—Motivation	46	3.243	0.400	59	3.152	0.284	0.039*
Part E—Emotions	47	3.523	0.489	59	3.601	0.332	0.483

Taken from Mena et al. (2019)

Note Part A: Orientation during the time of the *practicum.* Part B: Teacher's self-efficacy. Part C: Challenges during teaching. Part D: Motivation to teach. Part E: Management of emotions (Kaldi & Xafakos, 2017)

* Significant at the level $p < 0.05$

Table 4.5 Perceived teacher self-efficacy according to students teachers' determination (as measured by choosing the teaching career as their first choice)

	Teaching career (first choice)			Teaching career (second choice)			Welch	Sig.
	N	Mean	Sd	*N*	Mean	Sd		
Part A—Guidance and support	73	3.734	0.541	23	3.453	0.517	5.036	0.031*
Part B—Self-efficacy	74	3.984	0.356	24	3.876	0.452	1.147	0.292
Part C—Challenges	78	3.532	1.041	25	3.350	0.952	0.659	0.421
Part D—Motivation	78	3.212	0.330	25	3.138	0.386	0.746	0.393
Part E—Emotions	75	4.067	0.307	23	3.963	0.332	1.800	0.189

Note Part A: Orientation during the time of the *practicum*. Part B: Teacher's self-efficacy. Part C: Challenges during teaching. Part D: Motivation to teach. Part E: Management of emotions (Kaldi & Xafakos, 2017)
* Significant at the level $p < 0.05$

4.4.5 Student Teachers' Determination

In this chapter, we use the term determination as the student teachers' capacity to achieve the goal of becoming a teacher. One measure to materialize this attribute was asking them whether they chose the teaching career degree as a first or second choice of their tertiary studies, and assuming that those who did it as the first choice could be more determined to complete their studies. Practically, two-thirds of the sample chose to enroll in a teacher education program as their first option for their studies ($n = 84$; 75.6%), whereas one-third ($n = 27$; 24.3%) chose it as their second or third choice. As shown in Table 4.5, the results obtained from the questionnaire items indicated that only the dimension 'Guidance and Support' differed significantly from both groups (Welch = 5.036; df = 1; $p = 0.031$).

Slight differences can be seen in challenges and motivation as the group who chose the teaching career as their first choice felt more motivated when teaching but at the same time perceived more difficulties when performing regular teachers' duties.

4.5 Discussion and Conclusions

The subjects the student teachers considered more complex to teach during the *Practicum* were those related to natural sciences (41%), followed by contents of mathematics (almost 25%). This may lead to think that behind this difficulty may be underlying a low level of training competence in the Spanish context to address the development of tasks related to science and math and more mastery in social sciences

and humanities. Probably the student teachers' difficulties in math and sciences are due to lack of enough background during high school, aspects that are highlighted in the last TIMSS report (OECD, 2020) where the Spanish students' achievement in maths was of 502, under the OECD mean score (527) or the EU (513). This is also in line with Sikora's (2021) review results on the teacher career plans in high school education students in Australia. She found that those who chose a college education degree did not take mathematics in their last two courses of schooling.

The early childhood education cohort pointed out science as the most difficult content to teach (67.79%), probably because in the early childhood education program there are no specific subjects related to science or math education. According to the ENCIENDE report about Science Education for Early Childhood in Spain (COSCE, 2011) and financed by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation, five transversal proposals should be implemented in teaching to improve science knowledge in students: (1) the need to support and promote a renewal of the teaching of sciences, not only of the contents or methodologies of the classroom, but also of the approach of internal and external evaluation; (2) need for a rethinking of science teacher training in line with the renewal of science education that is being pursued; (3) promote scientific culture in Spain through the promotion of actions that involve the approach of science to society, in particular, in the family and leisure sphere, as well as scientific communication; (4) promote the opening of the scientific community to society in general and to children in particularly early ages; and (5) create, maintain, and stimulate a meeting point between the various agents involved in education and scientific culture, in particular of children of early ages.

Another relevant result highlights that a quarter of the sample chose the teaching career as a second choice, indicating that it is not considered by undergraduate students as an intrinsic way of professional development, but rather to obtain a permanent job. This result aligns with the adequacy rate for the year 2019–2020 where 73.9% undergraduate students enrolled in the first-choice degree in Spain (Ministry of Universities, 2021) out of a total number of 1,296,379 who initiate their studies at the university for the first year (MEFP, 2022). Those students in our study who chose the teaching career as their first option (75.6%) felt slightly motivated toward the profession as well as they also perceived more difficulties when teaching. This might indicate that they are more conscious of the importance of the teachers' role to engage students in multiple learning experiences. Havlík (1995) revealed that one-third of the newcomers to the education degree would have chosen other options if their grades had been good enough to choose it. For that reason, they might be more prone to bring knowledge to the classroom and have a proactive attitude toward the teaching practice. However, other researchers offer a different explanation for this choice. Scio found that students who chose education as the first option did it because they perceived the degree as less demanding than others. Nonetheless, in recent years, the required grades to enroll in an educational degree at the USAL has significantly risen, making them a first choice rather than a second option. Over the last five years, these grades have grown by 39.53% in the primary school degree (they have increased from 7.40 to 10.33 out of a maximum of 14 points), and by

32.97% (from 7.23 to 9.61 out of 14 points) to the preschool degree in the Faculty of Education, breaking a softer prior increase tendency in the last decade.

Thirdly, significant differences between *Practicum* I (no prior teaching experience) and *Practicum* II (prior teaching experience) were found in the dimensions of guidance and motivation. The fact that the student teachers from *Practicum* I felt more supported by their mentors and other schoolteachers and showed more motivation and interest in their practice, has to do with the fact of having had previous teaching experiences, as they usually increase their confidence when facing the teaching practice. On a different level, Malmberg et al. (2014) reported that experienced teachers' lessons were basically driven by their performance and the influence on their students' learning (intrinsic motivation) rather than by their sense of suitability, as it occurred in pre-service teachers' lessons. In this regard, it is worth noting that student teachers do not always go through positive experiences. Taking into account the aforementioned Bandura's model (1997) where enactive positive experiences are the most powerful way of increasing the sense of self-efficacy, this could be problematic for student teachers. However, in this situation, the role of mentors and advisors is revealed as key to help their student teachers to go beyond the situation and build knowledge for future events.

It is also interesting to note that most of the student teachers, regardless of the training program, preferred to teach in the lower grades of primary and early childhood classrooms, but most of them ended up going to the *Practicum* in intermediate levels (third to fight grades—9 to 11 years old). This result is important to know as the student teachers' training preferences in the *Practicum* period might define their priorities. Many of these students conduct their training practices in contexts in which they do not feel identified or are not related to their needs, interests, and motivations, which in turn make them lose interest in their future profession. Consequently, this aspect should be taken into consideration for future teacher education programs.

Finally, regarding inferential analysis, no statistical differences were found between the two groups (primary education vs. early childhood education) in the dimensions of the test. Only in the case of motivation, the primary education group felt more committed than their infant education counterparts. With respect to the rest of the dimensions, no significant differences were observed, which may indicate that students in both groups have similar perceptions, for example, about their effectiveness as teachers and their feeling of training for practice.

This study highlights the relevance for teacher education of student teachers' self-perceptions on how they see themselves as teachers. These subjective stances might be determinant to face the profession in future and to handle challenging situations. In fact, self-efficacy beliefs might be one of the factors that explain student teachers' successful graduation rates: 27,857 students finished the education studies (80.7%) (MEFP, 2022). For this reason, teacher educators should understand the importance of teacher self-efficacy and the ways to improve it. For instance, Kavita and Dahiya stated that the use of multimedia in teachers' instruction can significantly improve their mastery experience. Therefore, promoting the use of digital sources in the student teachers' lessons can be determinant to boost their confidence. On the other hand, there is a need for the educational administrations to professionally support

their teachers as they fail to fully believe in their potential without that assistance (Hong, 2010).

A major limitation of the results of this study is that they are highly dependent on the jurisdiction context of the University of Salamanca, Spain. Other results might be expected in other universities or countries. Besides, determining self-efficacy as a component of teachers' effectiveness is a complex task as it entails many aspects to be taken into account: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and somatic and emotional states (Bandura, 1977). Trying to have a portrait of the student teachers' self-efficacy would require the use of more instruments than one questionnaire.

Further studies would require studying other *practicum* contexts to check whether student teachers' perceptions identified differ from the ones collected in the present study. Secondly, a more in-depth analysis of the student teachers' self-efficacy would be required, that is, not only measuring it according to their beliefs but according to teaching performance. This last should be investigated through observational research.

4.6 Implications

In Spain, the educational system is decentralized, being directly managed by the Autonomous Regions' Governments. Nevertheless, each jurisdiction must follow the national legal framework, established by the ECI Order 3854/2007 for the preschool degrees, and by the Order 3857/2007 for the primary school degrees. These orders determine that both degrees must dedicate 50 ECTS out to 240 for the Practicum subjects and the final degree project, which, in turn, underlines the importance of those subjects to train the future teachers. Moreover, the legal system stresses the importance of teachers reflecting on their own ways of teaching as one of their main professional competences. Research also suggests the relevance of strengthening cooperation between academia and schoolteachers that promote and deepen knowledge, and it results in improvements in teaching skills. Although some teachers would want to participate in research projects, their schedule allows no margin for engaging such projects unless they wanted to do it in their free time. During the last years, some adjustments in their working conditions have led to increasing their teaching hours following the global neoliberal pattern. Work regulations for primary school teachers do not include any time or remuneration to do research while staying in the educational institutions. As for the Practicum areas, to date, mentors voluntarily request for student teachers to guide them during their practicum, without any economical compensation, with little work recognition and no freed time to address specific issues with their student teachers. Conversely, faculty advisors are assigned to this task by their departments assuming small student teacher cohorts' guidance for the practicum experience at the schools. Both, school mentors and faculty advisors carry out their work without any previous schedule adjustment making it more difficult for coordination purposes. This is one of the most criticized issues relating

to the practicum management, and it should be addressed in future policy adjustments. Coordinating both school mentors and faculty advisors would help student teachers to work specifically in increasing their sense of self-efficacy. Additionally, it could be interesting including specific case scenarios in the teacher education programs syllabi to allow for jointly work between school mentors and faculty advisors. Student teachers are affected by the mentioned aspects, as they engage their classrooms with their mentors in their regular schedules, with little time to discuss doubts or key aspects for their training and suffering the same schedule constraints as their mentors. They also claim for improvements in the coordination of mentors and advisors, whom they meet separately either in school or college. Finally, public administrations will eventually hire the current student teachers in years to come, so there is a joint interest in managing the teaching practicum in cooperation with universities. Nevertheless, allowing teachers to engage in research projects or to analyze teaching scenarios with their student teachers and faculty advisors would require increasing the workforce by investing more funds. This last is unlikely to occur in a decade marked with cutbacks in education.

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Appendix: Questionnaire About Teaching Experiences During the School Teaching Practice

By Kaldi and Xafakos (2017)

PART A—Guidance during school teaching practice

	Level of agreement ⇨ **During my teaching in the school teaching practice:**	**Totally disagree**	**Disagree**	**I am not sure**	**Agree**	**Totally agree**
1	I was systematically guided by my professors at the university	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
2	Class teachers guided me importantly	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
3	I received feedback about my teaching from my professors at the university	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
4	I received feedback about my teaching form the teacher of the class I taught	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
5	I had fruitful discussions and exchanged ideas about teaching with my course peers	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
6	I was encouraged about my teaching from my professors at the university	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
7	I consider professors' supervision during teaching very effective	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
8	I was systematically guided by the teacher-mentors	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
9	I received feedback about my teaching from the teacher-mentor	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
10	I consider the supervision of the teacher of the class I taught very effective	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
11	I consider teacher-mentors' supervision during teaching very effective	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
12	I was encouraged about my teaching from the teacher-mentors	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
13	I was encouraged about my teaching from the teacher of the class I taught	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
14	I was encouraged about my teaching from my communication with the course peers	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
15	I had easy access to materials and audio-visual means needed for my teaching as provided by the course	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
16	Teachers-mentors facilitated the process of teaching practice in schools	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5

PART B—Teaching self-efficacy

	Level of agreement ⇨ **After my teaching in the school teaching practice I think that**	**Totally disagree**	**Disagree**	**I am not sure**	**Agree**	**Totally agree**
1	I can use a variety of assessment strategies	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
2	I can explain further when students face difficulty in understanding	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
3	I can ask students appropriate questions	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
4	I can use a variety of instructional strategies (i.e. brainstorming, diagrams etc.)	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
5	I can use a variety of child-centred teaching approaches (i.e. group work, Project-Based Learning, etc.)	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
6	I can respond to students' difficult questions	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
7	I can incorporate students' experiences, previous knowledge and interests during the lesson effectively	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
8	I can take into consideration students' readiness level when preparing lessons (i.e. students with learning disabilities or gifted students).	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
9	I can assess students' learning tasks daily	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
10	I can present to students new concepts/skills effectively	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
11	I can direct students to independent learning tasks	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5

12	I can coordinate a class discussion	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
13	I can use attractive learning tasks for the students	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
14	I can give students' the appropriate guidelines before they carry out learning tasks	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
15	I can control disorderly behavior in the class	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
16	I can raise and maintain students' interest during the lesson	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
17	I can convince students to follow the class rules	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
18	I can manage bad behavior in the class	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
19	I can distribute routine roles to all students effectively	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
20	I can apply an effective discipline system in the classroom	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
21	I can stop situations where few students with improper behavior try to interrupt the flow of the lesson	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
22	I can respond effectively to students with disorderly behavior	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
23	I can make clear what my expectations are about students' social behavior	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
24	I can improve the performance of students with learning disabilities	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
25	I can develop students' critical thinking and exploratory skills	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
26	I can develop students' creativity	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
27	I can get all students be engaged in the learning process regardless of their readiness level	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
28	I can help students to enjoy learning	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
29	I can provide students with opportunities to be engaged in learning tasks according to their interests and talents	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
30	I can provide students with learning disabilities sufficient time to carry out learning tasks	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
31	I can respond to learning needs and interest of students from various cultural backgrounds	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5

PART C—Challenges during teaching

	Level of agreement ⇨ **During my school teaching practice I faced difficulties in teaching regarding the following:**	**Totally disagree**	**Disagree**	**I am not sure**	**Agree**	**Totally agree**
1	Classroom discipline	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
2	Collaborating with the class teacher	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
3	Collaborating with the students	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
4	Collaborating with the Head teacher	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
5	Lesson plans	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
6	Carrying out teaching	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
7	Finding A/V aids and materials	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
8	Finding information sources	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
9	Using A/V aids and materials	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
10	The school's infrastructure	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
10	Teaching in classes with students with immigrant background	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
11	Teaching in classes with students with learning disabilities	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
12	The content in some curriculum subjects I taught in senior primary school classes (i.e. Science, Maths, Language, History, etc.)	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5

PART D—Motivation to teach

	During my school teaching practice: Level of agreement ⇨	Totally disagree	Disagree	I am not sure	Agree	Totally agree
1	I consider carrying out teaching a pleasant task	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
2	I consider teaching as an important task to do	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
3	I consider my teaching as an important task for the academic success of the students	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
4	I think that if I don't carry out teaching, I will feel bad	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
5	I would feel guilty not carrying out teaching	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
6	It is my duty to teach because my course demands it	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
7	I consider teaching an interesting task to do	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
8	I like teaching	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
9	I consider teaching as a task that allows me to attain work objectives which I think are important	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
10	I don't know, I don't always see the relevance of carrying out teaching	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
11	I don't know, sometimes I don't see purpose in teaching	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
12	I used to know why I was carrying out teaching, but I don't see the reason anymore	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
13	Teaching is my duty because I am paid for it	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
14	I would not feel bad if I did not carry out teaching	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
15	I am obliged to teach because the school(s) collaborating with my course expect me to teach	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5

PART E—Management of emotions

	Concerning feelings I believe that Level of agreement ⇨	Totally disagree	Disagree	I am not sure	Agree	Totally agree
1	My feelings are clear to me at any given moment	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
2	Emotions play an important part in my life	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
3	My moods impact the people around me	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
4	I find it easy to put words to my feelings	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
5	My moods are easily affected by external events	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
6	I can easily sense when I'm going to be angry	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
7	I readily tell others my true feelings	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
8	I find it easy to describe my feelings	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
9	Even when I'm upset, I'm aware of what's happening to me	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
10	I am able to stand apart from my thoughts and feelings and examine them	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
11	I accept responsibility for my reactions	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
12	I find it easy to make goals and stick with them	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
13	I am an emotionally balanced person	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
14	I am a very patient person	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
15	I can accept critical comments from others without becoming angry	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
16	I maintain my composure, even during stressful times	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
17	If an issue does not affect me directly, I don't let it bother me	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
18	I can restrain myself when I feel anger towards someone	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
19	I control urges to overindulge in things that could damage my well being	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
20	I direct my energy into creative work or hobbies	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5

21	I consider the impact of my decisions on other people	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
22	I can tell easily tell if the people around me are becoming annoyed	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
23	I sense it when a person's mood changes	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
24	I am able to be supportive when giving bad news to others	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
25	I am generally able to understand the way other people feel	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
26	My friends can tell me intimate things about themselves	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
27	It genuinely bothers me to see other people suffer	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
28	I usually know when to speak and when to be silent	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
29	I care what happens to other people	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
30	I understand when people's plans change	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
31	I am able to show affection	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
32	My relationships are safe places for me	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
33	I find it easy to share my deep feelings with others	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
34	I am good at motivating others	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
35	I am a fairly cheerful person	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
36	It is easy for me to make friends	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
37	People tell me I am sociable and fun	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
38	I like helping people	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
39	Others can depend on me	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
40	I am able to talk someone down if they are very upset	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5

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Chapter 5
Mind the Gap: Teacher Induction in Scotland

Stephen P. Day and Rachel Shanks

Abstract In this chapter, we provide an overview of the national Teacher Induction Scheme and the Flexible Route to Registration as a teacher in Scotland. We highlight both the benefits and weaknesses of these two pathways into the teaching profession. The benefits of the Teacher Induction Scheme include a guaranteed post, a reduced teaching load in the induction year and an induction supporter/mentor to observe and support the induction year teacher. The main benefit of the Flexible Route is that it can be done on a part-time basis and its main weakness is the lack of a reduced teaching load and no formal supporter/mentor arrangement. Weaknesses in both pathways include the lack of a continuum in professional development from initial teacher education at tertiary level into and beyond the induction year. Another weakness in the induction scheme is the lack of compulsory training or education for those who take on the role of induction supporter/mentor. Finally, we provide some recommendations for reviewing the current pathways into teaching so that there are consistent levels of support to all beginning teachers in Scotland and clear routes into permanent employment as a teacher after the induction year.

Keywords Beginning teachers · Continuing professional development · Mentoring early career teachers · Teacher induction · Teacher probation

5.1 Introduction

Early career teachers (ECTs) often find themselves situated in a complex, dynamic contextual landscape that influences their development and practice and can dictate their professional expectations of teaching and professional learning (Kutsyuruba et al., 2019). Internationally, educational researchers and policy makers view the first

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three to four years after initial teacher education as the most crucial for a teacher's decision as to leave or remain in the profession (Jones, 2003).

In this chapter, we discuss Scotland's national Teacher Induction Scheme and the Flexible Route to Registration, which provide insights into how induction can be part of a career-long trajectory or continuum of teacher education. We argue that this continuum requires the involvement of all institutional players to ensure coherence and continuity, reduce unnecessary repetition and thereby help with the transition from student teacher to fully qualified teacher. The way that teachers are supported at the beginning and throughout their careers could be regarded as a proxy measure for how a society values education and teachers. Globally, teacher retention is a longstanding issue as substantial numbers of qualified teachers leave the profession within five years of entry (Perryman & Calvert, 2020). In the United Kingdom, data from the School Workforce Census for England shows that of those teachers who qualified in 2014, 32.6% left teaching after 5 years (UK Gov., 2020). In Scotland, the figures show that of those entering the profession in 2014/15, 21% had left the profession by December 2020 (Scottish Government, 2020). Research into this issue highlights the important role that early career support and mentoring plays in retaining beginning career teachers, with performativity, accountability and relatively poor pay for the workload being factors that drive teacher attrition (Hughes, 2012; Tran & Smith, 2020).

It could be argued that another important factor impacting on the issue of teacher retention and attrition is access to a quality, structured induction scheme that provides a secure grounding in practice for the beginning teacher and a clear orientation into the profession that sets up the early phase of the beginning teachers career trajectory.

This chapter explores teacher induction in Scotland by adopting a critical stance towards the Scottish Teacher Induction Scheme by problematising the policies that underpin both the Teacher Induction Scheme (TIS) and the Flexible Route to Registration (FRR) applying critical analysis to the operationalisation and administration of both pathways into registration as a teacher. We explore how the Scottish education system has striven to improve teacher retention by providing suitable early career support through teacher induction pathways. The chapter is structured in three sections. The first section outlines the development and implementation of the two induction pathways and describes their main features. The second section focuses on some of the unintended consequences of the TIS, and addresses critical questions of the TIS, such as whether it is appropriate that there is no mandatory education or preparation for the induction supporters/mentors.

To understand the educational context of the two induction pathways, first we need to explain the history of how both the Teacher Induction Scheme and the Flexible Route to Registration (originally called the Alternative Route to Registration) were created and secondly, we need to outline where teacher induction in Scotland sits in relation to Initial Teacher Education and registration as a teacher.

5.2 Policy background

Prior to the introduction of the Teacher Induction Scheme in 2002, there was a compulsory two-year period, called probation, which had to include 380 days' teaching. Head teachers submitted an interim report at the end of the first year of a teacher's probationary period and a final report with a recommendation on registration with the General Teaching Council of Scotland (GTCS) at the end of their second year [for details of teacher probation before 2002 see Shanks (2020)]. The probation scheme was overly dependent on the individual graduate securing a post of sufficient length to enable them to accrue the required 380 days of teaching, and there was little access to continuing profession development. Research into teacher probation in the 1990s led to calls for change (Draper et al., 1997). The Teacher Induction Project was set up by the Scottish Executive Education Department and the GTCS to consider the arrangements for beginning teachers and to draft a standard for beginning teachers to meet by the end of the probation period (Christie & O'Brien, 2005). This work developed into the Standard for Full Registration.

At the same time, the McCrone Report (*A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century*) (Scottish Executive, 2000), led to the McCrone agreement which included a simplified career structure and a guaranteed induction year for all beginning teachers (Scottish Executive Education Department, 2001). The simplification of the career structure reduced opportunities for teachers to gain leadership experience within school to support their professional development and progress their career. In the twenty years since the McCrone agreement, this has come to be seen by the profession in Scotland as a loss because the gap between the role of a classroom teacher and that of a principal teacher or Faculty Head is large. At the same time, local authorities began to consolidate the role of principal teacher, particularly in secondary schools, into the role of Faculty Head, reducing the number of principal teacher posts required in a school while at the same time increasing the responsibility and accountability placed on that role. Indeed, at the time of writing a new dispute erupted with Dundee City Council wanting to remove more principal teacher posts from schools in the city (Seith, 2022).

Key educational stakeholders felt that the new induction scheme was worth the 'trade' of a flattened career structure to better support and potentially improve the retention rates of those entering the profession.

5.3 Teacher Induction in the Scottish Context

In Scotland to be registered as a teacher, and be employed to teach in a school, it is necessary to complete a higher education programme in initial teacher education. This initial teacher education programme can be either a four-year bachelor's degree or a nine-month (18 weeks in university, 18 weeks on school placement) Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE). On successful completion of these programmes, students can meet the requirements of the Standard for Provisional

Registration (GTCS, 2021b). After initial teacher education in higher education, graduates enter either the Teacher Induction Scheme or the Flexible Route to Registration (previously called the Alternative Route). The General Teaching Council for Scotland is responsible for both the registration of teachers (including oversight of the qualifications needed to enter initial teacher education programmes and the accreditation and reaccreditation of the programmes) and the regulation of the profession, and this includes administration and oversight of the induction scheme.

From the introduction of the Teacher Induction Scheme in 2002, all beginning teachers in Scotland, with the right to live and work in Scotland, have been guaranteed a one-year teaching contract. The Flexible Route for Registration covers people who are working full-time in the private sector or working part-time and/or working as supply teachers. It is not possible to provide accurate numbers for those on the Flexible Route at any one time as it includes people who may be taking a career break or teaching abroad, who have deferred and who are working towards registration in an additional subject, and there is no annual start and end dates for this pathway to registration. However, it has been stated that in 2017, while 2470 gained Full Registration through the Teacher Induction Scheme there were approximately 619 people who gained Full Registration through the Flexible Route (General Teaching Council for Scotland, n.d.c.).

5.3.1 Structure of the Teacher Induction Scheme

During the induction year in Scotland, beginning teachers are provided with several supports to help them in their transition from student teacher to fully registered teacher including:

- reduction in classroom teaching (0.82 of a full-time teacher's teaching hours)
- remaining 0.18 time to be used for continuing professional development
- an induction supporter or mentor to oversee, guide and assess the beginning teacher against the Standard for Full Registration (GTCS, 2021a)
- observations by the induction supporter/mentor
- continuing professional development provided by the school and local authority.

Originally, the Teacher Induction Scheme guaranteed 0.3 time for continuing professional development and the beginning teacher's school was funded 0.1 of the mentor's time to support the beginning teacher. Changes were made due to financial pressures in the austerity period.

In this chapter, we are focusing on the Teacher Induction Scheme as opposed to the Flexible Route. Previous research on the Teacher Induction Scheme has found how relationships are important (McNally & Blake 2009; Shanks, 2018) and the key role of the mentor (Rippon & Martin, 2006). It is important to note that while the GTCS evaluated the Teacher Induction Scheme soon after its introduction (Pearson & Robson, 2005), there has been no comprehensive independent evaluation of TIS since it was founded.

5.3.2 The Flexible Route to Registration

In many respects, the revised name of 'Alternative' to 'Flexible' highlights the inflexible nature of the Teacher Induction Scheme as it is not possible to take part in the Teacher Induction Scheme on a part-time basis. New teachers with caring responsibilities or with other reasons for needing to work part-time have no alternative but to follow the Flexible Route. As well as not benefiting from the extra support of the Teacher Induction Scheme to qualify through (such as the reduced teaching load and the induction supporter/mentor), it is necessary to teach for 380 days compared to 190 days for the Teacher Induction Scheme (General Teaching Council for Scotland, n.d.b). In Scotland, 190 days is the number of days in a school year. Those on the Flexible Route do have the advantage of choosing exactly where to apply to teach unlike those on the Teacher Induction Scheme who take part in a national system of allocation where they can only state their local authority preferences.

5.3.3 Policy Post-McCrone

Two important reviews of education were commissioned by the Scottish Government in 2010, the McCormac review of teachers' pay and conditions and the Donaldson Review of Teacher Education. Both reported to the Scottish Government in 2011. The McCormac Report impacted on TIS by recommending the reduction of inductees' non-teaching time. The Donaldson Report, *Teaching Scotland's Future* (2011), on teacher education in Scotland made several recommendations which had a direct or indirect relation to teacher induction. For example, concerns were raised in the report about the teacher education continuum. The table below sets out the recommendations in the Donaldson Report (2011) that relate to teacher induction and provides an update on the level of implementation since the report's publication.

Donaldson Report (2011)	Recommendation number	Developments since 2011
The need for closer working between schools, local authorities, universities and national bodies	3	Achieved in some areas but not universally in place
Create new and strengthened models of partnership between schools, local authorities, universities and national bodies	15	New regional bodies have been created—Regional Improvement Collaboratives
Teacher induction non-contact time 'should build more directly and progressively from initial teacher education' (p. 95)	30	This is yet to be achieved across the country

(continued)

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Donaldson Report (2011)	Recommendation number	Developments since 2011
Partnerships to include joint delivery of CPD including during induction	10	Not yet the norm
Dual appointments between local authorities and universities	24	Very rare
Masters level opportunities	44	Growing opportunities and some Masters level routes into teaching
'in order to improve continuity and coherence for new teachers, university-based teacher educators should have a role in the development and delivery of induction schemes' (p. 93)	25	Yet to be achieved
Quality-assured mentoring	27	Not consistently in place across the country
Mentors were to be carefully selected and have training	28	Not consistently in place across the country
The roles and responsibilities of people within the teacher induction scheme need to be made clearer, in particular that there should be a mentor who assessed and an induction supporter who supported new teachers	29	This has not been addressed and the tension in the dual role of assessing and supporting an induction year teacher was noted at the outset (Rippon & Martin, 2006)
Recommendation on workforce planning relating to its accuracy	6	Still issues with accuracy
Recommendation on how information about prospective employment in teaching should be conveyed to teacher education students	7	Not uniformly carried out in higher education
New teachers should be supported after induction with further support such as mentoring provided	31	Not implemented
Flexible Route to Registration teachers should be given access to CPD and structured support	32	Not uniform across the country
'all teachers should see themselves as teacher educators *and be trained in mentoring*' (p. 98) (our emphasis)	39	The first part is often repeated but the second part has not been universally implemented

From the table above, it can be seen that while there were clear recommendations in the Donaldson Report (2011) on how to improve the Teacher Induction Scheme and teacher induction in general, many of those specific recommendations have not been implemented in a system-wide way. It depends on how the Teacher Induction Scheme is operated in each local authority whether the recommendations have been implemented or not. For example, while some local authorities involve higher education institutions in the provision of courses and events during the induction year, there is no formal role within the scheme (Gray & Weir, 2014).

5.4 Exploring Beginning Teachers' Experiences of Induction

As noted above, there has been no wide-scale independent review of the Teacher Induction Scheme in its 20 years of operation. Due to this and the limited amount of other recent research, a small study was conducted exploring the lived experience of beginning teachers who had participated in the Teacher Induction Scheme over the last five years. A convenience sample of beginning teachers was generated in terms of geographical location of induction, subject specialism and initial teacher education institution of origin by a putting out a call for participants on social media (Twitter and Facebook). Former students were contacted to ask them to consider participating in the study. The sample consisted of ten teachers: two primary school teachers and eight secondary school teachers. Two participants completed TIS in session 2018/19; six competed TIS in session 2019/20; and two were due to complete in session 2021/22. No one in the sample undertook the Flexible Route to Registration. In terms of geographical location for the induction year, the interviewees taught in eight different local authorities across Central and Southern Scotland, the North-East and North-West of Scotland.

Data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews. The interview schedule (see Appendix) included questions designed to probe the participants' everyday experience, covering areas such as where they completed their ITE programme, when and where they did their induction year. Questions were asked about their school and local authority experiences, in terms of mentoring support, the type of school, local authority CPD sessions and activities that they undertook, and their views as to the quality of their various experiences. The interview data were thematically analysed using a constant comparative approach to generate codes and defined categories. These were then refined and sharpened in an iterative process of coding, comparing and refining (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to form a rich description of the experiences of the Teacher Induction Scheme provided by the interviewees. Throughout this process, memos and notes were generated to support reflection upon converging and diverging themes as they appeared throughout the analysis process.

In this chapter, we will only report on a small proportion of illustrative examples from the data gathered and analysed. The focus of the next section of the chapter

will be the experience of the Teacher Induction Scheme from the perspective of the beginning teachers that have, or currently are, experiencing the scheme.

5.4.1 What Do Beginning Teachers Say About Their Induction Experience?

Participants in our sample had mixed perceptions of their induction experiences: four participants suggesting their experience was 'good', four participants suggesting that their experience was 'okay' and three participants suggesting their experience was 'poor'. Of those reporting a good experience, underpinning examples were given such as the schools tried to integrate and enculture them into the community and the life of the school, and a supportive and proactive school-based mentor. The extract below from Jacqueline's (pseudonym) interview transcript exemplifies this:

> …I was well supported by the rest of the department, and I had a mentor who was amazing. She made it clear from the get-go, anything that I needed, anything I was unsure about, go straight to her…. (Jacqueline)

Of those who had a poor experience, two interviewees described several factors that contributed to their poor experience with examples ranging from feeling unwanted, poor school-based mentoring and, in one case, no mentor for an extended period until the local authority intervened to get support, which led to an increased strain in the relationship between the beginning teacher and the school.

> In my initial conversation with my head teacher, I was told that she didn't really want a probationer that year… which actually made me incredibly nervous during the entire induction year because I felt this need to perform or to impress, to make her want to have a me. (Claire)

Victoria gave an example of poor school management of her induction as a reason for her poor experience when her initial mentor moved posts early on.

> I had a good mentor for the first three weeks of the TIS [mid-August to early September]. She left the school, and I never had a mentor until January… I eventually complained to the local authority TIS support team, and they got the school to assign one, a depute head. This led to some difficulties with my relationship with the school SLT because I went outside the school to the local authority. Not a good experience at all.

When asked about the types of experiences school leadership expected inductees to engage with, we got a mixed responses with participants saying that their schools had a set programme with clear expectations through to others saying that their schools had no expectations at all.

> We had regular meetings as probationers with one of the deputes, we had lunches together… we had to be part of the working groups [in the school (Eleanor)
>
> There was no prerequisite of doing anything to be honest. I come from quite an activist background … and I never felt that they wanted to hone or harvest that experience. All they wanted to do was get me through the probation year and I felt as if that was their end goal. (Claire)

A key theme found in the interviews was that the beginning teachers' perceptions of their experience of TIS was driven, to a large extent, by the quality of school-based support in terms of mentoring and enculturing them into the school environment.

When asked about their experience of the local authority support and CPD sessions regarding range of topics covered, and the quality and rigour of the sessions, those from a secondary background commented that they felt that the local authority sessions were geared towards the needs of the primary inductees and that the relevance of the sessions was often questioned. In terms of quality, rigour and breadth of issues, most participants perceived the quality and breadth to be mixed, with some good sessions and some not so good. Two participants indicated that they felt that these sessions often paid little or no attention to what they had covered in ITE, with several participants questioning whether the local authority induction managers knew what ITE programmes covered, as they perceived the local authority sessions to be repetitive of ITE.

The local authority sessions were understandably focused on application to practice with some reference to theory and an emphasis on process and local authority policies but without linking back to initial teacher education. However, this point was highlighted by Donaldson (2011) in his recommendations (3, 10 and 18) and in particular he commented that that

> Attempts to forge partnerships have had at best varying success. Shaping and supporting the kind of 21st century teacher which Scotland needs will require much stronger interconnections and collaboration than has been the case to date. We need much better alignment of values and purposes with a clear understanding of where and when the most effective contributions can be made if we are to achieve coherent and progressive development of professional expertise throughout a career. (page 84)

Unfortunately, we believe that not much has changed since these comments were made. If quality continuing professional development is to flourish in the early stages of a teacher's career, then the partnership model that is currently in place needs to be reformed.

In terms of the bureaucratic burden placed on inductees by the profile requirements for fulfilling the Standard for Full Registration set by the GTCS, most participants said that while there was a lot of paperwork, it was manageable if you planned your time effectively.

> I knew some people complain about it [the profile paperwork] a lot but I kept right on top of it. I know that obviously for some people who left it… if you didn't keep that record in that way you might have forgotten that you've done something. So, when you were coming to interview time, we were looking at your interview questions, I found it really helpful. (Eleanor)

A few participants suggested the paperwork did not resemble anything that other teachers were expected to do, and they felt the profile requirements are a 'hoop' jumping exercise as the following exchange between Jacqueline and the interviewer illustrates. However, it should be noted that teachers in Scotland now need to engage in a 5 yearly Professional Update process so other teachers are now expected to do something similar.

> It was quite annoying. There was a lot to fill in… when it came to actually going to submit it [the accumulated evidence], there's so many different boxes that had to be filled in and everything else, that take a long time to do…even still, I think it could be chopped down… there's so much on it [that] I think, is unnecessary. (Jacqueline)

Most of the participants indicated that the main benefit of the induction scheme was that it gave them the time to develop their practice within a relatively safe environment with Eleanor suggesting that 'I really think it gave me time and a safer environment to try things out'. This example highlights that for time and space to try out, new practices, tools or techniques was valued.

5.4.2 Post induction Issues

Securing a job after the induction year was difficult for four of the ten interviewees. Six participants managed to secure temporary work on a supply basis, and two participants secured a permanent post. Two participants are currently in the TIS and so have not yet reached the point of trying to secure a teaching post at the time of interview.

One participant, Jacqueline, who is in a temporary supply post indicated that she is actively considering leaving teaching because of her inability to secure a permanent teaching post. The following extract from the interview exemplifies this individual's struggle.

> … I've had many breakdowns. I honestly cannot keep going… not knowing if you're going to be working a day, or a couple of weeks in a school. You can't have a life, can't have a house, you can't pay for things. (Jacqueline)

Donald suggested that an unintended consequence of the induction scheme was that local authorities take on probationers but have no jobs for them when they complete the year.

> … there's been a lot of unfairness that can make you think yeah guarantee the job to everybody, guarantee the year probation…are councils only allowed to take so many probationers over their projected amount of vacancies?

These extracts indicate that for the participants in the sample there are positive and negative aspects to the Teacher Induction Scheme.

5.5 Critical Reflections on the Induction Pathways in Scotland

We now turn our discussion to the main themes to come from the interviews with current and recent participants in the Teacher Induction Scheme. We will also draw on the research literature on teacher induction to critically assess the perspectives

that inductees expressed and to draw out conclusions to stimulate further debate around teacher induction. Before we begin our discussion, there are a few things that it is important to note. Firstly, most participants in our study view this as a positive experience overall. The main benefits of the Teacher Induction Scheme being the time, space and structured support that the scheme provides for inductees to consolidate and develop pedagogical practice and to try out new ideas, therefore, what follows should be understood with this in mind. Secondly, the TIS is essentially a situated professional learning model (Kearney, 2015), therefore the learning that inductees undergo as part of TIS is in many respects unique to the school context and the department or stage in which the inductees find themselves working. Thirdly, the kinds of experiences that local authorities provide to their inductees is tailored to meet both the needs of the authority and the profession but the extent to which a balance is struck between these two needs varies between local authorities. All these points taken together mean that due to the way that the TIS is configured, there is considerable variation in the experiences that inductees have.

Kearney (2015) suggests that the provision of a 'comprehensive' programme for induction is problematic since the main purpose of a teacher induction programme is registration to the professional body with the professional learning of teachers being secondary. Research in the Australian context indicates that such state-run induction programmes suffer from a lack of understanding around the induction process or what a constitutes 'comprehensive' induction and what is required to administer such programmes, which has led to induction programmes that lack a theoretical or conceptual foundation that fosters teacher learning in the early years of their careers (Kearney, 2013). We argue that the Scottish TIS is not a comprehensive induction programme but provides a general induction into the profession because of the inconsistency mentioned above and since the onus is very much placed on the individual inductee to gather the requisite experiences, during the year, to give them the best chance of being able to speak well in job interviews to gain a teaching position post-induction.

A large body of International research on induction exists looking at many aspects of the induction process from its impact on retention (Buchanan et al., 2013; Gujarati, 2012; Ingersoll, 2012; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Kearney, 2014a); the characteristics of specific programmes (Gilles et al., 2009; Howe, 2006; Kearney, 2014b; Shanks et al., 2020; Wong et al., 2005); induction's impact on improving teaching and educational outcomes (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Wang et al., 2008; Wong, 2004); policies that support induction (Bartlett & Johnson, 2010; Smith, 2007); induction as a professional learning community (Carroll, 2005; Fulton et al., 2005; O'Malley, 2010); and participating teachers' perceptions of their experiences in induction (Algozzine et al., 2007; Buchanan et al., 2013; Kearney, 2013; Shanks, 2014). However, what is missing from much of the research and commentary about beginning teacher induction are research-informed frameworks that can be implemented which serve both the needs of the beginning teacher and the institution/s providing the induction.

5.5.1 Integration into the School Community

Our research indicates that a pre-requisite for a good induction year experience is an effective integration process into the school community. We suggest that this is an important element of how inductees are made to feel supported and nurtured. Indeed Kearney (2015) suggests that organisational socialisation practices are important to orientation of beginning teachers. In Claire's example, being informed by the head teacher that they did not want a probationer within the first five minutes in the school is a clear indication of the process not working. If learning is central to organisational socialisation (Antonacopoulou & Güttel, 2010; Gherardi & Perrotta, 2010), and is rooted in situated professional learning, then schools need to ensure that they welcome new teachers from the beginning of their induction experience. What is Clare to do in such a situation? For Claire, this set the tone for her entire time in the school and her induction experience. We would argue that no inductee should be made to feel as if they are a burden to the school or are in any way unwanted. We would suggest that this situation indicates an issue with the way induction managers at the local authority allocate inductees to schools. According to the McCrone agreement (Scottish Executive Education Department, 2001), induction year teachers are supposed to be supernumerary to the school's staff complement and mentors are meant to be given time perform their role. We are left with questions as to *how local authorities allocate inductees to schools, what are the criteria used for allocating inductees to schools and to what extent is there a consistent approach across all local authorities?*

5.5.2 The School-Based Mentoring Experience

The research literature advocates for quality induction mentoring as vital component to the success and development of beginning teachers (Fletcher & Barrett, 2004; Fulton et al., 2005; Wong, 2004). Indeed, several of the interviewees in our research suggested that they had a very good experience of induction concerning their school-based mentor. However, this positive expression was couched in a manner that suggested that they felt 'lucky' to have had a good school-based mentor. When probed on this point, many participants suggested that the picture is mixed as to the quality of mentoring given to their peers with most recounting instances where a fellow inductee was having a difficult time with their mentor. This suggests that there are issues with the relationship between some mentors and the inductee they support.

We believe that the heart of this issue may lie in the way that mentors are assigned to inductees by school leadership teams. The level of support that mentors receive for them to properly fulfil their role is not consistent across schools or local authorities, and we would suggest that there needs to be a more systematic approach to mentor support to help eliminate any deficiencies in the current system. From experience,

we are aware that many mentors take on the role to gain experience of mentoring in preparation for them applying for a promoted post. While we would argue that this is neither an appropriate nor sufficient motivation for becoming a mentor, we accept that this is one factor that a teacher may consider when deciding on whether to become a mentor. It is also important to note that in Scotland, there is no formal requirement for school-based mentors to have any formal training or qualification in coaching or mentoring to be able to support someone through the Teacher Induction Scheme. The only stipulation is that they must be registered with the GTCS, thereby implying that all registered teachers are suitably equipped to mentor beginning teachers. We suggest that this is simply not the case. We repeat what was stated in the Donaldson Report (2011): 'all teachers should see themselves as teacher educators *and be trained in mentoring*' (p. 98, our emphasis).

Another factor in relation to mentoring is that of the allocation of mentors to the inductee (Shanks, 2020). It appears from the interviewees that there is an inconsistency in practice concerning whether and the way in which schools and local authorities vet potential mentors in terms of their aptitude for the role, their motivation to do the role and the level of support and training they need to fulfil the role. We would suggest that there should be a minimum requirement for mentors to undergo formal training before permitting them to undertake this role. Ideally, we argue school-based mentors should undertake a formal qualification in coaching or mentoring.

5.5.3 Mixed Reviews of the Local Authority Professional Development

Several of our participants indicated that they had become involved in school learning communities and that this was advocated by the local authority. The learning community as a concept has become increasingly prevalent in education (DuFour et al., 2010), and some local authorities in Scotland promote their use. Several of our research participants indicated that the local authority development days were designed around group activities to foster a community of practice. However, the idea that people always learn as members of communities rather than as individuals is open to debate on the grounds that communities of practice need to be properly established and regularly nurtured to be truly embedded in schools and, in the case of induction, awareness of this point needs to be clear among those charged with organising this.

With respect to the inductees' views on their experiences of local authority professional development sessions as part of the TIS, participants were not altogether enthusiastic about their experience in terms of the quality, rigour or sequencing of content in the local authority sessions. McNally (2002) suggested that practical concerns might be uppermost in local authority induction manager's minds when constructing professional development activities for induction year teachers. Donaldson (2011)

made several recommendations on partnership working and bringing higher education into the induction scheme (see above). Twenty years on from the induction scheme's inception and eleven years on from the Donaldson Report, we argue that we are no further forward in this regard. We suggest that higher education partners could make a distinctive contribution to the induction scheme as a partner. However, Higher Education Institutions have (in the main) been kept at arm's length from local authority partners' professional development programmes to the point where quality and rigour have arguably been 'squeezed out' resulting in a lower quality experience than that to which inductees had experienced during their initial teacher education as McNally (2002) warned might be the case. Most of the interviewees suggested that the content covered similar ground and, in some cases, used the same readings as those used in ITE. In most cases, there appears to be a lack of coordination between local authority induction managers and university staff when it comes to the construction of professional development programmes run by local authorities. This often results in repetition of material rather than supporting or stretching new teachers with appropriate professional learning opportunities.

Another issue raised by interviewees was the fact that those in the secondary sector felt that the local authority sessions were overly geared towards primary teachers and that the relevance was not made clear (if at all) to them of the session to secondary teachers' practice. This theme was mentioned by all secondary interviewees and has been, in our experience, a perennial complaint from secondary inductees since the inception of the TIS with the way that local authority induction managers have organised their induction programmes. Bringing higher education institutions in as a partner in professional learning sessions could be part of the way to rectify this.

5.5.4 The GTCS Profile

The GTCS induction profile is the mechanism through which induction year teachers evidence their development and is how their mentor and the head teacher indicate to the GTCS that the inductee has been performed satisfactorily, met the Standard for Full Registration and can progress onto the national register of teachers. Most of the beginning teachers we interviewed suggested that the online profile was overly bureaucratic in nature and felt like a 'tick box' exercise. They also said that while they found some parts of the profile to be relevant, they felt that the profile was of little worth or relevance beyond them evidencing that they had met the Standard for Full Registration. Previous research found that the profile layout assumes that all professional learning takes place in an organised and planned way, thus ignoring informal learning which can take place more spontaneously (Shanks, 2018).

Interestingly, the only full-scale review of the Teacher Induction Scheme that we could find was one commissioned, conducted and published by GTCS (Pearson & Robson, 2005) which made no mention of the profile requirement themselves. Given the experiences of the beginning teachers in this research, it might be useful for the GTCS to reflect on how they can make the process of assessment against the

Standard for Full Registration a more authentic and useful experience that will then help teachers in their five-yearly Professional Updates (GTCS, undated).

5.5.5 *Post-induction Year Issues*

The most prominent post-induction issue to emerge from our research was the one that all inductees face when they complete the Teacher Induction Scheme—namely, finding a permanent teaching post. Most of the interviewees indicated that this was a chronic problem. They stated there was a lack of jobs for them to apply for in the areas they could work in without moving. They stated that the system 'seemed' to be skewed towards the need for schools to provide new induction places for the next cohort of student teachers coming out of initial teacher education. It appears that priority is given to the next cohort of inductees rather than retaining those who have successfully completed the induction scheme. We acknowledge that workforce planning is complex and that there are often several unknown factors, such as the number of teachers retiring and/or leaving the profession. However, there is an ethical issue with a system that produces newly registered teachers each year who have little prospect of securing permanent employment as a teacher. At least four participants indicated that the situation was so acute that they had actively sought jobs outside of teaching. This echoes findings in research carried out previously with beginning teachers in Scotland (Shanks, 2021). This is an urgent issue as it could be regarded as a waste of taxpayers' money to support the development of a teacher through initial teacher education and induction to then lose them from the profession because there are no posts for them at the end of the induction process.

Some participants expressed the view that local authority recruitment practices appeared to operate like a 'closed shop' that reduces the chances for those who did induction in another local authority. They felt they had less chance in being successful in either securing an interview or being successful if interviewed. This is an issue of fairness, of transparency and of creating a level playing field in recruitment and selection. In addition, several participants mentioned that the practice of local authorities filling substantive posts with inductees was part of the problem. This means there are less vacancies for the teachers to apply for after their induction year.

5.6 Conclusion

We can see there are different gaps in provision during the induction year and a gap in employment continuity for some after the induction year. The bridge between initial teacher education and a career in teaching is not the same for all beginning teachers with some receiving much less support than others from their school and/or their mentor. The induction year is followed by temporary and/or supply teaching which

means less of a continuum and more of a stop-start experience which is rather like the situation which the Teacher Induction Scheme was meant to address.

The GTCS is involved in all phases of teacher education in Scotland, but there are still some disconnects in the teacher education continuum. For example, higher education institutions provide initial teacher education, and the GTCS accredits these programmes. Programme requirements include a certain number of weeks on placement at schools, and this brings schools into the initial teacher education process. The Teacher Induction Scheme involves local authority staff who co-ordinate professional learning activities for the induction year teachers in their area.

The Flexible Route to Registration is overseen by the GTCS but there is no formal role for local authorities, and again higher education institutions are not involved. Beginning teachers on the Teacher Induction Scheme have a mentor at the school they work at, or a mentor is provided by their local authority, however beginning teachers on the Flexible Route are not allocated a mentor. Thus, in the career-long trajectory of teacher education in Scotland, there is a disconnect between initial teacher education and induction, and differences in the induction experience for beginning teachers. It is not only in the teacher induction process that higher education institutions are excluded. When Full Registration is achieved, teachers must complete a 'Professional Update' process every five years and again there is no formal role for higher education institutions.

The Teacher Induction Scheme was created with the best of intentions, to regularise the employment of beginning teachers for their first year after initial teacher education. It provided them with time and space to experiment and to undertake their own professional development with the support of a mentor. However, over the last twenty years, the time out of the classroom has reduced, less funding goes directly to schools and less posts are supernumerary. A review of how the scheme is operating in each local authority and what happens to teachers once they leave the Teacher Induction Scheme would show what changes are necessary to make sure that it can meet its aims for the next twenty years. Currently, the only national review of the whole scheme was conducted by the GTCS just after its introduction (Pearson & Robson, 2005) so a full review is long overdue.

5.7 Recommendations

That a review of the Teacher Induction Scheme and the Flexible Route to Registration is carried out and considers the following:

1. Supporters/mentors of beginning teachers having to complete Masters level course/s in mentoring.
2. Local authority induction managers and higher education institutions working together to create professional development opportunities for beginning teachers at Masters level.

3. Combining initial teacher education and the induction year so that fully qualified teachers emerge from higher education after 5 years (replacing the undergraduate route) or 2 years (replacing the PGDE) with a Masters and successful completion of the Standard for Full Registration.

Appendix

Demographic Questions

- Where did you do your ITE programme and what subject do you teach?
- What year did you complete your Initial Teacher Education programme?
- What academic session did you enter the Teacher Induction Scheme?
- In which local authority did you complete your probation?
- In which school did you complete your probation?

Semi-structured Questions

- Can you describe your probationary year in your school for me?
- What types of activities did you engaged in within your school during your probation?
- Can you describe the relationship you had with your school-based mentor?

Prompts—how supportive were they? Did they push you—if so in what way if not, why do you think that was?

- What were the main issues you faced in your probation year and how did you overcome them?
- What was the pattern of local authority support for probationers in your probationary local authority?
  - What kinds of activities did the local authority sessions introduce you to?
  - What was your view on the quality of those sessions?
  - Did they differ from what you experienced during your ITE programme? If so in what way?
  - What was it like filling in the paperwork associated with probation?
  - What impact did your experiences on probation in your school and local authority have on your developing teacher identity?
- In your opinion, what were the benefits to you of the probation in terms of your professional development?
- Were there any tensions within that professional development? What were they and how did you resolve the tension?
- In your experience were there any unexpected or unintended consequences that arose at the end of your probationary year? How would you describe them? In what way did the impact on you and your early career?

Prompts

- Did you have any issues finding a post to go to post probation?
- How do you think teachers view the teacher induction scheme?
- Do you think the teacher induction scheme will/has helped you to stay in the profession?

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Chapter 6
Exploring Teacher Professional Identity and Agency in Local, National and Global Policy Contexts

Janet Lord

Abstract Teachers' professional lives are situated at the intersection of local, national and global educational policy contexts. What they purposefully do (agency) and how they see themselves and their roles as teachers (identity) dynamically interact with such contexts. This chapter argues that in order to understand the meaningful professional development work of teachers, it is important to understand this interplay. Current dominant policy discourses concerning the 'improving teacher' and 'teaching as a craft' are examples of an over-reliant emphasis on more insular narratives of agentic teachers and teaching. Such narratives fail to consider the complexities of factors and discourses that impact on the beings and doings of teachers and are therefore inadequate. Based on an iterative dialogue between particular theoretical ideas and emerging case study data, the research that I report in this chapter proposes a multi-level integrating framework for understanding the experiences of teachers as they develop and locate a sense of their professional identity. Taking a critical realist approach, I report on a case study of one teacher, Jill, from an English secondary school. Drawing on narrative data and on Archer's work (e.g. 2012) on reflexivity, the ways in which Jill's thinking mediates links between her agency and identity and structural educational policy contexts and discourses are considered. The understandings drawn from this work can be applied to show the explanatory usefulness of reflexivity as a concept in understanding teachers' professional thinking and doing.

Keywords Critical realism · Teacher · Agency · Identity · Reflexivity

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6.1 Introduction

Using a critical realist framework, this chapter considers the ways in which teacher agency and identity relate to structuring influences of educational policy contexts and discourses. In particular, I argue that what teachers purposefully do (agency) and how they see themselves and their roles as teachers (identity) dynamically interact with such contexts and discourses through the mediating role of their reflexivity. Throughout the chapter, the importance of viewing teachers as active agents, whose professional education as teachers is on a developmental continuum (see Chap. 1), will be articulated and exemplified.

In this chapter, I introduce ideas about identity, agency and reflexivity, particularly focussing on Margaret Archer's concepts from a critical realist approach. I propose a conceptual framework which shows the relationship between a number of factors that impact on teacher agency and identity. I introduce the narrative of one teacher, Jill, and discuss her identity and agency using the conceptual framework, showing understandings of reflexivity and agency which can be used in professional development work with teachers.

Thinking about agency further and expanding the notion that it is what actors 'purposefully do', Priestley et al. (2013) point out that agency can be defined as the way in which actors 'critically shape their responses to problematic situations' (Biesta & Tedder, 2006, p. 11). In the ecological view that I have taken in this chapter, agency is positioned within the contingencies of contexts in which agents act upon their beliefs, values and attributes that they mobilise in relation to their situations and contexts. Agency is a process, and rather than being possessed, or a capacity that resides within individuals, it comes about through engagement with specific contextual and situational conditions; it is not free floating, but situated and contextualised. As Biesta and Tedder (2007, p. 137) put it, 'the achievement of agency will always result from the interplay of individual efforts, available resources and contextual and structural factors as they come together in particular and, in a sense, always unique situations'. Drawing on the work of Margaret Archer (e.g. 2003), we can see that there are close interconnections between the concepts of agency and identity, in that identity may be seen as determining a set of fluid parameters for viewing the development and course of an individual's agency, their chosen actions and relations with the world. For teachers, identity and agency are enabled and constrained by the various discourses of education that underpin the everyday professional worlds of teachers and which, in part, form the social and cultural contexts for their professional activities and for their thinking. Teachers (as agents) are whole persons, with accompanying and individual life experiences, emotions and concerns, identities and role obligations in education.

6.1.1 Critical Realism as a Framework

Critical realism (CR) explicitly discusses a relationship which is central to an understanding of the social world—that between ontology and epistemology (e.g. Bhaskar, 1989). As Scott (2010) suggests, this relationship is perhaps particularly central in relation to education, because critical realism concerns itself with knowledge and its formation, and how this is key to notions of schools and schooling as social objects. Despite there being a natural affinity between a CR approach and education, there have been few empirical studies applying critical realism (CR) to the collection and analysis of data in this area. Although Archer herself has theorised widely about reflexivity, Archer's ICONI (Internal Conversation Instrument) measure of reflexivity (Archer, 2007) is her only systematic attempt to undertake empirical work in this area. Other work includes that of Scott (2010); he makes a powerful argument for the superiority of critical realism in relation to knowledge and understandings of schools. However, there is a gap in the applied field in terms of a CR approach to understanding the lived realities of teachers in schools and the ways in which teachers negotiate the relationship between structure and agency; the work I describe here starts to plug that gap. It particularly concerns the role of inner conversations or individual reflexivity in relation to the development of individuals' personal projects and actions and to an understanding of their identity and agency.

6.1.2 Archer's Notions of Identity and a Sense of Self

In regard to the question 'how do teachers become, be and develop as teachers?', the relationship between structure and agency is central. Archer proposes that individuals' reflexivity mediates the link between structure and agency. She defines reflexivity as

> …the regular exercise of the mental ability, shared by all people, to consider themselves in relation to their (social) contexts. Archer (2012, p. 1)

In everyday terms, reflexivity can perhaps be best described as our 'inner conversations'. The exercise of reflexivity, or the use of inner conversations, allows individuals to direct their own actions and projects, and enables us to be agentic shapers of our own lives. Reflexivity is the model for engagement with the world that leads to agency and identity. Although reflexivity is ubiquitous, Archer argues that it is not a homogenous concept; rather, there are a number of ideal reflexive modes, or different ways in which inner conversations are conducted. The different ideal modes are used more frequently and are more dominant for different individuals (Archer, 2012). Archer explains the ways in which the modes differ:

> …practitioners of each of the…different modes of reflexivity adopt generically different 'stances' towards society and its constraints and enablements…Each 'stance' goes above and beyond the manner in which a given subject responds to any given constraint or enablement

and represents an overall pattern of response to the totality of structural powers.' (Archer, 2003, pp. 342–343)

Archer suggests that we all engage in each of the ideal modes of reflexivity described here at different times and in different situations, and to different degrees:

- Communicative reflexives (CRxs) have an 'evasive' stance on life, and are collectivist towards the social. For CRxs, internal conversations need to be confirmed and completed by others before they lead to action. CRxs express doubt that a fully autonomous internal conversation could lead them to the 'right' action.
- Autonomous reflexives (ARxs) have a 'strategic' stance on life, and are accommodative towards the social. For ARxs, internal conversations are self-contained, leading directly to action. ARxs take part in the lone exercise of a mental dialogue with themselves and have self-confidence in their own internal conversations.
- Meta reflexives (MRxs) hold a 'subversive' stance on life, and are transcendental towards the social. For MRxs, internal conversations critically evaluate previous inner dialogues and are critical about effective action in society. Self-interrogation is a feature of their thought and talk. They are idealists—this makes them social critics.

To illustrate this, consider an example that is based on a conversation I had with Margaret Archer at a conference in 2015. The example concerns the different ways in which different individuals might engage with a situation where their car has broken down and needs some expensive work to be done:

A ***communicative reflexive***, for whom internal conversations need to be confirmed by others before they lead to action, might need to discuss the situation with their partner before booking the car in to the garage.
An ***autonomous reflexive***, whose internal conversations are more self-contained and lead more directly to action, is likely to confirm to themselves that they can afford to have the work done and that it needs doing before making the call to the garage.
A ***meta-reflexive***, for whom internal conversations analytically evaluate previous inner dialogues and are critical about effective action in society, might spend some time debating with themselves about the merits and ethics of owning a car at all.

If reflexivity is indeed the bridge which mediates 'deliberatively between the objective structural opportunities confronted by different groups and the nature of people's subjectively defined concerns' (Archer, 2007, p. 61), then it has a crucial role in determining social action, and is potentially powerful and emancipatory. Certainly, interventions based on reflexivity could be very valuable in teachers' professional development. The nature of the context in which teachers and teaching are embedded, the type of reflexive mode(s) that teachers favour and the sense of the personal and social self that develops and is narrated and changed through reflexivity, all lead to changing forms of agency and action. However, the concept of reflexivity and of its impact on agency has been ignored in much social research; even Archer's own empirical research has been less developed in this area than the emphasis she puts on

reflexivity might predict. This chapter draws on the notion of reflexivity to illuminate how the mediation process that is done by reflexivity operates for teachers living and working in the real world in real social and cultural contexts.

6.1.2.1 The Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework here shows the dynamic intersectionality of a number of factors that may influence the professional lives and identity of teachers, and how this intersectionality might influence their agency.

The vertical axis of the framework corresponds to the conceptual 'closeness' of the influencing factors to the discourses with which a teacher may be engaged. For example, the impact of the UK government's policy on teachers' pay. Some factors will be 'close' to all teachers—for example, recent career history will affect every teacher's professional identity, albeit differently. The horizontal axis relates to the structure/agency continuum. In relation to this axis, factors that are more related to structure would include the geographical location of a school, as well as its sociocultural context. Other factors are more intrinsically linked to agency, such as psychological factors or an individual's self-concept, for example Lord (2012). These interactions exemplify the 'agency through engagement' concept discussed above.

The interacting cascade of clusters within the conceptual space is central to the framework and represents factors at macro, meso and proximal levels. The macro level includes a cluster of factors such as government policies and the particular norms and values of the culture in which the individual operates. The factors in this cluster provide a 'wash' of the socio-historical-political milieu over the whole of an individual's professional identity. The influence of these macrosystemic factors cascades down through the other clusters (Lord, 2012), creating discourses that permeate through the education system, interacting to generate further discourses about policies such as standardisation of testing and performativity (Sahlberg, 2011). The meso-level cluster in the framework comprises factors that are closer to the individual and more related to her/his sense of agency, again emphasising the importance of interplay between individual efforts and contextual/situational factors. For example, whether the school in which a particular teacher works is a faith school or if it is in a disadvantaged area. The proximal-level cluster includes factors such as an individual's age, gender and ethnic origin, factors that are close to the individual teacher. This cluster also includes the individual's own professional background, her/his values and her/his personal ideas about the functions of education. As is shown in Fig. 6.1, although the clusters of factors at each level have their own defining features, they also overlap and interact, reflecting the idea that identity can usefully be thought about as a constellation of concerns.

Figure 6.2 shows how the mediating processes of reflexivity may operate in conjunction with this model. In the figure, the inner core represents the teacher as agent, including proximal factors such as age, race, social background and so on. The outer ring represents the discourses that are currently relevant in education and

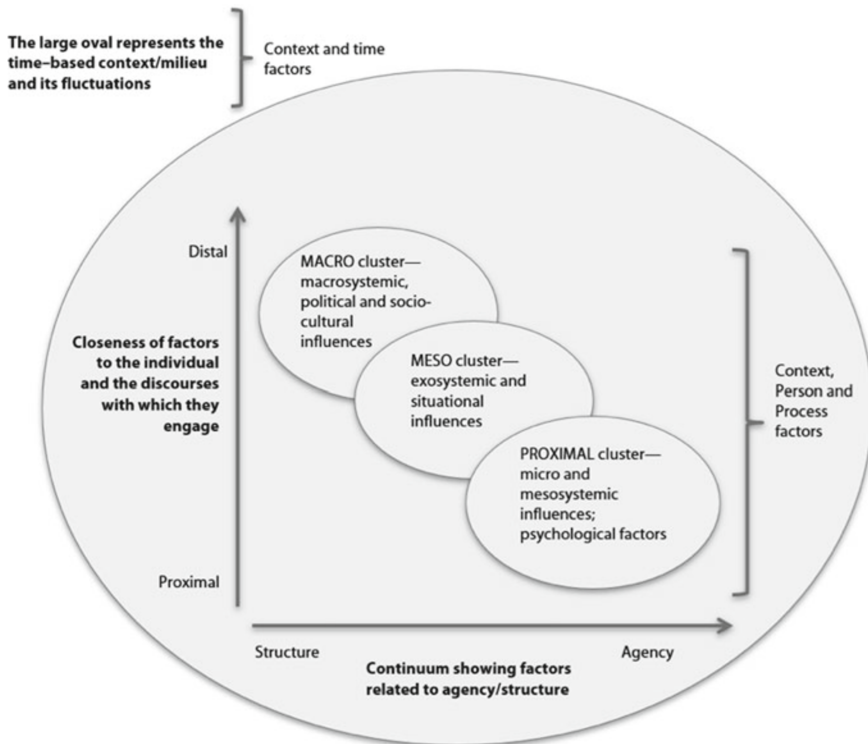

Fig. 6.1 Conceptual framework showing the interacting influences of factors at a number of levels on a teacher's professional identity and agency (Lord, 2012)

in forming the educational milieu. The middle ring shows the two-way diffusion of the determining processes of reflexivity, including, but not limited to, contextual continuity/discontinuity; form of the internal conversation; and the types of dialogic relationships and dialogic partners with which the teacher engages.

Archer discusses how the dominant mode of reflexivity employed by individuals reproduces or changes their situations. There is a need for specificity about *how*, *when* and *where this* mediation happens that is important in looking at the work of reflexivity. To this end, this next section introduces a thinking tool, TRAIt: the Teacher Reflexivity, Agency and Identity tool. TRAIt explains how reflexivity might be a key mediator between the individual as agent and the factors and discourses of her/his contexts, illuminating the '*how*, *when* and *where*' of these complex relationships. TRAIt develops an idea about the integration of reflexivity and this conceptual framework that draws on theory, the belief that Archer's work is under-socialised, and on empirical data (Fig. 6.3).

In the three concentric rings of TRAIt, the inner circle shows the teacher as an agent, with agentic powers, located within the socialising structures of society and more particularly of education. This circle has a clearly defined circumference,

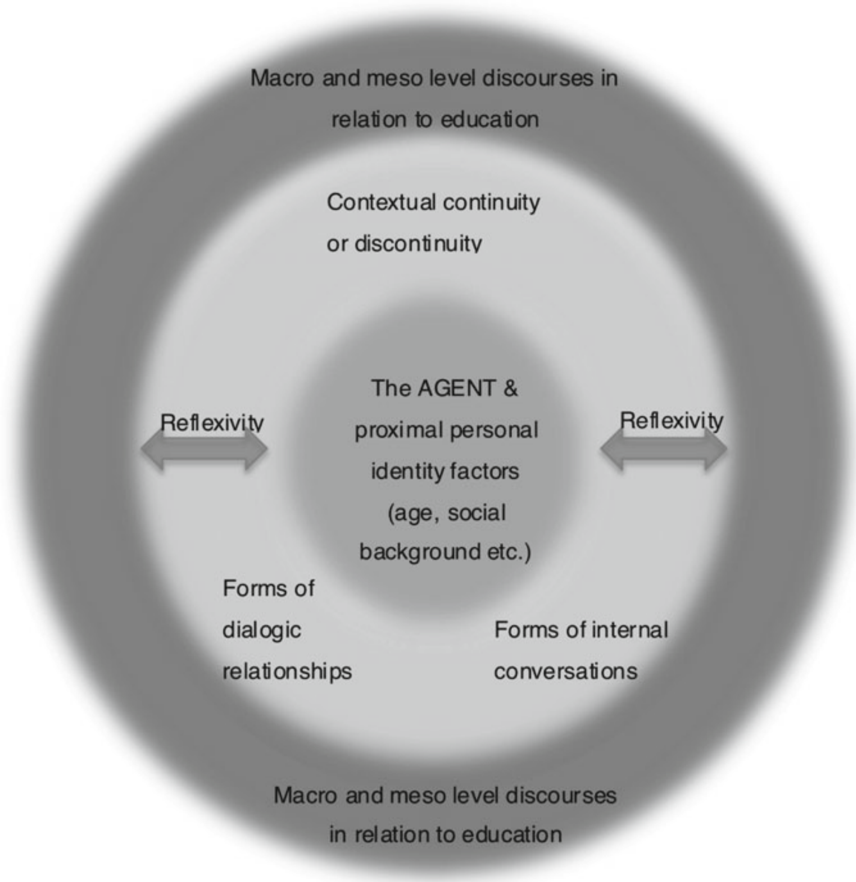

Fig. 6.2 The mediating relationship between reflexivity and the macro, meso and proximal levels of the conceptual framework

suggesting the analytical separation of agent and structure. The middle ring represents the two-way determining and mediating processes of reflexivity. Reflexivity is a two-way interactional process, as the double-headed arrows in the diagram illustrate. According to Archer's critical realist approach (e.g. 2012), the determining and mediating processes of reflexivity are: forms of dialogic relationships and of internal conversations, the ways in which the personal projects of participants are determined and facilitated, and contextual continuity or discontinuity. This ring has fuzzy boundaries that represent the interactional and mediating role of these processes of reflexivity. The outer ring represents (macro level) discourses and policies and (more meso level) policy enactments and conditions, local to particular schools and areas, that impact on teacher identity and agency. This ring also has clearly defined perimeters to denote the analytical separation of structure and agency.

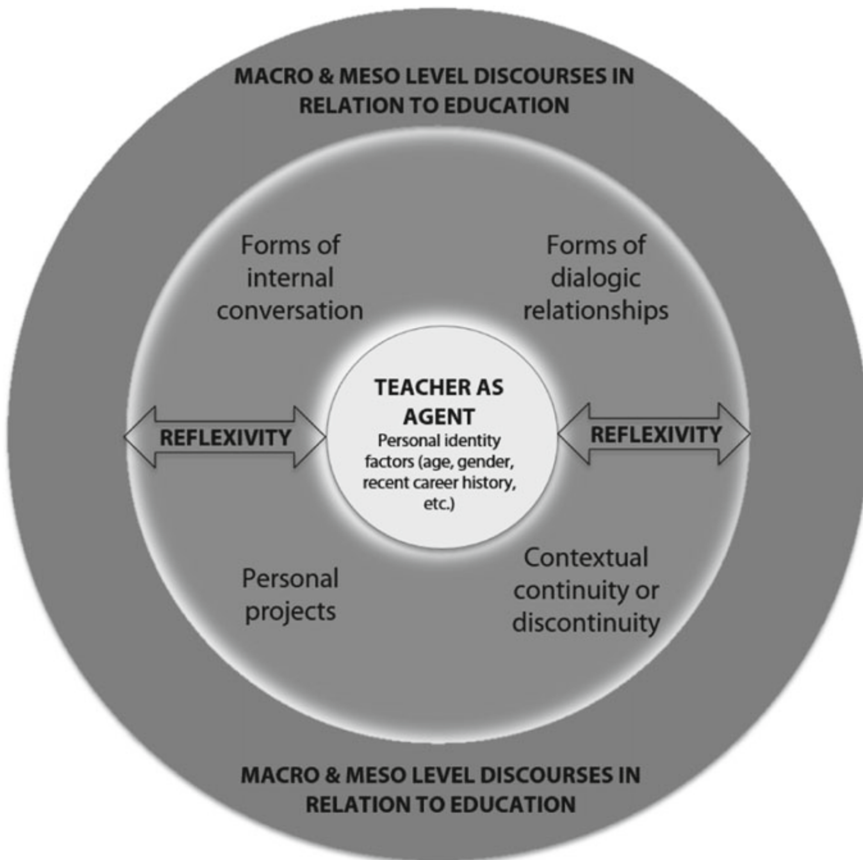

Fig. 6.3 TRAIt: teacher reflexivity, agency and identity tool

In my research, and using this model, I worked with four teachers; this chapter focuses on one illustrative case, Jill. Jill's case study has been chosen to generate an in-depth, multi-faceted understanding of the complex issues surrounding identity and the lived realities of teachers' being and doings, in their real-life nested contexts. Although of course there is limited generalisability from this case study, to some extent this limitation was addressed in the production of the case study by the facts that the sampling used was theoretical sampling (which drew on a my conceptual framework), the co-construction of Jill's portrait with Jill herself and transparency throughout the research process (Crowe et al., 2011; Stake, 1995), which was achieved by making clear in the description of the methods used to elicit the case study the steps involved in case selection, data collection, the reasons for the particular methods chosen and my own positionality. Explanatory power of the model is limited to a single case of a teacher while it pretends to explain macro and meso levels. The work investigated the following research questions:

- What are the personal/psychological factors that impact on the development of teacher identity?
- What are the factors and processes of education that underpin teachers' beings and doings? How do these factors and processes interrelate?
- What part does individual reflexivity play in mediating this interrelationship and in generating particular forms of agency? How do this agency and reflexivity inform identity development?

6.2 Methods

A case study methodology using multiple sources of evidence was used in order to encapsulate the large number of relevant factors. I used a number of empirical data collection methods focused on participants' narrations of their beings and doings as teachers. In this paper, I focus on one teacher, Jill and her narrative. Jill is an English teacher in her mid-40s and has responsibility for 'more able' students in a large 11–18 Catholic college, St. Gervase's, in an industrial town in the north of England. St. Gervase's has a reputation locally for being a good school, although it obtained a 'requires improvement' grade at a recent government (Ofsted) inspection.

I met Jill five times over the data collection year. In the first two sessions, she was asked to talk about her career to date and her views on teaching. She also completed a timeline for her career as a teacher, showing any life events that affected her career or career choices, as well as any events in the wider world that might have been significant to her. Jill also constructed a 'concept map' on a corkboard with the central concept 'Me as a teacher—what I think, feel and do' (an operationalisation of the linked terms of identity and agency, that are suggestive of being and doing). In order to do this she was given a set of concepts from which she could choose, derived from the literatures, and was also told that she could add others of her own. I also observed Jill teaching twice during the year, and discussions were held after each observation. In the final meeting, she was asked about her school context and personal reflexivity. The timeline and concept map were designed as narrative elicitation techniques and as such it was the narratives about then that were analysed, rather than the map/timeline themselves. Photographs of Jill's completed timeline and concept map are shown in Figs. 6.4 and 6.5.

The work of Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot on portraiture (n.d.) was used for guidance on thematic analysis. Lawrence-Lightfoot suggests that thematic analysis is both an iterative and a generative process, bringing 'interpretive insight, analytic scrutiny and aesthetic order' to the data, which involves constructing emergent themes (Lawrence-Lightfoot, n.d.)

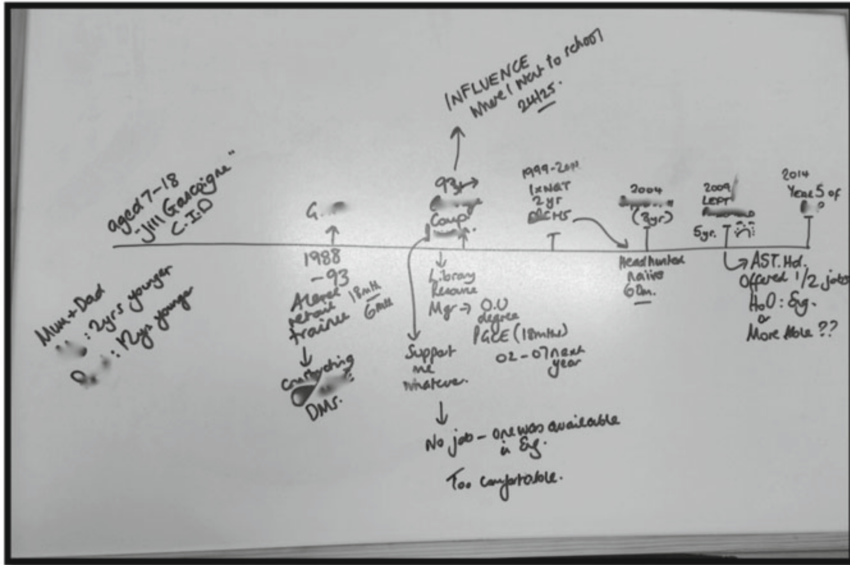

Fig. 6.4 Jill's timeline (identifying places/schools have been blurred out)

Fig. 6.5 Jill's concept map

6.3 Jill's Portrait and Its Analysis

6.3.1 Factors That Impact on Jill

The themes that run though Jill's interview relate strongly to her family, both her natal family, and her husband and daughters. Equally, key in Jill's narrative is the link between family and work, and the constraints and enablements that this interplay brings to her life. Archer's critical realist approach, in particular the aspects concerning the role of inner conversations or individual reflexivity in relation to the development of individuals' personal projects and actions and to an understanding of their identity and agency, is key to this discussion. According to Archer structure and agency are commonly conflated, either 'upwardly,' 'downwardly' or 'centrally.' Such conflation suggests that either structure or agency is given more prominence than the other, or that both are seen as equally influential, with the consequence that neither retains adequate explanatory power. Archer's alternative, which she calls 'morphogenesis', a word she borrows from biology that means 'the process that causes something (in biology, usually a cell or organism for example) to develop its shape.' offers an account of social action and space provided via social interaction and structural elaboration. A personalised conceptual framework relating to the factors that were key for Jill at proximal, meso and macro levels was populated by drawing on Jill's data (see Fig. 6.5). The intersectionality of local, national and global policy contexts runs throughout Jill's story, as we shall see.

Jill's case study was chosen to generate an in-depth, multi-faceted understanding of the complex issues surrounding identity and the lived realities of teachers' being and doings, in their real-life nested contexts. Although of course there is limited generalisability from this case study, this limitation was addressed in the production of the case study by the facts that the sampling used was theoretical sampling (which drew on a my conceptual framework); the co-construction of Jill's portrait with Jill herself;. and transparency throughout the research process (Crowe et al., 2011; Stake, 1995), which was achieved by making clear in the description of the methods used to elicit the case study the steps involved in case selection, data collection, the reasons for the particular methods chosen and my own positionality. Explanatory power of the model is limited to a single case of a teacher while it pretends to explain macro and meso levels (Fig. 6.6).

6.3.1.1 Macro-level Cluster

Jill's narrative account reflected the discourses of accountability, performativity and achievement that are currently prevalent in education (e.g. Ball, 2008; Department for Education, 2015, 2016). Achievement and data featured large in her narrative, perhaps as a function of her relative seniority in school and her trajectory to her current job via a head of English post, both of which emphasised the consequences of examination results for her personally. Jill suggested that for many people, the

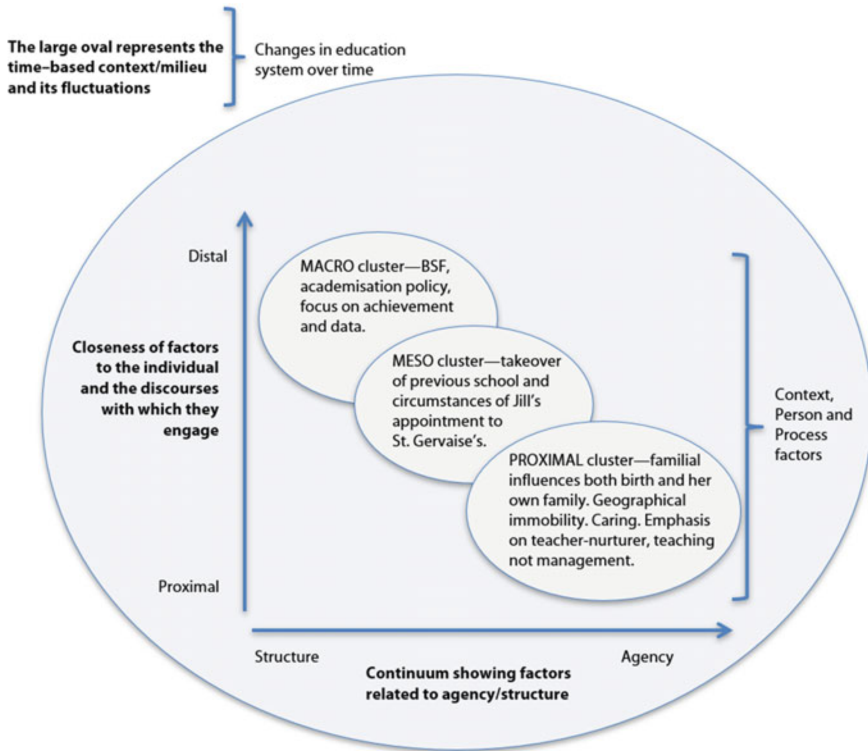

Fig. 6.6 Cascading clusters of factors in Jill's beings and doings

primary objective of the school system '*could be* [seen as] … *the dreaded GCSE… A-level results.*' This quote exemplifies—in just a few words—the complexities of the intersection between national policy discourses and the enactment of policy locally in school.

The other set of macro-level discourses that affected Jill were those to do with the government's 'Building Schools for the Future' (BSF[1]) programme (Department for Education and Skills, 2003) and its academisation project (Education Act, 2002) that were joint factors in the closure of the Ashfield school and its takeover by Ladywood School. Jill expresses her response to these discourses very clearly; '*I felt I was forced to move because of what happened with the 'federation'*… Both of these sets of discourses had penetrating effects on other clusters of factors that were key to Jill's beings and doings.

[1] The Building Schools for the Future was a 2003 government initiative, involving private sector partners, of investment in secondary school buildings. The policy included aims relating to securing educational transformation in low-performing schools as well as to improving school buildings.

The story of how Jill ended up at St. Gervase's is an interesting one; her move there is a defining one in her career and home life. Jill moved to St. Gervase's from Ashfield School, where she was head of English. Despite the challenges of the job, Jill did not ever intend to move from her head of department position at Ashfield. However, after some political manoeuvring at local government level, Ashfield was federated with Ladywood, a larger school nearby; although in fact, this was much more of a 'take over' by Ladywood than a federation. Jill wasn't at all pleased about the Ladywood takeover of Ashfield, nor did she want a position in the new federated school. Hence, when Jill moved to St. Gervase's, it was a rather unhappy move, and more of a decision to avoid joining the new federated school than a positive move towards St. Gervase's. It took Jill a while to become established in her new job. One of the ironies about her current position at St. Gervase's is that from her classroom window, she has an excellent view of the sports fields and the classrooms of the new buildings of Ladywood School. Occasionally in our meetings, Jill would refer to Ladywood and nod over towards the new buildings in a slightly hostile way;

> *…but I'm OK now I can sit here and look out across there* [to Ladywood] *and I don't get bitter… much* [laughs].

6.3.1.2 Meso-level Cluster

At the meso level, St. Gervase's school—Jill's immediate context—was of critical importance in shaping her beings and doings. Jill was ambivalent about the move to St. Gervase's, and this ambivalence coincided with what she and her husband Stuart perceived as a qualitative change in family dynamics; for the first time, she and Stuart felt that their elder daughter was able to babysit the younger one. This combination meant that for the first time in years Jill was able to focus on herself and on family projects. As well, Jill was thinking about moving on from St. Gervase's. In fact, as a result of her disquiet with her position at St. Gervase's and as a conclusion to her internal deliberations about whether she should remain as a classroom teacher or move into senior leadership, she left St. Gervase's to move to a new school at the end of the study year.

6.3.2 Moving on from St. Gervase's

After four years at St. Gervase's, Jill was wondering whether to continue to apply for assistant head teacher posts. She had had a number of interviews but had been unsuccessful. Jill explained that data was not really her forte; rather, she was much more interested in teaching and learning. However, she knew that for assistant headship posts, an easy familiarity with data and systems is essential. Perhaps as a result of Jill's ambivalence about data, one of the things that comes over strongly from Jill is that she is in a quandary about whether she really wants an assistant head's job, which would mean less time in the classroom.

> So I don't know…I'm quite happy, and I am quite happy to just be an English teacher with responsibility for more able students because that's a lovely job…but at the moment I am in a bit of a… so it could be a very different conversation we're having this time next year couldn't it?

In fact, the conversation a year on was indeed very different. Jill had decided that she wanted to focus more on family life, and her longstanding interest in teaching and learning was winning through. In April 2015, she secured a post as head of English in a local high school, St. Charles', which was in special measures.[2] Jill had decided to apply for the job there because of a unique combination of its location, the challenging nature of the role and her increasing sense of dissatisfaction with her current job. The decision to apply was not an easy one. Jill had however changed her mind about what kind of job she wanted:

> It just excites me because… this is like building your own department…and thinking, this is going to work and when you take on board the changes that have happened at that school this year plus the positivity of the staff, it will be…a very quick rise. It's that bad because they have no systems, they have no systems for data management, no systems for assessing, no data, there is just nothing there…it's like the blind leading the blind.

6.3.3 Life Projects

It is clear from her career trajectory that work is an important part of Jill's life, and in our discussions, Jill described work as one of two undertakings that were important to her: the other is her family. However, work and family are more than interrelated undertakings; they are her key 'life projects' that reflect her driving concerns.

The family 'project' features prominently in Jill's narrative. She was born and brought up with her brother Pete and sister Louise in a working-class family in a local town. Jill's parents were always supportive of their children:

> Jill: *They've always they've always supported what we choose to do, whatever, even now, what we choose to do, they know that we are our own people, and whether that's sort of in relationships, or…*
>
> J: *So they weren't massive influences like 'you must be a detective' or 'you must be a teacher' or anything like that?*
>
> Jill: *No, and if that's what we said we wanted to do, see Pete wanted to be a pigeon boy for years because the guy next door had a pigeon loft but they never said 'No you won't.' …Louise wanted to be a sweet shop… they always said 'Yes, if you want a sweet shop, you go and get yourself a sweet shop.' But like I say it's just been a case of 'let them see which way which they want to go.'*

[2] A school may be placed in 'special measures' if a government Ofsted inspection concludes that the school is failing to provide an acceptable standard of education and if the governors and leadership team do not show the capacity to secure the necessary improvement. As a result of being placed in special measures a school will be subject to monitoring visits and inspections until necessary changes are deemed to have been put in place successfully.

Now Jill has a husband and children of her own, she still sees family as a prime concern and motivator, but work and family are always closely intertwined for her. For example, one of the reasons for her to have applied for and subsequently accepted her new job is because of its proximity to where her elderly parents live—the school is on the same road. Her parents are pleased about this:

> I say, 'In September, Dad, I could come here every night from work for my tea'. He said, 'you could even come at lunchtime, we'll have your lunch ready.'

One of the functions of Jill's family is to provide an enabling context which supports her in her other significant 'project' of 'being a teacher'. In one sense, the family is closely integrated with this project and supports it because Jill 'is' a nurturing teacher. Jill acknowledges that the two projects are intertwined: '*to quote Jane* [a friend] *every day is a school day*'. And yet, there is also a sense in which Jill keeps the two projects of home and work quite separate, rarely having work colleagues as Facebook friends, ensuring that her planning for school takes as little time as possible and making sure that she makes the most of her evenings, weekends and holiday times. Her work is underpinned by her values and sense of moral purpose, which is to do with caring, nurturing and mentoring. This moral purpose manifests itself in at least two linked ways: firstly, in the cultivation of a nurturing, caring persona in relation to both the students and colleagues; secondly, a sense in which Jill acts as and sees herself as someone who can be a role model in school for younger or less experienced staff.

Although Jill's narrative is characterised by a relative lack of geographical movement, this stasis is not mirrored in her career or her family life. The symbiotic and intertwined concerns of work and family are sometimes facilitating (for example, when her husband makes her job possible through many of the things he does at home). In the same way, these intertwined factors can be constraining; for example, when Jill is away on a school trip, she puts plans in place to ensure that the family can run efficiently for a few days without her:

> …like tomorrow I go to London for two days overnight with school so I have to organize my home life so everyone, Dad's to the dentist, the oldest is going to go to school to pick the other one up because Dad's not going to be… But he's going to have to go on Wednesday and the child minder needs informing she might even need her hair doing because he might forget things; so the two do sort of blend together.

Despite this co-constraint of work and family, in Jill's narratives there is a real sense of purpose, of movement, of agency and of self-determination. The themes that run though Jill's interview relate strongly to her family, both her natal family, and her husband and daughters. Equally key in Jill's narrative is the link between family and work, and the constraints and enablements that this interplay brings to her life.

6.3.3.1 Proximal-Level Cluster

At the proximal level, Jill's definition of herself as a teacher-nurturer was very important. Jill first talked about this in one of our early meetings, and this theme sets the

scene for much of what she said afterwards. Caring was key to much of what she said and did. Jill's values were rooted in her stable family network, both her birth family and her own family. Over the time she was at St. Gervase's and her focus has shifted from one of her life projects, her work, to another: her own family. This was partly as a function of age, and partly to do with the logistics of the family situation. A stable family network, with a focus on stasis and on geographical proximity, is a very much feature of Archer's communicative reflexives (e.g. Archer, 2012). Yet in Jill's case, her reliance on her family as sources of rationality and as sounding boards for her reflexive inner conversations is entwined with a sense of moral purpose, of projects and of idealism, that reflects the features of meta-reflexivity. This moral purpose and idealism are associated with her teacher-nurturer role. For example, when Jill is promising to take out for a meal the disadvantaged pupils with whom she works, she says *'yes I'd take my daughters out for a meal, these kids need to go out for a meal'*, showing the intertwined nature of these concerns in her articulation of her moral purpose.

A striking theme in Jill's narratives is her focus on caring for students, which perhaps in part derives from her strong sense of family and of her nurturing role there. In this extract, she explains how she makes the link between how she nurtures her own daughters, and how she treats some of her year 10 students.

> Jill: *…I said to them come May next year just before you leave if you do work hard, I'll take you out for a meal…somewhere posh, not McDonald's - somewhere we'll have to use knives and forks. But then I did the 'if you show me up …' and they were 'we won't, we won't' and they're thrilled by this…. Again it's all part of, 'yes I'd take my daughters out for a meal, these kids need to go out for a meal'…*

This was a recurring theme; in this discussion, Jill described how being a 'teacher-nurturer' was 'what I am'.

> I've always had that teacher-nurturer inside of me I think…the teacher aspect has always been there. And so it is central to what I do because it's what I am, I think that's what it comes down to: it's what I am.

This role as a carer/nurturer is integrated with a moral purpose about work that manifests itself through a self-imposed mentoring role for other members of staff. For example, Jill sees it as important that she gives advice to the member of staff at St. Gervase's who has been appointed as the new temporary head of English.

6.3.4 Intersectionality

The interaction of factors at a number of levels in the conceptual framework is clear in Jill's narrative. For example, the Building Schools for the Future (BSF), academisation policy and performativity/accountability discourses that were features of the macro-level context permeated through and had cascading effects on factors at the other levels. National discourses relating to academisation were enacted locally in the policy that resulted in the takeover of Ashfield School by Ladywood School.

The discomfort that this takeover caused for Jill interacted with her personal circumstances and the concerns she had relating to family and resulted in her subsequent move to St. Gervase's. Interestingly, Jill did not articulate any tensions between the performativity pressures and discourses (that are features of the macro cluster of factors), her own values and her self-image as a teacher-nurturer, perhaps due to the importance of her family values and nurturing approach to teaching and learning in determining her reflexivity and agency.

Similarly, the intersection between local, national and global policy contexts is seen throughout Jill's narrative. For example, the focus on accountability for results, which is a pervasive global discourse, interacts with national imperatives relating to the datafication of education and to local policy contexts relating to BSF.

How does Jill's reflexivity mediate the structural and proximal to suggest the privileging of particular forms of beings and doings?

Jill is an individual who uses both meta-reflexivity and communicative reflexivity as dominant modes of inner conversation, both her professional and personal life. Meta-reflexivity, where the social order is problematised, is key to her actions and the way that she sees the world. For example, she talks about how she had seen a news report about how many children go hungry in the school holidays because they do not have their term-time school dinner, expresses her concern that many of her pupils may be hungry and explains what she can do about it. Interestingly, however, although Jill expresses her concern, this concern is not politicised, nor does it impact on her agency in any significant way. She does not start a school breakfast club, nor does she lobby the local MP about disadvantage. She deals with the issue more individually, by bringing in apples and breakfast bars that she knows the pupils will eat.

As well as demonstrating some of the features of meta-reflexivity, in many ways Jill truly embodies the 'thought and talk' form of internal conversation that is described by Archer (2007, p. 94) as a feature of the communicative reflexive. Jill is a social animal, who could well be described as an 'extroverted chatterer'. This was obvious from the length of the interviews (Jill talked, quite openly and willingly, for almost twice as long over the year as any of the other teacher-participants I interviewed) and the wide-ranging nature of the discussions that she and I had. Communicative reflexives 'attach supreme importance to inter-personal relations' (Archer, 2007, p. 283) and remain deeply embedded in their original social context; Jill's key project of 'family' is significant to her agency. Her concern for what Archer describes as 'relational goods'—which in Jill's case include love, reliance, caring and trust—and the reproductive projects to which this concern leads 'act[ed] as a filter, sifting friendships, social activities and leisure pursuits to ensure congruity with their families' normativity' (Archer, 2012, p. 99). Indeed, in Jill's case, her nurturing and caring approach was evident in her professional capacity as well as in relation to her husband and daughters. There is a sense in which Jill's nurturing approach to her pupils at school was an extension of that same caring approach, developed from her

natal family background, that she expressed in relation to her own husband and children. So when she is explaining about taking her class out for an end of year meal, in her own mind this action is firmly linked to her familial caring values. Jill's thoughts about her family exemplify Archer's view of communicative reflexives who, in terms of marital/family relations, 'appear to endorse "togetherness"' (Archer, 2007).

The forms of reflexivity which are evident in Jill's inner conversations direct her agency and shape her actions. For instance, it is partly as a result of her concern with family and with her elderly parents' welfare that she moves to a school near to where her parents live. But there is a dual-purpose to her intention: the move to a school where she feels her skills are more useful, where she can make a difference and where her values sit comfortably, but moreover where she can reconcile her personal and professional projects without compromising on either.

Jill is indubitably a communicative reflexive, but she also uses meta-reflexivity as an auxiliary mode in key professional moments. At home and with her family, Jill clearly uses communicative reflexivity as her dominant mode. Family and the values of care are important and are also associated with strong elements of communicative reflexivity. These are privileged for her. At school, and in her wider professional life, although communicative reflexivity is still dominant, there are also features of meta-reflexivity. Those of her values that are associated with caring in the classroom and in the school are documented as elements of meta-reflexivity, but are secondary (and yet correctly part of the whole story). In Jill's professional life, her communicative reflexivity is dominant still, and interlinks with her meta-reflexivity. The higher-order purpose and project that is evident in Jill's inner conversations is related to caring. That particular combination of her concerns for family, caring and values plays out in relation both to her family and to the pupils at school. The dominant and auxiliary modes are intertwined in a symbiotic fashion, and direct her actions in relation to her professional development and journey as a teacher, and her projects and concerns. Jill's meta-reflexivity is predicated on her caring values, derived from her family background. It is not a well-developed meta-reflexivity, predicated on a sense of moral purpose—but moments of meta-reflexivity, relating to the ethos of caring, are nonetheless there for Jill. It is an auxiliary mode and has a supportive function in relation to her communicative reflexivity. TRAIt is populated here, using Jill's data (Fig. 6.7).

In the TRAIt representation for Jill, the inner circle shows her as an agent, with agentic powers, located within the socialising structures of society and more particularly of education. Her age, her experiences as a teacher (both recent and over time) and the caring values that are encapsulated in the stability of her family are important in the determination of her agency and the modes of reflexivity that she employs. The middle ring, representing the two-way determining and mediating processes of reflexivity, can be exemplified as follows for Jill.

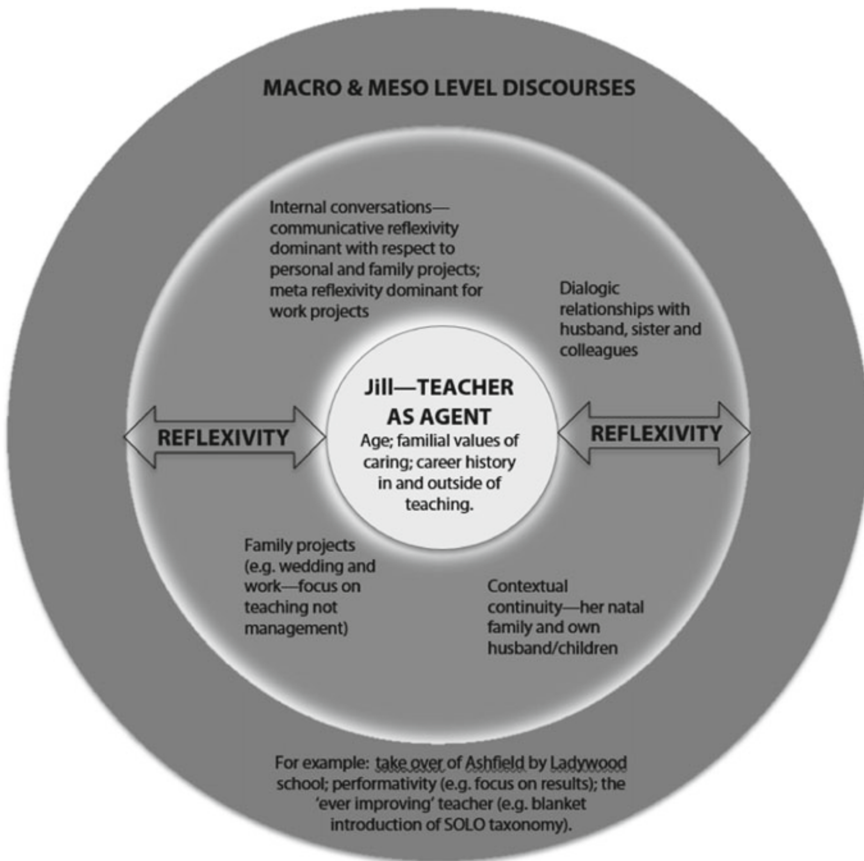

Fig. 6.7 TRAIt populated with Jill's data

6.3.5 Contextual Continuity

The contextual continuity denoted by Jill's family and the close stable relationships between her and her parents and siblings, as well as her emphasis on stable relationships in her own family, are evident in Jill's narratives. Archer (2012) argues that such stability and a focus on relational goods—such as love, reliance and trust—are likely to result in communicative reflexivity being the dominant mode that an individual employs. As I have shown, Jill does demonstrate such communicative reflexivity, particularly in relation to her personal projects. However, she also employs meta-reflexivity as an auxiliary mode, and this is related to the different nature of her professional projects from that of her personal projects.

6.3.6 Personal and Professional Projects

Jill's personal projects were to do with the family. For example, she was planning a renewal of marriage vows when we first met. Professionally, her projects were related to her career trajectory and were her ambitions related to senior leadership, with all that entails, or was she more concerned with teaching English and with her classroom practice? This was a dilemma that Jill mentioned on a number of occasions, and in the academic year following our final meeting she started a challenging teaching job in a school near her parents' house. The rationale for this decision was substantially instrumental: Jill wanted her personal and professional projects to be interwoven. In this instance, she wanted to be near to her elderly parents as well as to be able to have a fulfilling career. These personal and professional concerns and their intertwined nature are key to the fact that Jill employs both meta-reflexive and communicative reflexivity, although they are employed differently for different projects.

6.3.7 Types of Dialogic Relationships and Dialogic Partners

As a communicative reflexive, Jill discusses both personal and professional issues with her family, being impelled to check on her thinking with her close relatives, particularly with her husband and sister. She also has a close group of colleagues on whom she particularly relied when she wanted to discuss professional concerns. However, when it came to making decisions about actions, Jill felt that she took those individuals' ideas on board and then made her own decisions that felt right for her and that closely aligned with her values. The dialogic relationships are important for her, but they are not the sole determining factor of her agency.

The outer circle of the TRAIt model represents macro-level discourses and policies and more meso-level policy enactments and conditions, local to particular schools and areas, that impact on teacher identity and agency. In Jill's case, the discourses that she articulated as being particularly significant to her agency and identity concerned discourses at a national level concerning performativity. For example, she talked about a focus on examination results. Other national discourses that impacted on Jill's agency included a concern with the 'ever improving teacher' that was a continuing priority for the government (Department for Education, 2016). More locally, Jill has been affected by the academisation programme that resulted in Ladywood School taking over the school where she was head of English, and the consequential imperative for her to move to St. Gervase's.

As we have seen throughout the discussion of Jill's work, it is the case that teachers' professional lives and their agency are situated at the intersection of local, national and global educational policy contexts. Global discourses such as accountability, performativity and achievement that are currently prevalent in education and which play out at both local and national level are significant in the expression of Jill's agency. The way in which her reflexivity interacts with these discourses—and in

particular with her articulation of how performativity has impacted on her beings and doings—is significant in regard to her agency. This shows the importance of considering modes of reflexivity in relation to an individual's context and personal projects.

6.4 Conclusions and Implications

The understandings drawn from Jill's case study and from the other teachers I worked with (not described in this chapter) show the potential explanatory usefulness of Archer's conceptualisations of reflexivity (e.g. 2012) in understanding teachers' professional thinking and doing. Thinking about reflexivity through a critical realist lens allows us to develop a deeper understanding of how the mediation process that Archer describes as a function of reflexivity (e.g. 2012) operates for teachers living and working in the real world in real social and cultural contexts.

The essence of the daily work of teachers reflects an intersection of personal biography and the situational structures and cultures of schools in which teachers operate, which brings about differences in professional thinking and doing. In considering this daily work, as exemplified through Jill's narrative, we can see the importance of viewing teaching—and teachers—as being or embodying more than a set of competencies, as Day points out in Chap. 10.

By identifying the modes of reflexivity that Jill used and considering how her reflexivity determines and mediates her agency in her personal and professional contexts, this work showed how individuals generate the elaboration of structure and culture, but also how they themselves simultaneously undergo elaboration as people (Archer, 1995, p. 253). The study illuminates the intersectionality of a number of factors at a variety of levels that may influence the professional lives and identity of teachers, and how this intersectionality might influence their agency. The intersection of local, national and global policy contexts with each other and with Jill's concerns and beings and doings; what Jill experiences in regard to these intersections does indeed shape her responses to problematic situations (Biesta & Tedder, 2006).

As a result of this study, I was able to increase understandings of and develop ways of thinking about reflexivity and agency that could be used in professional development work with teachers, generalising from the empirical to demonstrate the applicability of the theoretical. TRAIt is a thinking tool. Thinking tools are often used in education and serve a number of functions, including being useful in making thinking more transparent and in providing ways to think specifically about different content and ideas (Mappen, 2015). Certainly, interventions based on reflexivity could be very valuable in teachers' professional development. TRAIt could be utilised for any particular individual teacher, and this could be done by asking particular questions of individuals and their contexts. To this end, further work could develop a rudimentary prototype toolkit based on TRAIt, which could enable individuals to have a better understanding of how professional identity and agency develop and to bring insights into the determining processes of reflexivity and agency that are

important to teachers. Teachers could use the toolkit reflectively for their own developmental purposes, or it might be used by managers in conjunction with teachers to work collaboratively in relation to teacher development and agency. Further research in this area could usefully fill the gap that Archer's work leaves in regard to practice; the application of work on modes of reflexivity and on teacher agency could be used to enhance teachers' reflective practice. In addition, a consideration of the work of Michael Eraut (e.g. 2012) on trajectories, or the developmental pathways we create for ourselves, but which are also influenced by other individuals—and by contexts—as we journey through our lives would be helpful in filling out/developing the explanatory power of the model in relation to the macro and meso levels. Eraut talks about development being a function of the opportunities we have for experiences that will enable us to fulfil roles and tasks and, in that process, develop ourselves, on the assumption that we have the capability to occupy the role. This resonates strongly with the work I have described in this chapter. Considering TRAIt and the work on Eraut in conjunction would be a helpful development to facilitate the explanation of the power of the macro and meso levels of influence.

The TRAIt approach and conceptual model I have presented focus on the proximal level, with less of a focus on meso and macro levels of the ecological systems which impact on and are impacted by individuals' beings and doings. Further work is currently addressing this limitation, with analysis of the meso- and macro-level factors which the TRAIt model may be able to explain being considered.

This is an area where this paper on identity, agency and reflexivity in teachers, using a critical realist lens and approach to reflexivity, adds to the currently flourishing debate concerning the role of reflexivity. Importantly, this work also contributes to a critical re-reading of the concept of teacher education, focusing on the complex negotiations that teachers make in their developmental journeys in order to stablish themselves in the complex, precarious and often contradictory world which is teaching and teacher development in the twenty-first century.

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Chapter 7
Reading Towards a School for All? Comparing Course Literature Lists in Academic Swedish Special Education Teacher Training Between the 1980s and 2010s

Heidi Wimmer, Gabriella Höstfält, and Wieland Wermke

Abstract This chapter focuses on the empirical value of course literature in order to understand paradigm shifts in teacher education over time. In order to show this, the example of Swedish special education teachers is presented. This case is of international interest since the Swedish school systems have been highly committed to international trends. These trends are among others, the inclusion movement, i.e. the making of a school for all in the spirit of the Salamanca declaration of 1994, and the impact of PISA since the 2000s, related to paradigms of standardised student performance measurement of all students. By making qualitative and quantitative content analyses of course literature lists since the 1970s, we show that there are indeed significant shifts in what prospective professionals in school are expected to be. In the case presented in this chapter, it can be shown how special education teachers until the 1990s had a profound medical focus on schooling and disability in their training. Today, they are by their academic training more expected to be expert teachers for all children. Moreover, their reading includes today much focus on scientific method. This illustrates that this professional group is expected today to produce own systematic knowledge.

Keywords Special education teacher · Teacher training · Course literature · Paradigm shift · Sweden

7.1 Introduction

The concept of teacher education mirrors shifts in trends within the wider field of education and on course literature set for students by teacher educators, influencing what they do with their students in terms of teaching and engagement with policy discourse. Current research has extensively investigated the influence of shifting global education trends on school systems and teaching professions at the national

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level (cf. Proitz et al., 2017; Wahlström et al., 2018). The two most significant trends from an international perspective are the movement towards an inclusive school for all, represented by the 1994 Salamanca declaration of Salamanca, and the trend towards standardisation, reflected in the global testing culture, and expressed in universal testing such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (Hamre et al., 2018). From these two trends emerges a field of tension between the aim of goal achievement for all pupils resulting from the increased level of standardisation and growing prominence of standards, and the aim to include all pupils independent of their ability to meet such standardised prerequisites (Ainscow, 2016). Within this field of tension, one profession plays a central role, since traditionally it has a specific focus on pupils for whom instruction in regular classrooms and schools provides inadequate educational solutions: The profession of Special Education Teachers (SETs).

During the late twentieth century, the era from which both of the described trends originate, the working conditions of SETs have changed significantly. As a result of the aim of inclusion, special schools—the traditional workplace of SETs—have become increasingly less common, supplanted by a workplace shared by SETs and regular teachers, which by necessity increases collaboration between special education teachers and other professionals (Ainscow, 2016). In other words, when speaking about the school of the twenty-first century, at least in the Western world, we speak about schools that are more inclusive, resulting in the increased presence of professional SETs in regular schools. This is why, we argue, this perspective makes a valuable contribution to this book edition on teacher education from a comparative perspective.

Unfortunately, the shifts in the profession of SETs internationally during that time remains somewhat overlooked in research (Cameron et al., 2018; Wermke et al., 2020). Even though the described trends are occurring on a global scale, they do not impact professions on a national level in exactly the same ways, as the context-specific peculiarities can significantly affect the impact of such trends at a national level (Schulte & Wermke, 2019).

One possible variable to investigate in the changing profession of SETs is the academic training of the professionals, as this is where future SETs are prepared and introduced to their future work. Reading lists in particular can be regarded as sources that transmit knowledge on the subject being studied. We argue that reading lists are a proxy for changes in the professional knowledge base with implications for the professional practice. If the profession and the expectations of the profession change, how might this be mirrored in the academic training of SETs? Here is where this research becomes relevant, asking the following questions: *How did the specialisation training for teachers into special education teachers in Sweden change over time in regard to what special education students have to read in their academic training, and how has this reading changed over time?* To address this question, we will compare SET training from the 1980s with that of the 2010s.

The focus on Sweden is conditioned by the explained context-specific peculiarities. Sweden is a fertile example for the examination of changes of school systems due to global trends in education. Sweden presents a democratic, Western, and meritocratic school system, which aims to fulfil the declaration of Salamanca to achieve

a genuinely inclusive school for all. The Swedish comprehensive school system was long characterised by a decreasing number of special schools, but has also undergone tremendous school reforms and reform attempts since 1990, including the processes described earlier. Our focus on the course literature is due to the assumption that the knowledge and beliefs that are assumed to be of relevance for SET teachers are transmitted in the literature that the prospective SETs are supposed to read in their training. Investigating the course literature of SET training in Sweden thus allows us to draw conclusions about the profession in Sweden as such and also to make possible changes within the profession visible. Moreover, with the investigation of the course literature in two different decades, a temporal perspective on the education is possible. The decision on the specific timespans, the 1980s and the 2010s, was also influenced by the recent history of the SET training in Sweden, which is briefly outlined in the following contextualisation.

7.2 Context

In Sweden, there are two parallel education programmes for special educators. One is for SETs (*speciallärare*), and the other is for Special educators (*specialpedagoger*). The education of both is to some extent very similar, as they are both three-term postgraduate education programmes (90 credits), and require previous training and experience as a preschool teacher or a regular teacher. Furthermore, both take place at specific universities in Sweden that have been authorised by the government to issue those degrees (Göransson et al., 2015, 2016; von Ahlefeld Nisser, 2014). While both qualifications overlap considerably in their content, they do differ from one another. In a nutshell, the education of special need educators (SNE) focuses more on the organisation of schooling and learning environment which enables them to work with pupils. The education of SETs, in contrast, focuses more on individual-centred learning goals which enables them to work with pupils (Göransson et al., 2015; von Ahlefeld Nisser, 2014).

However, this division into two separate special needs education professions in Sweden is historically very recent. Between 1962 and 1989, only one qualification existed for SETs. In the 1980s, schools in Sweden were strongly criticised for the way in which children with disabilities were treated. This criticism eventually spilled over into the training of SNEs, which led to the relabelling of SETs and their training as “special educators”. The renaming was intended to make a clear change visible, which is also reflected in a shift in the sphere of responsibility for special educators compared to the previous SETs. From 1990 on, the new education of special educators could start, and the training of SETs came to an end (Haug et al., 2006; von Ahlefeld Nisser, 2014).

In the early 2000s, the training of special educators was criticised for putting too much focus on issues such as supervision and school development while neglecting issues such as active and concrete work with pupils with difficulties at school. As a consequence, in 2007, a new training for SETs was announced, which came into

force in 2008. Since then, both trainings have existed in parallel (von Ahlefeld Nisser, 2014).

Since the re-establishment of SET education, two specialisations within the education have been provided, one for language, writing, and reading development, and another for mathematical development. In 2012, four more specialisations were added, namely specialisations in visual impairment, hearing impairment or deafness, severe speech impairment, and developmental disability. Thus, there are currently six possible specialisations within the training for SET teachers throughout Sweden (von Ahlefeld Nisser, 2014).

Of course, the SET training in Sweden does not exist in a context-free space. As described, it is influenced by policies within Sweden, but also by educational policies on the international scale (see Sect. 7.1). In turn, these international educational policies influence the profession of SETs in other countries. For a better understanding of the specifications and commonalities with SETs outside of Sweden, it can therefore be useful to have a brief look at the training of SETs in other countries. Such a broadened perspective enables us to discover the different ways educational systems deal with special educational needs and SET training specifically, but also draw connections across space and time (cf. Boban & Hinz, 2009; Takala et al., 2019a, 2019b). Takala et al. (2012) state that policy developments in Finland, Norway, and Sweden have broadened the definition of special needs education (SNE) from a disability focus to include a wide variety of diversity and educational needs. However, internationally, SNE is still influenced by cultural traditions and national policy-making, even if it seems that ideas of inclusion play a more important role in special teacher education and regular teacher education today (Haustätter & Kuippis, 2015).

7.3 Theoretical Framework

Our theoretical rationale draws on our ambition to make visible changes in the academic training of SETs. As we will show, there are different approaches to understanding special educational needs and the provision of education to meet them. The understanding of what special education is, how it is to be provided, and for whom differs in time and space (Wermke et al., 2020). Skidmore (1996) identifies three different special educational paradigms, the psycho-medical, the sociological, and the organisational paradigms. Here we follow Kuhn's (2012) definition of paradigm as the knowledge that counts as facts within a scientific discipline. According to Skidmore (1996), characteristic for the psycho-medical paradigm is a focus on the micro level, in the sense of an individual perspective. Special needs are thus described as having their origin in the deficit inherent in the individual. Interventions are described in line with an image of medical conditions such as diagnostic tests or quasi-clinical interventions (Skidmore, 1996).

The organisational paradigm focuses, as the name implies, on the organisation of schooling and the school as an institution. Thus, this paradigm moves away from an individual-centred perspective and looks at special educational needs on a broader,

meso level of analysis. The basic idea of the organisational paradigm is that the organisation of schools may succeed to different degrees in the reduction of problems or hindrances for the students. Deficiencies in the organisation of schools can cause special needs. Consequently, organisational weaknesses need to be addressed through restructuring and different configurations of the school as an institution in order to make the school more suitable for the students (Skidmore, 1996).

The sociological paradigm summarises research with a focus on an even broader level, the societal, macro level. This paradigm opens the way for criticism and discussions on different ways of schooling of pupils with special needs, challenging the society and the system as a whole, as it locates the emergence of special needs in "the reproduction of structural inequalities in society through processes of sorting and tracking" (Skidmore, 1996, p. 42). Dealing with problems on a societal scale, the solutions to such problems concern the shape of the education system as a whole and the reduction of inequalities on a societal scale. However, just as the social traditions represented in the sociological paradigm are various, so are the convictions around these issues and interventions (Skidmore, 1996).

For the purpose of this research, Skidmore's paradigms provide categories for our analysis of literature lists at academic SET training in the 1980s and 2010s. Next to the psycho-medical, organisational, and sociological categories, other aspects appeared to be of interest while analysing the corpus of course literature in SET training. Building on these three categories derived from Skidmore's paradigms (1996), we expanded our theoretical framework with two further categories.

Since it can be assumed that the education of SETs includes aspects of pedagogical and instructional method, a so-called *pedagogy/instructional method* category was established. Literature subsumed under this classification includes texts on the topics of instructional method and different subject didactics, as well as writings on pedagogy as such. Since SET training in Sweden is located at universities, it can be assumed that scientific work may also be part of the SET training as an academic education. The second supplementary category is therefore called *scientific method* and covers literature on scientific work and methods. These five categories can thus be understood as different modes of knowledge within special education. These modes of knowledge are, in turn, a substantial part of the professional body of knowledge within the academic training of SETs. According to Harries-Jenkins (1970), a profession's body of knowledge constitutes an important element of professionalisation, e.g. the process of giving an occupation professional qualities, in the case of SET, continuing education for teachers.

In summary, the five categories contain modes of knowledge within the field of special education, and the body of knowledge constitutes a comprehensive set of concepts, terms, tools, and activities that make up the SET profession.

7.4 Method

Educational plans and literature lists from courses at universities are under an obligation to be archived for unlimited time as they are considered public documents, at least in Sweden. This made it possible for us to collect the educational plans of the SET training for the respective time periods at one of the largest universities in Sweden, with the largest SET education programme by number of students. As explained in the contextualisation, SET qualification in Sweden was abolished in 1989 and re-established in 2008, which makes the period of the 1980s, as the period of the former qualification, and the period of the 2010s, as the period after the reintroduction of the qualification, interesting and relevant for this research. With the help of archivists, we were able to collect the educational plans of the SET training of that university for the period from 1977 to 1989, and for 2008 to 2020. Through the educational plans, it was possible to clarify which courses were held within the programmes. It was thus ascertained that at the investigated university for the period 1977 to 1989, the training of SETs consisted of a general part and, building on this, specialisations in the subject of speech, and a specialisation in the subject of development. For the period 2008 to 2020, too, the education started with a general part, followed by three specialisations: developmental disability, language, writing, and reading development, and mathematical development. For the general part of the SET training in the second area, data is made available from 2008 onwards. Due to the gradual introduction of the specialisations described above, data for the specialisation in language, writing, and reading development (below called: Language specialisation) is already available from 2013, while the earliest data for the specialisation in developmental disability (in the following called: Development specialisation) dates from 2014, and for the specialisation in mathematical development, from 2014 as well (in the following called: Mathematics specialisation).

In the next step, relevant literature lists from the respective periods were identified and collected via the course plans. The literature lists collected in this way were then quantitatively analysed applying the Basic Content Analysis of Weber (1990) in a twofold manner. This form of content analysis uses different possible quantitative methods to analyse mostly existing documents, such as, in our case, the literature lists of the SET training (Drisko & Maschi, 2015).

In the first part of our analysis, we used the technique of word-frequency lists. For this purpose, the titles of the texts listed in the collected literature lists were extracted. In the next step, prepositions and conjunctions were removed from the extracted titles, as these were classified as substantively uninteresting (cf. Weber, 1990). The processed lists of titles were then examined for the frequency of the words they contained with the help of the data analysis software NVivo. Lists of the ten most frequently occurring words per specialisation and time period were created, which allowed a preliminary insight into the content of the education, following the assumption that a high frequency would be accompanied by a great significance for the content of the training (Weber, 1990).

The second part of the analysis, again according to Weber's (1990) Basic Content Analysis, followed a deductive coding strategy. Based on the work of Skidmore (1996) and our expanded analytical framework, we established codes in accordance with the categories described above. Here, the literature lists were broken down even more precisely by extracting and listing all authors for each course and semester in a comprehensible way. Furthermore, the titles were then assigned to the respective authors. Finally, according to the content of the title, an assignment to the respective theory-based codes was undertaken. This procedure enabled a deepening of insight into the content of the SET training, as the assignment of the titles to the codes shows the proportion of literature that can be assigned to the respective category form, according to the manifestly available titles. As Weber (1990) states it, this procedure makes it possible to see relative emphasis within the researched material. Moreover, it allows the tracking of possible shifts over time, especially in comparison of the different time periods (Weber, 1990).

In order to give an insight into this important analytical step of category assignment, Table 7.1 presents each of the developed categories with two titles as anchor examples from the examined literature lists.

The completed coding was then evaluated using descriptive statistics to convert the textual information into a numerical format. Thus, an overview of the distribution of the categories in the material was created (cf. Reinders & Gniewosz, 2015). The potential limitations of this approach are the contextual setting of the reading lists and the fact that there are more influences with impact on a professions' knowledge base and practice than academic studies. However, reading lists regarded as means to interdisciplinary knowledge integration can be a part of a broader conceptualisation of educational changes from the studied time period. The distributions found, alongside the results of the first part of the analysis, were further processed by tabulation (cf. Cohen et al., 2018, p. 679), which allowed the following presentation of results.

7.5 Results

Starting with the first layer of analysis, the frequency of words of the literature lists, the following results can be concluded.

From 1977 to 1989, the most frequent word in the titles from the literature lists of the Basic part, the Speech specialisation, and the Development specialisation, was, in all three cases "child" (*barn*), or grammatical forms of it (*barns*, *barnet*, *barnets*). This can be interpreted as a marking of the target group of the work from SETs. For the Basic part, the next most frequent words were "new" (*nya*), then "care book" (*omsorgsboken*), and the fourth most common word "developmentally disabled" (*utvecklingsstörd*) or forms of it (*utvecklingsstörds, utvecklingsstörda, utvecklingsstördas*). For the Speech specialisation, the following most frequent word was "language" (*språk, språket, språkets*). For the Development specialisation, the second most frequent word was "development" (*utveckling*), followed closely by

"developmentally disabled" (*utvecklingsstörda*). In both specialisations, the title is thus also a reflection of what the content focus appears to be.

In Table 7.2, the ranking of the most frequent words for the period 1977 to 1989 can be seen in even more detail, showing the ten most frequent words regarding each part of the SEN teacher education.

For the period 2008 to 2020, the most frequent words within the titles in the literature lists for the Basic part were "school" (*skolan*, *skolans*, *school*, *schools*), followed by "disability" (*funktionshinder*, *disabilities*, *disability*, *disabled*). The fourth most frequent word was "education" (*education, educational, educator*) and with the same frequency the Swedish word for "pupil" (*elever*, *elevers*). It is also noticeable that right behind it, the word "inclusive" (*inclusion*, *inclusive*) appears. The word "child", found in the top position in the previous analysis, is also found here among the most frequent words, but in sixth position behind "inclusive", and the appearance in the

Table 7.1 Anchor examples of the assignment of literature to the developed categories

Category	Anchor Example 1	Anchor Example 2
Psycho-medical	Utvecklingspsykologiska perspektiv på barns uppväxt (Translation: Developmental psychology perspectives on childhood development) Asklan, L. & Sataoen, SO. (2003). Utvecklingspsykologiska perspektiv på barns uppväxt. Stockholm: Liber Material: General part, 2008	Nervsystemets fysiologi (Translation: The physiology of the nervous system) Ottoson, D. (1970). Nervsystemets fysiologi. Natur och Kultur Material: Speech specialisation, 1977/1978
Pedagogy/instructional method	Perspektiv på specialpedagogik (Translation: Perspectives on special education) Nilholm, C. (2003). Perspektiv på specialpedagogik. Lund: Studentlitteratur. Material: General part, 2008	Didaktiska samtal i specialpedagogiska kontexter: en studie av undervisning i grundläggande svenska och matematik (Translation: Didactic conversations in special education contexts: a study of teaching basic Swedish and mathematics) Eriksson Gustavsson, A-L., & Samuelsson, J. (2007). Didaktiska samtal i specialpedagogiska kontexter: en studie av undervisning i grundläggande svenska och matematik. Linköpings universitet: IBL. LiU-PEK 246 Material: Mathematics specialisation, 2014

(continued)

Table 7.1 (continued)

Category	Anchor Example 1	Anchor Example 2
Sociological	Normalisering och kategorisering. Om handikappideologi och välfärdspolitik i teori och praktik för personer med utvecklingsstörning (Translation: Normalisation and categorisation. On disability ideology and welfare policy in theory and practice for people with intellectual disabilities) Tideman, M. (2000). Normalisering och kategorisering. Om handikappideologi och välfärdspolitik i teori och praktik för personer med utvecklingsstörning. Lund: Studentlitteratur Material: General part, 2008	Samhället och den utvecklingsstörde (Society and the developmentally disabled) Riksförbundet FUB. (1986). Samhället och den utvecklingsstörde. Larssons förlag Material: General part, 1987
Organisational	Särskolans integrering i den vanliga skolan (Translation: Integration of the special school into the mainstream school) Söder, M. (1979). Särskolans integrering i den vanliga skolan. Slutrapport Soc inst Uppsala Material: Development specialisation, 1987	Skolans kontrollregim - ett kontraproduktivt system för styrning?: en antologi (Translation: The control regime of the school—a counterproductive system of governance?: an anthology) Forsberg, E. & Wallin, E. (2006). Skolans kontrollregim - ett kontraproduktivt system för styrning?: en antologi. Stockholm: HLS förlag Material: General part, 2008
Scientific method	Samhällsvetenskapliga metoder (Translation: Methods in social sciences) Bryman, A. (2006). Samhällsvetenskapliga metoder. Malmö: Liber Material: General part, 2008	Forskningshandboken: för småskaliga forskningsprojekt inom samhällsvetenskaperna (Translation: The research handbook: for small-scale research projects in the social sciences) Denscombe, M. (2016). *Forskningshandboken: för småskaliga forskningsprojekt inom samhällsvetenskaperna. (3., rev. och uppdaterade uppl.)* Lund: Studentlitteratur Material: General part, 2018

Table 7.2 Ten most frequent words in the literature lists for the basic part, the speech specialisation, and the development specialisation from 1977 to 1989

	Basic part	Speech specialisation	Development specialisation
1	Barns [children's]	Barn [child]	Barns [children's]
2	Nya [new]	Språk [language]	Utveckling [development]
3	Omsorgsboken [care book]	Människan [the human]	Utvecklingsstörda [developmentally disabled]
4	Utvecklingsstörd [developmentally disabled]	Stamning [stuttering]	Handikappade [handicapped]
5	Elever [pupils]	Svenska [Swedish]	Vi [we]
6	Samhället [society]	Tal [speech]	Psykiskt [mentally]
7	Utveckling [development]	Byggnad [building]	Föräldrars [parents']
8	Skolan [the school]	Fonetik [phonetics]	Första [first]
9	Behandlingsarbete [treatment work]	Foniatri [phoniatrics]	Inte [not]
10	Bok [book]	Framställning [presentation]	Psykologi [psychology]

ranking of the word "perspective" (*perspektiv*) in ninth place is also noteworthy (see Table 7.3).

In the Language specialisation, for the timespan 2013 to 2020, "reading" (*read*, *reading*) was the most frequent word, followed by "assessment" (*bedömning*), and again the word "child" (*barn, barns*). The fourth most frequent word within the literature list of this specialisation was "mapping" (*kartläggning*). As in the general part of the education, the word "perspective" (*perspektiv*) appeared again in the most frequent words in the literature lists, here even on fifth position (see Table 7.3).

Investigating the Development specialisation for the timespan 2014 to 2020, the word that appeared most was "child" (*barn*, *children*), closely followed by "communication" (*kommunikation*, *communication*). The third most common word was "disabilities" (*disabilities*, *disability*), and the following three words seem to specify the focus on developmental interest, as they are "intellectual" (*intellectual*), "study" (*studie*, *studies*, *study*), and "learning" (*learning*). Another group of words in the frequency list of this specialisation could be classified as relating to the work of SETs or their workplace. These words are "primary special school" (*grundsärskolan*, *grundsärskolans*), "special school" (*särskolan*, *särskolans*), and "teaching" (*undervisning*) (see Table 7.3).

Investigating the literature list of the Mathematics specialisation for the timespan 2014 to 2020, one word is predominant. "Mathematic" (*matematik, mathematical, mathematics*) appeared 74 times in total, while the next common word "learning" (*lärande*) appeared 27 times in total. As for the Language specialisation, "assessment" (*bedömning*) was one of the most frequent words, here in third position. Subsequently, the words "perspective" (*perspektiv*), "children" (children), and "tutoring" (*handledning*) are ranked in fourth, fifth, and sixth places, respectively. See again

Table 7.3 Ten most frequent words in the literature lists for the basic part, the language specialisation, the development specialisation, and the mathematics specialisation from 2008 to 2020

	Basic part	Language specialisation	Development specialisation	Mathematics specialisation
1	Skolan [the school]	Reading	Barn [child/children]	Matematik [mathematics]
2	Funktionshinder [disability]	Assessment	Kommunikation [communication]	Lärande [learning]
3	Education	Barns [children's]	Disabilities	Bedömning [assessment]
4	Elever [pupils/students]	Kartläggning [mapping]	Intellectual	Perspektiv [perspective]
5	Inclusive	Perspektiv [perspective]	Study	Children
6	Barns [children´s]	Working	Learning	Handledning [tutorial]
7	Lärande [learning]	Språket [the language]	Grundsärskolan [primary special school]	Del [part]
8	Specialpedagogik [special education]	Stöd [support]	Undervisning [teaching]	Matematikdidaktiska [mathematics didactic]
9	Perspektiv [perspective]	Särskilt [special]	Särskolan [special school]	Number
10	Allmänna [general]	Tidig [early]	AKK abbreviation for "Alternativ och Kompletterande Kommunikation" [augmentative and alternative communication]	Power

Table 7.3 for an overview of the ten most frequent words of the period from 2008 to 2020.

Some assumptions can already be derived from these results. Firstly, comparing the most frequent words from both timespans, it emerges that the uniform focus in the earlier form of the qualification gives way to a greater variation in content and focus within the re-established SET training. It also becomes apparent that the list which previously consisted only of Swedish words, later also includes terms in English among the most frequent words. Another interesting fact is the already outlined appearance of "perspective" during the later timespan. Both points together can be read as an indicator of a growing academisation of the SET training.

Looking into the second layer of the analysis, the paradigmatic contribution of the literature, the following can be stated. Beginning again with the findings from the earlier period, the most presented paradigm in the literature list of the Basic part is the *psycho-medical* category, with more than 40% of the total. The second

most significant part is the *sociological* category, which represents one quarter of the assignments, and the *pedagogy/instructional method* category one-fifth of the assignments. The *organisational* category represents less than 10% of the distributions, and in the Basic part overall, no *scientific method* literature is included.

In the literature of the Speech specialisation, the *psycho-medical* category again constitutes the largest category, with more than 50% of the distributions and the *pedagogy/instructional method* category (15.96%). The *sociological* category represents less than 10% of the literature and the *organisational* and *scientific method* categories do not appear at all in the literature of the Speech specialisation.

For the literature of the Development specialisation, the *psycho-medical* category is again the most represented with 376 out of 699 distributions (53.79%). The *sociological* category with 23.32% is the second largest category. Within the literature of the Development specialisation, the *pedagogy/instructional method* and the *organisational* category make up less than 10% each, while the *scientific method* literature even less than 1%, with only 3 out of 699 distributions.

For the literature of the SET training during the timespan from 1977 to 1988, a clear focus on *psycho-medical* literature can be found, alongside an almost complete absence of literature from the category *scientific method*, both independent of the specific part of the SEN teacher education.

Concerning the paradigmatic distribution of the literature regarding the SET training from the later period (2008–2020), the following results can be presented. For the first semester, the general part of the education, one-third of the literature could be allocated to the *pedagogy/instructional method* category, making it the most represented category. The *psycho-medical* category makes up 20.59%, the *sociological* category 17.23%, and the *scientific method* category 15.97%. The *organisational* category still reaches 12.61%.

Among the literature of the Language specialisation, the *pedagogy/instructional method* category also remains the strongest (63.64%). The second largest category is *psycho-medical*, which reaches slightly more than 20%. To the *scientific method* category can then be assigned another 10% of the literature within the Language specialisation, while the *sociological* and *organisational* categories both account for less than 4% each.

A similar picture can be found for the literature of the Development specialisation, where 40.3% of the literature could be assigned to the *pedagogy/instructional method* category and 28.36% to the *psycho-medical* category. The third largest part of the literature could be located within the *sociological* category, followed by the *organisational* and the *scientific method* category which both include less than 10% of the overall literature.

The comparison of the distributions from the two periods reveals a shift over time. The comparison of the two general parts of the qualification, depicted in Table 7.4, shows that the share of *pedagogy/instructional method* literature increases, while the share of *psycho-medical* literature decreases. In addition, literature in the *scientific method* category is included in the later qualification.

Table 7.4 Comparison of the categoric distribution of literature of the basic part of the SEN teacher education from 1977 to 1989 with the Basic part of the SEN teacher education from 2008 to 2020

Basic part 1977–1989 Total: 112 = 100%	Basic part 2008–2020 Total: 238 = 100%
Psycho-medical 44.86%	Pedagogy/instructional method 32.35%
Sociological 27.46%	Psycho-medical 21.85%
Pedagogy/instructional method 19.64%	Sociological 17.23%
Organisational 8.04%	Scientific method 15.97%
	Organisational 12.61%

Table 7.5 Comparison of the categoric distribution of literature of the development specialisation of the SEN teacher education from 1977 to 1989 with the development specialisation of the SEN teacher education from 2014 to 2020

Development specialisation 1977–1988 Total: 699 = 100%	Development specialisation 2014–2020 Total: 134 = 100%
Psycho-medical 61.79%	Pedagogy/instructional method 40.30%
Sociological 26.48%	Psycho-medical 28.36%
Pedagogy/instructional method 7.58%	Sociological 18.66%
Organisational 3.72%	Organisational 6.72%
Scientific method 0.43%	Scientific method 5.97%

A similar picture can be drawn for the Development specialisation. While in the earlier Development specialisation, the literature provides a clear focus on the *psycho-medical* category, and the *scientific method* literature is nearly absent, whereas in the later Development specialisation, *pedagogy/instructional method* literature is more present, and the *scientific method* literature comes into focus as well (see Table 7.5).

Finally, the two specialisations in Speech and Language, respectively, can be compared. Again, the emphasis within the course literature shifts over time from the *psycho-medical* category to the *pedagogy/instructional method*, and the proportion of *scientific method* literature increases from 0 to 10% (see Table 7.6).

Table 7.6 Comparison of the categoric distribution of literature of the speech specialisation of the SEN teacher education from 1977 to 1989 with the language specialisation of the SEN teacher education from 2013 to 2020

Speech specialisation 1977–1988 Total: 94 = 100%	Language specialisation 2013–2020 Total: 176 = 100%
Psycho-medical 66.38%	Pedagogy/instructional method 63.64%
Pedagogy/instructional methodical 20.96%	Psycho-medical 21.02%
Sociological 12.66%	Scientific method 10.23%
Organisational 0%	Sociological 3.41%
Scientific method 0%	Organisational 1.70%

Thus, a paradigmatic shift can be observed for the SET training as a whole. For the observed time, the earlier qualification shows a clear concentration on the *psycho-medical* category. For the re-established SET training, the focus throughout the programme lies on the *pedagogy/instructional method* category. The further distribution of literature can be interpreted as more dispersed between the categories, coupled with a stronger weighting of *scientific method* literature compared to the earlier period. As a consequence, the growing importance of the category *scientific method* can be understood as an academisation of the SET training, a point that can also be strengthened by the first part of the analysis. Furthermore, the shift from *psycho-medical* to *pedagogy/instructional method* literature, indicates that the SETs were previously trained more to become psycho-medical professionals, while recently they have been trained to become pedagogues or educational instructors. Additionally, the growing dispersion among the different categories can be interpreted as a shift in the knowledge to be imparted from depth to breadth.

7.6 Discussion

In this chapter, we have investigated historical dynamics in the education of special education teachers in the national context of Sweden. By comparing what SET students are required to read in their academic education over different periods of time in Sweden's largest SNE teaching programme, we were able to show how the profession of SETs has changed over time.

The argument goes that special needs education as well as teacher education as a whole are steered by the choice of literature our students must read. Lists of compulsory reading are therefore fertile sources for showing dynamics in teacher education over time. In other words, we investigated the formal body of knowledge as an educational element of professionalisation (Harries-Jenkins, 1970). Thereby, the body of knowledge, as a system of basic propositions, comprises the focus of interest of the profession and guides the rationalisation of situations of the professionals. As the body of knowledge is provided through formal academic education, the course literature plays a significant role (Harries-Jenkins, 1970). Consequently, the change in the body of knowledge can be interpreted as a movement in the process of professionalisation of SETs.

A similar movement can be discerned in the modes of knowledge within the field of special education, explained by the appearance of the term "perspective", which can be understood as a way of handling competing and overlapping paradigms. In our case, we can track the nature of the SET profession as shifting from having a medical but very explicit character in the 1980s, to a much more educational, but also much more "blurry" nature. This ambiguity affects both the profession's mode and body of knowledge and makes it difficult to determine the object of the SNE profession. In other words, the SET's academic identity has shifted from that of a medically oriented specialist with a certain literacy in disability and students at risk, to that of a generalist in all risks that might occur in regular schooling, in particular

with regard to the issue of academic goal achievement. Moreover, SETs are expected to work with their professional body of knowledge in a way that is determined by scientific method.

We argue that this change can be related to global trends in mass education. On the one hand, there is a movement towards an inclusive school for all, which became prominent in the 1994 declaration of Salamanca, and sought the democratisation of working for a "school for all". On the other hand, there is the rapidly growing focus of school systems on standards and standardised testing, in the aftermath of OECD PISA (Hamre et al., 2018). This has resulted in increasing challenges for public education, where standards and standardisation have resulted in a shifting of the mass schooling project towards a strong emphasis on "goal achievement for *all*" (Ainscow, 2016).

The worldwide trend in special needs education, in which the fundamental understanding of disability in terms of a psycho-medical model has shifted towards a systemic social model, can be connected to inclusion as the leading educational policy in countries such as Sweden, which in turn is supported by various international declarations such as Salamanca or the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Boban & Hinz, 2009; Takala et al., 2019a, 2019b). Our results find this international trend reflected in the course literature of ongoing SETs in Sweden.

Finally, what does our findings have for practical value for the academic training for future teachers and special teachers? Our historical analyses in a certain national context illustrate for students that *what* they shall read as obligatory course literature has both time and space dimensions. It depends on historical and geographical contexts, who has the right to go to which school connoted with the right to learn what by which means (Goodson, 1993). Developing a critical stance towards the dynamic nature of its own profession and its knowledge body will contribute to the development of dynamic and critical educators, who actively can enact the policies, put on them, in the future (Priestley et al., 2012).

7.7 Conclusion

The model, derived from Skidmore (1996) illustrates professional changes in the paradigmatic distribution over time. The change from a psycho-medical paradigm towards a wider and more educational paradigm can also be seen in the context of previous findings of a shift in content focus in Nordic and international SET education, also away from a psycho-medical approach and towards a broader educational one (Haustätter & Kuippis, 2015; Takala et al., 2019a, 2019b). As with studies especially within the educational field, the design of the current study is subject to limitations. First it's focused on changes within the academic education of special teachers when in fact change depends on a number of causes, for instance increased globalisation, advancements in technology, and developments in research into teaching and learning approaches (Biesta, 2010). Second, a more thorough examination of the

rationale for policy and curriculum changes may contribute to a deeper understanding of influencing factors concerning academic reading lists supporting a school for all. Since there remains a pedagogical-instructional research gap within the field, further research could examine the content of SET education in other national contexts. In this way, it would be apt to investigate further the extent to which the changes found can be attributed to the influence of international policy, or whether alternative changes are triggered by the same policies in different contexts and education systems. Within the Swedish, or even international context, a closer look at education and the knowledge it imparts should also be aimed for.

The usage of literature lists and our method of analysis also limit the significance of our conclusions. With regard to the first part of the analysis, it must therefore be noted that counting word frequencies, as has already been stated, is done under the premise that the high frequency of appearance of a word can be regarded as an indicator of the word's importance. This deliberately ignores the fact that one word can have several context-dependent meanings (Weber, 1990). For the second part of the analysis, possible limitations could be that the Basic Content Analysis only works with manifested material and cannot delve deeper into a more latent level (Drisko & Maschi, 2015). It might therefore be interesting for further research to investigate the body of knowledge of SETs from the two training periods studied by surveying the SETs themselves. Even if a text was on the literature list during the training, this does not necessarily mean that the text was actually read. There is also the possibility that a text was read during training but was discussed critically or as problematic within the university. Such a scenario cannot be represented in an evaluation such as the one presented here.

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Chapter 8
Leadership Preparation and Development Policies in England, Sweden and Russia: Exploring Policy and Practice

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Abstract This chapter explores Teacher Education as an ongoing professional trajectory, exploring the implications for both the policy and practice teacher professional identity, and how this has developed its later stages in career trajectory, in three different nation-states of the UK, Sweden and Russia. Here we choose to focus on the different national interpretations of leadership preparation and development, and the links between this and the support of Principals in schools. In the UK over the last decade, the development offered to senior staff has been led by an increasingly marketised approach, which has steadily moved further away from academic expertise and Higher Education qualifications. In contrast, the system in Sweden has thoroughly maintained its links in leadership preparation inside universities, building a rapport between senior staff in schools and their counterparts in university education departments. While in the Russian system these HEI links are also maintained, yet the national framework under which they operate is only now in its embryonic stages.

Keywords Leadership preparation and development (LPD) · School leadership in England · Principal development in Sweden · Russian principal development programmes · School trusts · Policy and practice

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8.1 Introduction

This chapter compares the Leadership Preparation and Development (LPD) policies of school principals in England, Sweden and Russia, giving an overview of where these three nation-states currently are, with regard to their competing domestic, national and international pressures. The literature in the two last decades has revealed a variety of ways to foster the professional development of school leaders around the world (Huber & Muijs, 2010; Jensen, 2016; Lumby et al., 2008; MacBeath & Townsend, 2011; Young & Crow, 2016; Young et al., 2009). Patterns of leadership preparation and development are highly variable across national contexts, ranging from prescriptive mandatory programmes, to ad hoc 'on the job' learning in many countries (Bush, 2018). In many countries, the development of school leaders is high on the agenda of politicians of different political wings, as this chapter will go on to demonstrate. At the beginning of the new century, there seemed to be a broad international agreement about the need for school leaders be required to improve teaching (Huber & Muijs, 2010). While in some countries discussions of school leader development are mainly rhetoric, elsewhere real actions have been taken to provide important development opportunities for school leaders (Bush, 2018; Huber & Muijs, 2010) even if these have moved away from university provision, as in England.

Huber & Muijs (2010) found there is a trend towards requiring participation in time-consuming programmes as a preparation for leadership responsibilities in schools. The combination of course-based learning at colleges and universities with experience-based learning in workshops and at the workplace was also identified in their study. Huber also noted the trend of extending short courses into extensive programmes and distinguishing between different phases in school leaders' careers when designing opportunities to learn. In accordance with a new and strengthened position of school leaders, professional training and professional development has been placed more highly on the agenda, with the aim of professionalisation of school leadership (Bøje & Frederiksen, 2019). There are various discussions about how best to train future and existing school leaders (Huber & Muijs, 2010; Jensen, 2016), and here we outline which different ways have been taken across three diverse countries.

Based on the existing body of literature on the professional development needs of school principals, Pashiardis and Brauckmann (2009) hold that several relevant suggestions arise. Firstly, professional development should continue after appointment in order to support principals in facing the diverse challenges they may encounter at school. Secondly, there is a need to establish training provision in relation to the different stages of leadership and after leaders have been evaluated in a formative way. Thirdly, some specific training needs have been uncovered (Pashiardis & Brauckmann, 2008); for example, the professional development needs of new and experienced principals are not identical. Pashiardis and Brauckmann (2009) underpin the importance of the need to establish training provision in relation to the different stages of leadership, i.e. new and experienced principals. As a result, differences related to the principals' career stage must also be accounted for in any training schemes. This is in line with Bush (2018), who suggests that a better approach

to principals' induction is to regard it as an ongoing process. Bush suggests that such a process might have six phases: *succession planning, leadership preparation, recruitment and selection, induction, mentoring and in-service development*. In-service development in terms of leadership learning as a career-long process.

According to a number of researchers (Bush & Glover, 2004; Pashiardis & Brauckmann, 2008), leadership preparation and development should take into account the local contexts within which leaders operate. Professional development can then be provided by a wide array of sources, such as universities, professional associations, governmental agencies and other organisations. Partnerships between various organisations may also enhance the training impact on school leaders. Boren et al. (2017) conclude that principals must be continuous lifelong learners if they are to keep up with the demands of today's complex and ever-changing educational environment. Boren et al. argue that principals can receive critical support if districts and universities harness their collective knowledge and resources to provide appropriate and effective professional development to them at every career stage. This chapter starts with the leadership preparation and development policies in England, moves on to Sweden and lastly looks at the developments in the Russian system, giving an overview of where these three nation-states currently are. A conclusion compares and contrasts the three systems.

8.2 England

In the UK, education is a devolved policy; each of the four nations has their own system, the focus here being England. Leadership preparation and development in England is now intertwined with system leadership (Hargreaves, 2010) and the structural reform (Greany & Higham, 2018) that have occurred in the middle tier of school administration, both of which have developed significantly within the last decade (Bubb et al., 2019). Therefore, the first section of this chapter that addresses professional leadership qualifications for teachers in England, looks at the context in terms of how schools are administered and services provided, before moving on to an examination of these qualifications.

8.2.1 System Leadership

Emerging from Hargreaves' (2010) notion of system leadership, of organisations assisting each other, in a 'self-improving school-led system' (SISS), school leaders' roles and development have significantly altered. Despite 'largely undefined in official texts, the SISS agenda has become an overarching narrative for schools' policy since 2010' (Greany & Higham, 2018, p. 10) and has had diverse effects. System Leaders were defined by Hopkins and Higham (2007, p. 147) as leaders who 'support the improvement of other schools as well as their own', although they were perceived

at the time as being exclusively headteachers. The Department for Education (DfE) considers all those who work in senior roles in education in England, to be System Leaders. The term has gained more in usage since roles and responsibilities have become less clearly delineated, to cover not only individual actors such as national leaders of education (NLEs) (Harris et al., 2021), and Evidence Leads in Education (ELEs) but also the organisational bodies and their representatives of such agents as (the now de-designated) Teaching School Alliances (TSAs), Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) and Regional School Commissioners (RSCs) (Greany & Higham, 2018). System leadership has become normative, whereby System Leaders are constructed as de facto policy ambassadors (Courtney & McGinity, 2020) and may well act as instruments of government rather than leaders of their profession (Cousin, 2019). These instruments of government have, effectively, had their reach expanded through the creation of Teaching School Hubs (TSHs) from September 2021, as these are now responsible for the delivery of teacher training and leadership development.

8.2.2 The Changing Nature of the Middle Tier

The middle tier, 'that space in the system where the governance and administration of education are enacted locally, take account of local circumstances and need, and recognize that decisions in relation to one school have consequences for others' (Woods & Simkins, 2014, p. 325), has seen the most significant change in education services in England since 2010. Prior to 2010, the vast majority of schools were administered by a geographically based, democratically elected Local Authority (LA). Following the Academies Act of 2010 there has been a rapid increase in academy schools, ones that do not belong to the LA but via a not-for-profit Trust, operating as Single Academy Trusts (SATs) or Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) which may be local or nationally based; creating a two-tier dual system of maintained schools and academy schools. In 2010 there were only 203 Academy schools (Gibson, 2018) but schools were either persuaded or enforced to become academised to the extent that a MATification (Gibson & Outhwaite, 2022) resulted in a situation that by January 2021 in 39% of all schools being academies and over half of all pupils (52%) were attending them (Department for Education, 2021); the governments preferred governance model for all schools now being the MAT.

The notion of SISS and system leadership has integrated with MATs but with a plethora of actors involved, with some 1200 MATs operating 7600 academies, 1500 government designated 'system leader' schools, 1500 SATs, eight RSCs along a range of school types such as Free Schools and Studio Schools, etc. (Greany, 2022). This reform has been characterised as 'chaotic centralisation' (Greany & Higham, 2018), 'the muddle in the middle' (Gibson & Outhwaite, 2022) and a 'dysfunctional fragmentation of the local systems' resulting in the 'disappearance of (or change to) the middle-tier' (Crawford et al., 2020, p. 2). Bubb et al. (2019) categorise 'middle tier' roles in four broad areas: finance; accountability; access and the development of people; it is in the context above that the service of people development is provided.

8.2.3 National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) Inside This Dual System

If school leadership has a 'significant effect' on the quality of teaching and learning within a school (Leithwood et al., 2020), then a preparation for the role and development within it are essential necessities. This is true for a variety of leadership roles within a school, not solely for principalship or headship. The case for such LPD can be argued from not only improving the organisation but also succession planning, talent retention and even that employers have a 'moral obligation' to develop employees (Bush, 2018). As leadership preparation and development has shifted to lie with the MATs, and the TSHs, the nature of such knowledge may also become restricted. Gibson (2018) found in one small-scale study that the LPD was based around the immediate needs of the MAT, was functional knowledge and there were particular problems due to the MAT being geographically dispersed.

LPD in the twenty-first century in England has been dominated by the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) which opened in 2000 and became the provider of a range of qualifications, The National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) being the most important. Three other qualifications were introduced: The National Professional Qualification for Middle Leaders (NPQML); The National Professional Qualification for Senior Leaders (NPQSL) and The National Professional Qualification for Executive Leadership (NPQEL). The NPQH became mandatory for new headteachers in 2009, however following a change of government, the mandatory status was abolished in 2012. The NCSL also lost control of these qualifications which were given to regional licencees (Bush & Montecinos, 2019). There was a decline in the NCSL (which had been renamed the National College for Teaching and Leadership NCTL, in 2013) which was then formally closed in 2018. Bush (2009, p. 387) labels the first decade of the twenty-first century as leadership development being 'nationalised', while Gibson (2018, p. 92) contrasts the second decade as it being 'privatised'.

HEIs had a contractual role in the development and delivery of the NPQs, but as the direction of travel of government policy has changed they have been outsourced to third sector 'charitable' organisations (known as the 'Big 9') as part of their reform, that often make limited links back to HEIs, as their staff are not employed by that sector. This privatisation of leadership preparation is part of an ongoing removal of HEI from the teacher education landscape generally, as highlighted in the Education White Paper (DfE, 2022). There are 9 particular organisations which are now controlling LPD in England: Ambition Institute; Best Practice Network (which manages the Outstanding Leaders Partnership); The Church of England; Education Development Trust; Harris Federation; Leadership Learning South East; Teacher Development Trust; Teach First and UCL Institute of Education (Gibbons, 2021). The reforms also include changing NPQML into 3 distinct new NPQs and an additional two new NPQs, generating a suite of 8 NPQS in total, which have been delivered by these new providers only, from September 2021.

There was a flurry of initial research into these qualifications (for example, Rhodes et al., 2009; Simkins et al., 2009), however there has been little in recent years. Simkins et al.'s (2009) data 'showed high positive outcomes in relation to personal development, impact on the school generally, the enhancement of school's capacity for further development and, perhaps surprisingly, on a range of pupil outcomes' (p. 4). While, in the same year, Rhodes et al. (2009) concluded that 'Although the majority of respondents perceived themselves well prepared by NPQH… role conceptualization via professional alignment is vulnerable …and may limit the transition to headship' (p. 462). A more recent study (Leornardi et al., 2017) was highly positive concluding from their larger government-funded mixed-methods longitudinal study that, 'The findings suggested high levels of satisfaction with the Leadership Curriculum at both the level of individual modules and overall qualifications' (p. 9).

The changing nature of this leadership preparation and development provision in England appears to be about the development of a very perfunctory knowledge versus a more emancipatory knowledge-based approach which had led senior school staff to higher education qualifications such as Masters and Doctorates rather than with the de-professionalisation of, and de-skilling of, teaching and leading that we are currently witnessing. The erosion of the HEI involvement, the closure of the NCTL (NCSL) and the move to system agents as providers, are likely—at best—to fail to deliver educational leaders who are capable of developing the system, but—at worst—sadly only likely to produce school leaders who are complicit in the government-led neoliberal English education agenda.

8.3 Sweden

Sweden is a country with an established welfare system prioritising education and the overall standard in the educational system is good, with both pre-school and adult education having a good reputation globally (Ärlestig et al., 2016). At the same time, Sweden has during the last years faced declining student results in international comparative studies such as PIRLS, PISA, TIMSS (Blossing et al., 2015). Partly as a consequence of this, the pre-service preparation programme for aspiring principals in Sweden is changing. This section of the chapter problematises the changes Swedish government policy suggested regarding professional development and trajectory for teachers and principals. We first present the ongoing changes in the Swedish educational system with a focus on the teacher shortage and government policies response. This is followed by a short outline of the professional development and trajectory in Sweden for teachers and principals with a specific focus on the leadership preparation programmes. Finally, some concluding remarks are drawn about the professional development in Sweden concerning leadership preparation for aspiring principals and principals.

Sweden (as in the other Nordic countries) has during recent decades been affected by the changes brought about in the wake of globalisation (Blossing et al., 2014). Swedish schools have turned from previously characteristic social democratic regimes to neoliberal policy regimes. The move has been underpinned by institutions such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Blossing et al., 2014; Lundahl, 2005). In Sweden, a downward trend in students' progress has been shown in international meta-evaluations (e.g. PIRLS, PISA and TIMSS), which is in line with all Nordic countries except Finland (Blossing et al., 2015). This, in turn, has created a pressure for reform, which has placed great demands on every level in the Swedish educational system (Blossing et al., 2015).

During 2015, the OECD pointed to the need for more comprehensive strategies for the Swedish school (OECD, 2015). Based on that, Swedish government policy presented a proposal for an overall strategy for increased knowledge and equivalence, with the establishment of a national professional programme for teachers and school leaders to promote teachers' and school leaders' professional development. The developed proposal resulted in a suggestion of a programme with two tracks, for teachers and principals, which aims to increase the attractiveness of the teaching profession and strengthen the pedagogical leadership by creating conditions for teachers', pre-school teachers' and school leaders' professional development throughout their professional lives (Government Offices of Sweden, 2021; SOU, 2017:35, 2018:17). This means that Swedish government policy has placed an increased focus to strengthen teachers' as well as school leaders' professional development. It's also a way of addressing the shortage of teachers in Sweden.

Swedish schools face major recruitment needs and are currently lacking qualified teachers for all age ranges (Bertilsson, 2018; Boström et al., 2022). The teacher shortage in Sweden is, according to Bertilsson (2018), a result of larger cohorts of students, increased retirement among teachers and more teachers leaving the teaching profession. Boström et al. (2022) argue that the shortage of teachers in Sweden can be traced back at least 50 years, and the causes are many and complex including deteriorating conditions, low status for the profession and New Public Management as a management philosophy. The possibilities for solving the problems in the long term are several: higher salaries; better working conditions; strengthened professional identity; higher status and flexible ways to study to become a teacher. Based on the findings of a study on the teacher shortage in Sweden, Boström et al. (2022) suggest, among other things, a thorough analysis of different reforms related to teacher education (structural reforms, curriculum reforms and teacher education reforms) is needed in order to gain genuine knowledge of the outcomes and consequences of the reforms, to obtain guidance for possible future reforms.

The quality of teaching is often stated as the most decisive factor for students' learning (Hattie, 2009), which in turn means that teacher's ability to professional development is a central issue for the future development of Swedish schools. Insufficient competence maintenance for the teaching and school leadership professions and lack of conditions for professional development is also given in different Swedish

governmental policy documents schools (e.g. SOU, 2017:35). A possible professional career trajectory for a Swedish teacher is to become a principal, which is a part of the proposal for the national professional programme for teachers.

To transfer from teacher to a competent principal requires both knowledge and experience (Brauckmann et al., 2020; Jerdborg, 2022). Demands on what to accomplish comes from several levels of governance and actors; the national/political level, national agencies, school owners such as municipalities and independent schoolboards as well as teachers, students, parents and the general public. Often, individual principals have higher expectations on themselves in relation to what is expected from other actors (Brauckmann et al., 2020). In addition, accountability policies, decentralisation requirements and demographic shifts have been found to affect the content and foci of leadership preparation programmes in many countries. This is evident in a renewed emphasis on assessment and organisational capacity building, but also in the alignment of preparation with results-driven policies of standardisation and accountability (Ylimaki & Jacobson, 2013). We cannot predict how far the enablement of stronger professional self-governance, as is intended by accountability and autonomy, is framed by destabilisation (Brauckmann et al., 2020). Insufficient attention has been paid to the genesis of environmental conditions, such as historical, social, political and societal contexts; conditions of system structure; and space for actions and decisions to be taken (Brauckmann et al., 2020).

Politicians and policy-makers increasingly recognise that problems and challenges that arise at the school level should be solved there. These political expectations of delegating more responsibility to the individual school stand in stark contrast to the weak knowledge that exists about how new public management can be translated into successful leadership practices (Brauckmann et al., 2020).

8.3.1 Leadership Preparation Programmes in Sweden for Aspiring Principals and Principals

In Sweden, the geographical area's local authority is responsible for employing principals and the state contributes with their basic training (Ärlestig et al., 2016). The National Principal Training Programme is currently hosted by seven universities at the request of The Swedish National Education Agency and is based on an agreed national document that coordinates their expectations. This makes it possible to meet expectations from several levels and create a common knowledge framework for all principals in Sweden (Brauckmann et al., 2020). Principals' formal professional development mainly consists of the mandatory national principal leadership programme.

However, Sweden's principal preparation and training differs in relation to many other countries, since the Swedish National Principal Training Programme is offered for the first time when the participant has a position as a principal, pre-school principal or deputy principal (Brauckmann et al., 2020). Some appointed principals have gone

through voluntary recruitment training or pre-service preparation programmes as teachers, and some have experience as teacher leaders, deputy principals or substitute principals, while others don't have any leadership training or experience (Ärlestig et al., 2016; Brauckmann et al., 2020). The current national programme is a 3-year mandatory in-service programme and consists of three courses: school law and governance, governing with objectives and results, and school leadership (Ärlestig et al., 2016).

In addition, different pre-service courses and programmes for aspiring principals exist at universities in Sweden. A pilot of a pre-service preparation programme for aspiring principals with 7.5 credits is underway during 2021–2022 (the programme is conducted by the same universities that provide the principal programme). The Swedish National Education Agency dictates the objectives that the programme shall meet, and the universities contextualise the programme. The programme is intended to be included in the proposed national professional programme for teachers' and principals' professional career trajectories (Government Offices of Sweden, 2021; SOU, 2018:17).

8.3.2 Concluding Remarks

In Sweden, the proposed national professional programme for teachers and principals may be a way to develop a national framework for professional learning, but there remain many unanswered questions about principals' professional learning. There is a lack of incentives and clear career steps for principals, as well as a much greater focus on teachers' professional learning than principals' professional learning. In relation to previous research on leadership development and professional learning, Sweden mirrors Bush's (2018) contention that professional learning is variable across national contexts (Bush, 2018) although in most countries the central government has a strong influence on the provision of leadership training (Jensen, 2016). How Sweden succeeds with the proposed national professional programme for aspiring principals and principals remains to be seen.

8.4 Russia

The professional training programme and preparation for the position of school principal is determined by the historical/political development and the prevailing context in Russia (Farkhatdinov et al., 2014; Kasprzhak, 2009). Recent years have seen changes in the core competencies required of school principals, as well as in the criteria by which they are evaluated (Antipina, 2011). The certification requirements for school principals and their career trajectories should be analysed and seen through the prism of two periods: before 2011 and after 2011. Prior to 2011, the path to the position of principal was a linear promotion, which required a candidate for

the position of principal to start his/her career as a teacher (Bolotov et al., 2011). At the time no qualification in Management or Educational Leadership was required, the profession was acquired within the school and was based on the personal life experience of a principal. Professional qualification was obtained within the school, where a career started from the position of teacher to deputy principal and then to principal. Schools were managed mostly by principals who were considered to be "a teacher of teachers" and not a manager or leader of the organisation (Bolotov et al., 2011). Therefore, traditionally school management was based on the personal life experience of a particular principal in the Russian educational system. This tendency is a legacy of the late Soviet period, when there were no special requirements for principals (starting from the 1978) nor were they obliged to undergo any training programme before their appointment for the position (Order of the Ministry of Education of the USSR of 20.02.78 N 24).

8.4.1 2011 Onwards

2011 became the transition point for the principal's certification, which required new competencies to be obtained by principals. The professional trajectory, has had major changes as a consequence of the shift to the trend where principals are held accountable for students' learning outcomes. The federal package of legislation, 'On Education in the Russian Federation', cements the role of the school principal as overseer of all the operations of a school: educational; social; scientific; and those related to facilities and budgeting (Federal law 'On education in Russian Federation' from 29.12.2012 N 273-FZ, part 5, article 51). Under the same law, the federal government transfers the right to determine the nature and frequency of principal's certification to the regional governments. Regional departments of education now have the power to establish or close a school. All this has played an important role in transforming the ways in which school principals are trained, hired, placed, certified and developed professionally (Harris et al., 2017).

Thus, requirements for the position and main responsibilities of a principal are declared in the Unified Qualifying Directory for the positions of leaders, experts and civil servants:

- a candidate has to have higher education (Specialist, Bachelor, Master's degree) in such fields as 'Management', 'Public Administration' or 'Personnel management' and 5-year pedagogical experience.
- higher education in any field and professional retraining programmes in such fields as 'Management', 'Economics' or 'Public Administration' and pedagogical or managerial experience not less than 5 years (Order dated August 26, 2010 N 761n (red. 31.05.2011) 'On the evaluation of the Unified Qualification Directory for the Positions of Leaders, experts and civil servants, section Qualification Characteristics of the Positions of Educational Workers').

New requirements have opened up new opportunities to enter into the school principal profession. Today's landscape of principals is diverse, and it has become possible to build a career not only within one school. Moreover, a candidate could become a principal having no experience in the educational field at all (Order dated August 26, 2010 N 761n (red. 31.05.2011) 'On the evaluation of the Unified Qualification Directory for the Positions of Leaders, experts and civil servants', section Qualification Characteristics of the Positions of Educational Workers').

With the endorsement of the law, the majority of principals urgently completed a master's degree or a professional retraining in the required fields which were not always related to the educational field (Bysik & Kasprzhak, 2016; TALIS, 2018). TALIS revealed that the majority of school principals (88% of those polled) undergo the required managerial training only after they have already taken up their positions (TALIS, 2018). Moreover, few of the candidates for school principal in Russia are aware of their impending promotion and are able to prepare for the position in advance (Bysik et al., 2015).

8.4.2 Personnel Reserve

Today, Russia has personnel reserve, so that every third candidate for the principal's position undertakes required qualifications in advance (TALIS, 2018). Certification for the principal's position is regulated by the order of the Ministry of Education of 2018 (Order of Ministry of Education 'On approval of the procedure and terms for the certification of candidates for the position of head of an educational organization, subordinated to the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation' 2018). Municipalities are entitled to decide on the certification procedure which comprises the organisation form of the procedure, aims, frequency, etc. The most significant differences among certification models of Russian regions are in the way the certification procedure is organised and the assessment tools used. Unfortunately, the information about the assessment criteria is not publicly available in the majority of regions (except Ekaterinburg, Kaliningrad, Vladivostok) (based on the analyses of regional Ministries of Education orders 'On approval of the procedure for certification of candidates for the position of heads and heads of state educational organizations'). This makes the procedure of certification complex and not transparent.

Despite the fact that Russia has the unified qualifying directory, there is no information on the required skills for the position (Order dated August 26, 2010 N 761n (red. 31.05.2011) 'On the evaluation of the Unified Qualification Directory for the Positions of Leaders, experts and civil servants, section Qualification Characteristics of the Positions of Educational Workers'). The striking point of the Russian education system is that no unified principal certification system, no professional standards for principals, no national qualification exists in the Russian education system. The first professional standards for principals were elaborated and adapted only in March 2022.

Table 8.1 Educational programmes for school principals by type

Specialised	Non-specialised courses
Master's programme (educational leadership, educational management)	Master's programmes (public administration, management)
Specialised professional retraining programmes (educational leadership, educational management)	Professional retraining programmes (public administration, management)
Project based programmes	
Seminars, conferences, internship/traineeship, online courses	
Professional training courses (such courses usually appear as a consequence of the reforms)	

The unified qualifying directory, the certification itself created a system, where the professional training and education for principals is not homogeneous. The landscape of educational programmes for school principals is not based on a unified perception and can be divided into two groups (Table 8.1): programmes for principal's position; professional training programmes, which principals are required to take no less than once in every three years (Federal law 'On education in Russian Federation' from 29.12.2012 N 273-FZ, Article 47).

As we can see from Table 8.1, existing programmes for principals can be divided into specialised and non-specialised courses, which in their place comprise a variety of preparation forms. The most common forms for Russian principals are: professional training courses (84%), which can be up to 160 academic hours, but range in modules of 36, 72 and 144 h; participation in conferences (82%); and online courses and seminars (75%) (TALIS, 2018).

According to TALIS 61% of principals take specialised Master's and professional retraining courses which are required for principals' certification, while others take courses that are not related to the education field directly (TALIS, 2018). This tendency creates a concern among educational scholars, as there is a need for principals not only having qualifications in pedagogy or general management, but also gaining qualifications in educational leadership (Bolotov et al., 2011). However, the choice of the programme often depends on the candidate's rationale. Thus, candidates, who aim at getting just a certificate for the position, will possibly prefer to take non-specialised professional retraining courses as such courses are not time-consuming and do not require a lot of effort.

Another important factor is the existing funding sources for training programmes for school leaders, which are key to their content and goals. Financing for principal training generally comes from regional budgets or in some cases from municipalities and this defines what programme will be taken by a principal. If a principal takes a course on the account of the regional authorities, most likely this programme will be developed and carried out by regional institutes for professional development (Kasprzhak, 2007). At the same time, school principals also have an opportunity to

enrol in MA programmes developed by universities across the country. These include both fully funded degree programmes by federal budget as well as for-profit ones. The data from 7SLS (Harris et al., 2017) shows that only 15% of school principals pay for the programmes on their own.

We have analysed the hiring and placement of principals in various regions, as well as the procedures for certification, and found no single approach common to all of them (based on the analyses of regional Ministries of Education orders ‘On approval of the procedure for certification of candidates for the position of heads and heads of state educational organizations’). Nor is there currently any uniformity among principal training and professional development programmes. As a consequence, the definition of the school leader’s profession is becoming more multifaceted. However, the emergence of school principal’s standards can drastically change and redesign the landscape of educational programmes. One of the possibilities is the emergence of a unified national qualification and certification. In this way, the ambiguous question arises: who should be in charge of the designing and implementation of principals’ professional development programme and certification procedures in Russia? Will a unified qualifying directory eventually lead to a system, where the professional training and education for principals is defined and characterised?

8.5 Conclusions

What we have seen in this comparative chapter is actually the turning point for a lot of these leadership preparation and development programmes comes from around 2010/11. The entrenchment of neoliberal positions through the use of international comparative data has taken the national systems in England, Sweden and Russia down paths that they may not have taken or has potentially accelerated decisions that were being taken nationally. Although very divergent systems, in different stages of their development, there are similarities in the leadership preparation and development approaches taken in England, Sweden and Russia where a common framework is being developed and adopted across all three countries. What remains of concern, given how teacher education is such a deeply contested field within European education and within the different national contexts of Europe, is that the longer-term implications for education leadership practice, are playing out here with these differing national positions. Russia is currently developing a framework; Sweden are sharing their framework across the seven HEIs engaged in the delivery of the programme, while in England, these phases have been worked through, have been abandoned, and there is now no HEI involvement in the leadership preparation and development of school leaders, as the baton has been passed to system agents—let us hope that Sweden and Russia can learn from the mistakes that England have made.

One potential problem with the creation of entry qualifications for leadership positions is if they create (further) barriers to entry for specific groups. Such qualifications as NPQH in England, could, in principle, create further impediment to disenfranchised groups such as gender and ethnicity, both of which are disproportionately

represented at school principal level in England. Equally, theoretically, such qualifications rather than bar, could liberate; the possession of such a qualification could unlock pathways previously restricted. In England the proportion of school heads in state-funded education that were women in 2020 was 70%, while the workforce was predominately female of 76%. This figure disguises the issues of secondary education (aged 11–18) leadership which is highly gendered, with only 40% being female while being 63% of the secondary workforce as a whole (DfE, 2021). Although these figures have improved over the last 10 years, they are still highly gendered in favour of men. It appears that the creation of NPQH, has not had a significant liberating effect (though equally it could be argued that it has not been a further hindrance too). This has resulted in the creation of all female NPQH courses, in the hope that this may aid female recruitment to it. It appears that NPQH, 20 years in, is doing little to support underrepresented groups and may well be simply replicating privilege. In Sweden, there is less leadership gender division with junior high school principals being 69% female but 66% of the workforce, while in high school women are 54% of the workforce but only 49% of principals. Russia too, has only 69% of principals women, compared to 85% of teachers (TALIS, 2018). This is an area of continued research by academics, can entry qualifications open or close doors for careers of certain groups?

8.6 Recommendations

8.6.1 England

In the last decade, programmes relating to school leadership have moved further away from universities, and as a consequence have become arguably more practice, and less theory, orientated. The links between these organisations and universities should be reinstated, in order for staff across the sector to better develop a wider theoretical and policy understanding. We also argue that it is not enough to have an executive leadership qualification (NPQEL), as many will be studying this for the first time, so ongoing leadership development needs to be put in place for established school leaders to continue to develop their practice.

8.6.2 Sweden

As there is a close connection between context and leadership, we argue that preparations and development programmes for aspiring principals should be guided to a greater extent by context-related school leadership research, where Sweden can serve as an example of a more context-sensitive leadership preparation programmes for aspiring principals and in-service principals.

8.6.3 Russia

We assume that professional development programmes should be developed by HEI meanwhile certification for the principal's position should remain in the hands of educational authorities. Otherwise, accumulation of two functions (function of control and educational function) in one institution can lead to imitation of the procedures.

We also suppose that professional training programmes should differ for those who prepare for the position of a principal and those who already work as a principal (experienced principals). Thus, professional programmes for emerging principals should meet the basic minimum requirements set by the professional standards which ensure that candidates are trained for the position, can successfully pass certification and enter the personnel reserve of the principals. This project should have invariant components providing the basic qualification requirements for the position as well as variant components which allow considering regional peculiarities and context. We assume that offers of professional training programmes for experienced principals should be diverse and respond to a variety of challenges faced by the principals. Such programmes should not be a mere formality for passing certification and should be financed directly from the school funds, thus leading to a more responsible choice. It seems to us that all this can lead to formation of the competitive market of executive education which in its place will have a positive impact on the quality of such programmes and emergence of unique ones.

We note that our conclusions across our countries are quite similar, and we believe that this is because we are interested in the ongoing nature of the professional development trajectory of teachers into leaders, we believe that—irrespective of the nation-state—this is a process that continues across the length of a career, and doesn't stop just because an individual has reached a particular level in the system. Understanding of policy memory and system development is something that we believe is continued to be required until staff finish in post, not because they reach a particular system level. Although this takes a level of system funding that is currently rarely in place in national systems.

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Chapter 9 The Changing Role of the Headteacher in Scottish Education: Implications for Career-Long Teacher Education

Alison Mitchell, Deirdre Torrance, Julie Harvie, Christine Forde, and Margery McMahon

Abstract This chapter critically explores educational policy directives related to the changing role of headteachers (principals) and considers the implications for career-long teacher education. It interrogates changing policy articulations of the role of the headteacher internationally then, through thematic analysis, the Scottish context in 'An Empowered System' (Scottish Government, 2019a) (hereafter SG) and the Professional Standards (General Teaching Council for Scotland, 2019a) (hereafter GTCS). The three themes identified: *Cultivating Culture*, *Privileging Context and Community* and *Leadership of Professional Learning* are synthesised to generate understanding of the expectations of headteachers to develop and lead collaborative cultures of professional learning. The chapter draws on findings from the 'Future of Headship' data, generated though the Delphi Method, to examine the tensions and issues experienced by school leaders in their leadership of learning communities in a case study school. The chapter concludes by considering the implications for the role of headteachers in leadership of career-long teacher education.

Keywords Headship · Middle leadership · Professional learning · School culture · Context · Community

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9.1 Introduction

This chapter examines shifting constructions of the role of the headteacher in the development of career-long teacher education, using the Scottish education system as a case study. Internationally, the role of headteachers (principals) has evolved considerably over the past thirty years. Emphasis has shifted from management and administrative functions to school leadership as a collective endeavour that nurtures and harnesses the strengths, self-efficacy and agency of teachers at all levels to improve student learning and outcomes (Torrance et al., forthcoming). Current global constructions of headship emphasise the importance of collaborative leadership, the centrality of teacher professionalism and the development of schools as learning organisations underpinned by a culture of professional learning, support and challenge.

The Scottish education system provides an interesting case study of the role of headteachers in the development of career-long teacher education. A stated policy purpose of 'The Empowerment Agenda', (SG, 2017a), is the creation of a "school and teacher-led education system" (SG, 2017a, p. 4). A key tool intended to realise this, the Headteachers' Charter, is designed to re-shape the role of headteachers. Central to this role is an expectation that headteachers lead learning communities, thereby having a critical role in the career-long development of teachers. A central impetus behind the Empowerment Agenda is an enduring attainment gap between pupils from advantaged and disadvantaged backgrounds (SG, 2021b). Schools are charged with 'closing the gap' but this construct of 'gap' is reductionist, based largely on performance targets. An alternative, less reductionist idea, is that of an 'opportunity gap', an approach which becomes particularly important for schools serving disadvantaged communities where it is critical to draw on, rather than ignore, problematise or diminish the resources of the school and its communities. The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified the need for headteachers to ensure their school's context underpins its continuing development as a learning community as they navigate the mandated professional learning requirements descending from central government reforms.

The policy expectation around the headteacher's role to lead learning communities, signals an emphasis on collaborative practice within and across schools. We need to examine the ways in which these learning communities enable teachers to understand and be responsive to the communities of the school. In this, teachers need opportunities to build their collaborative practice with their colleagues in school, pupils and parents and the wider community, colleagues in other local schools, and other professions (Mitchell, 2019). We also need to examine potential tensions between efforts to support and enhance teachers' sense of agency and self-efficacy as education professionals, within hierarchical school systems. Findings from this exploration have implications for other education systems facing similar challenges.

The chapter draws from a multi-strand research project, 'The Future of Headship', where policy analysis is combined with investigating the lived experiences and practice of headteachers (Torrance et al. forthcoming). This chapter draws from

two components of the project. The first, builds on an analysis of the policy problem (Bacchi, 2012) to examine policy intentions (Taylor, 1997), through a content analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The second, draws from data gathered using the Delphi Method (Green, 2014) with school leaders. In particular, we examine policy expectations around headteachers "leading learning communities" (SG, 2018a, p. 1) to explore the implications for the understandings and practices of career-long teacher education.

9.2 Analysis of the International Policy Problem: Neoliberalism and Policy Borrowing

In this first section of the chapter, the Scottish experience is situated within international developments, including specific discussion of neoliberalism, the effects of policy borrowing and alternative constructions of policy learning. Headteachers are navigating key education policy problems identified by governments across the globe, where policy borrowing has become the norm, partly as a response to the search for quick and inexpensive policy solutions. This provokes challenges to a local, contextually defined ethical enactment of headship, where tensions exist between performativity and social justice, with gaps between pedagogical vision and practice. Although Scotland has its own education system with devolved responsibility (UK Government, 1998), distinct from other United Kingdom jurisdictions, through policy borrowing, many of its education policy themes are reflected in international contexts.

9.2.1 Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism has become a pervading ideology in recent decades, beyond global economies to impact on spheres of public life, including education (Erss, 2015; Sellar & Lingard, 2013). One of the aims of neoliberal education policy is to create a stronger link between the economy and education. The rationale for this, is that gaps in the skills market can be filled by young people entering the world of work (Apple, 2001) although to perceive this as a linear process significantly underestimates how complex this supply–demand relationship is (Humes, 2013). Nevertheless, the idea that schools and other educational establishments align with what could be termed a 'marketized' ideology is prevalent in many educational systems across the globe (Smythe, 2021).

Arguably, schools are not comparable to other market-driven institutions, as they function within highly complex ecosystems (Smythe, 2021). To apply market principles to education is to take an oversimplistic view as key factors influence, constrain

and shape decisions and actions taken: schools work within differing local communities, serving pupils with a huge variety of abilities, needs and cultures; working with young people places unique obligations and demands on staff; schools exist within a social, economic and political framework, where accountability and performativity are prevalent. As such, the headteacher role is not directly comparable to that of leaders in other organisations. These high levels of complexity signify that educational systems and structures need to change to facilitate a 'reflexive' process of accountability, allowing the voice of school leaders to be heard, so that their beliefs and actions are taken into consideration (Ranson, 2003). This would result in values being balanced against political constraints (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993), with the generation of a shared understanding, making sense of and informing social order (Ranson, 2003). Given the effects of policy borrowing, this is unlikely.

9.2.2 The Effects of Policy Borrowing

Increasing pressure has been placed on education systems across the globe to perform successfully in relation to international and comparative measures, determined by transnational organisations such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (Pashiardis & Johansson, 2021). Comparative data dispensed by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), the Third International Mathematics Science Study (TIMSS) and the Teaching and Learning International Study (TALIS) influence policy, as governments strive for good results and international league table rankings. The homogenisation of policy has followed with 'policy borrowing' emerging between countries (Priestley, 2002; Sahlberg, 2007), where features of overseas policies are taken and adapted to fit a new context.

Policy borrowing can be seen in action with the similarities evident between recurrent trends and themes in the *New Basics* project in Queensland (2001), *Curriculum for Excellence* (2004) in Scotland, *The National Curriculum of New Zealand* (2007) and *The Ontario Curriculum* (2009). One such theme is that teachers are now being placed as 'curriculum makers' rather than 'curriculum implementers'. However, curriculum development is increasingly being recognised as a highly complex process (Alvunger, 2018; Muller & Young, 2019; Priestley et al., 2021; Vernon, 2020). It requires teachers to engage with questions around, for example, the purposes of education, values, the place of knowledge and skills, pedagogy and social justice. Giving schools more agency in curriculum making may sound a positive move but if it is accompanied by narrow performative measures such as benchmarking, attainment data, league tables and external inspection regimes, then it skews what schools do in terms of developing a curriculum fit for their unique context (Priestley et al., 2021). This tension can lead to additional pressure and challenge for school leaders.

Another theme is the policy construction that school improvement is more likely to follow if school leaders have more autonomy to make decisions at a local level (Sinnema & Aitken, 2013). Policy effects of this—intended or unintended—include increased accountability for teachers and senior leaders, augmented assessment

regimes and changes to working conditions and professional cultures (Modeste et al., 2020). This is particularly apposite in the Scottish context, where educational leadership is at a crucial juncture given the persistent impact of the pandemic, the heightened emphasis on issues related to poverty, inequality and discrimination and the Review of Education Governance in Scotland (SG, 2017), amidst current policy reform (SG, 2021a). However, new iterations and experiences of educational leadership are challenging the neoliberal preservative that has traditionally been the lens through which the success of schools is judged.

9.3 Policy Expectations of the Headteacher's Role: Analysis of Key Policy Texts

Education is a critical policy imperative in Scotland, largely due to it being a small centralised system with an administration aiming for greater consistency and uniformity, seeking to be defined by their record in education (SG, 2016a). Scotland's comprehensive school system and the quality and professionalism of the teaching workforce were recognised as strengths in the *Debate on Schools for the Twenty-First Century in Scotland* (Munn et al., 2004), that initiated and informed Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence (SG, 2008). More recently, declining performance in globally valued success measures, such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (OECD, 2015; SG, 2016b, 2019b), has contributed to Scotland's policy turbulence, with increased scepticism around the success of *Curriculum for Excellence* in practice. This has fuelled criticism from the current Scottish Government of the profession and of educational leadership.

In rational and ascribed standards for school leaders, germane to many European and international systems, the headteacher role is perceived as central to system-wide efforts to raise achievement and to address an attainment gap (Cruickshank, 2017). In this next section of the chapter, changing policy articulations of the role of the headteacher are interrogated (Taylor, 1997). Findings from a thematic analysis (adapted from Braun & Clarke, 2006) consider: the role of the headteacher within the Headteacher Charter (SG, 2018a) and the Standard for Headship (GTCS, 2021b); and at teacher level, through the empowerment framework "Empowering Teachers and Practitioners" (SG, 2018b) and the GTCS Standards for fully registered teachers, and Career Long Professional Learning (GTCS, 2021c, 2021d).

9.3.1 Thematic Analysis of the Role of the Headteacher in Scotland

Over the past five years, educational reform in Scotland has been relentless in the pursuit of the twin aims of excellence and equity, through The National Improvement Framework (NIF) for Scottish Education, (SG, 2019c). The NIF highlights six key

drivers, including school leadership and teacher professionalism, to enable continuous improvement of the education, and life chances for children and young people, by closing the poverty-related attainment gap. The responsibility placed on school leaders (and therefore teachers at all levels) to 'raise the bar while closing the gap' (SG, 2019c) creates tensions in reconciling the incompatibility of social justice practice with the dominance of an accountability-led educational policy climate. This challenges teachers' values and integrity, impacting on their professional identity and agency as education professionals (Verger & Parcerisa, 2017).

The focus of the Future of Headship project is on the practice realities of leaders in school. Given the significance of policy in the role and work of headteachers, a critical approach to the analysis of policy was adopted. One of several concerns of critical policy analysis noted by Diem et al. (2014) is the gap between policy rhetoric and practice reality. As a first step, relevant policy documents were scrutinised through a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which examined at a latent level the "underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualisations" (2006, p. 84) of school leadership and teacher professional learning within the professional standards (GTCS, 2021b, 2021c) and the 'Empowered System' (SG, 2019a; 2019b). The thematic analysis followed a six-step framework adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006), to analyse the role of the headteacher within the Headteacher Charter (SG, 2019a) and the Standard for Headship (GTCS, 2021b), and at teacher level, the empowerment framework "Empowering Teachers and Practitioners" (Education Scotland, 2019) and:

- The Standard for Full registration (GTCS, 2021c)
- The Standard for Career-Long Professional Learning (GTCS, 2021d)
- The Standard for Middle Leadership (GTCS, 2021e).

The six-step framework for the thematic analysis involved:

(i) Initial reading: Familiarisation with the policy texts
(ii) Coding: Identification of keywords and repeated patterns of meaning
(iii) Categorisation of codes into broader themes
(iv) Identification of overarching dimensions of school leadership, empowerment and professional learning as understood in the key texts
(v) Analysis of the key themes and assumptions within the conceptualisations of headship and professional learning
(vi) Synthesis: implications for professional learning.

This section focuses on the identification, analysis and synthesis of the key themes underpinning conceptions of headship in relation to empowerment and Career-Long Professional Learning (CLPL).

9.3.2 *The Revised Professional Standards*

Stefkovich and Begley (2007) stress the exigency for school leaders to know their own values and ethical predispositions, with ethics "highly relevant to school leadership as rubrics, benchmarks, socially justified standards of practice, and templates for moral action" (2007, p. 209). In Scottish education, the values of social justice, trust, respect and integrity, highlighted in the Standard for Headship (SfH) (GTCS, 2021b), are asserted to underpin school leaders' and teachers' professional practice. The professional standards have been through several iterations since 1998 (Fig. 9.1), with values and equalities underpinning each iteration of the SfH. Through successive revisions, the focus has evolved from competencies and key management functions required to improve teachers and schools (Scottish Executive, 1998), to the parallel emphasis on social justice and equity issues, with the expectation that all teachers now contribute to school leadership (GTCS, 2021c).

In 2021, Scottish education embarked on the formal enactment of the revised Professional Standards, including the SfH (GTCS, 2021b), the national framework for aspiring and practising headteachers that provokes reflection on what it means to be a [head]teacher in Scotland: sense of identity and purpose; perceptions and expectations of others; "establish[ing], sustain[ing] and enhance[ing] a positive ethos and culture of learning through which every learner, including colleagues, is able to learn effectively and achieve their potential" (GTCS, 2021b, p. 6).

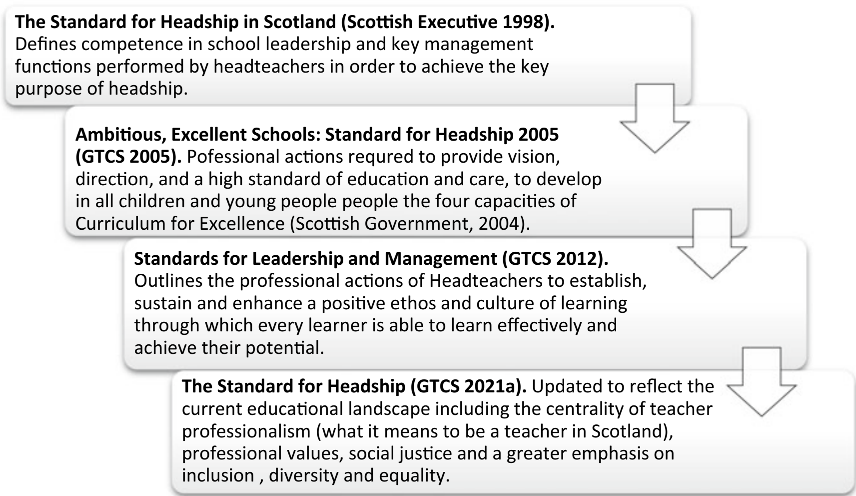

Fig. 9.1 The development of the *standard for headship*

9.3.3 An 'Empowered System'

Part of the tension in the construction of headship is explored through a theoretical thematic analysis of 'An Empowered System' (SG, 2019a) which aligns the responsibility for closing the poverty-related attainment gap placed on schools—and more specifically on headteachers—with education. Education is being held to account for addressing wider socio-economic issues (Sahlberg, 2021). Schools are perceived as embodying "the social fabric that has reciprocal relationships with social, health, cultural and economic aspects of life" (Sahlberg, 2021, p. 17).

9.3.4 The Headteacher Charter

In the latest cycle of change, a policy solution between central and local governments involved the development of 'The Headteachers' Charter' (SG, 2019a), intended to increase the autonomy of headteachers. Central to this development are ideas around collaboration, empowerment of the school community and working in partnership to bring about improvement.

9.4 Themes Arising from Analysis of Key Policy Documents

A key theme in the Future of Headship research programme involves tracing the way in which the role of the headteacher in Scottish education has evolved and indeed, continues to evolve. Part of the current impetus for the changing construction of headship has been the increasing emphasis on 'leadership at all levels' in schools (Forde & Torrance, 2021), alongside the focus on career-long teacher education, where engaging in ongoing professional learning is now central to understandings of what it means to be a teacher/leader. This third section of the chapter discusses key themes arising from the analysis of key policy documents.

The Headteachers' Charter (SG, 2019a) highlights the specificity of the role of headteacher as a leader "open to constructive support and challenge" who is both responsible for the school community and accountable, through "statutory, contractual and financial obligations", to the local authority while the role is articulated in the GTCS Standard for Headship (GTCS, 2021b) as "the lead professional", with "responsibility and capacity to enable and empower individuals and teams"; a leader who will "proactively contribute to leadership at system level". The analysis of the construction of the headteacher role in both documents elicited three overarching themes in relation to prescribed leadership responsibilities and practices impacting Career-Long Professional Learning:

(i) Cultivating culture (Fig. 9.2)
(ii) Privileging context and community (Fig. 9.3)
(iii) Leading professional learning (Table 9.1).

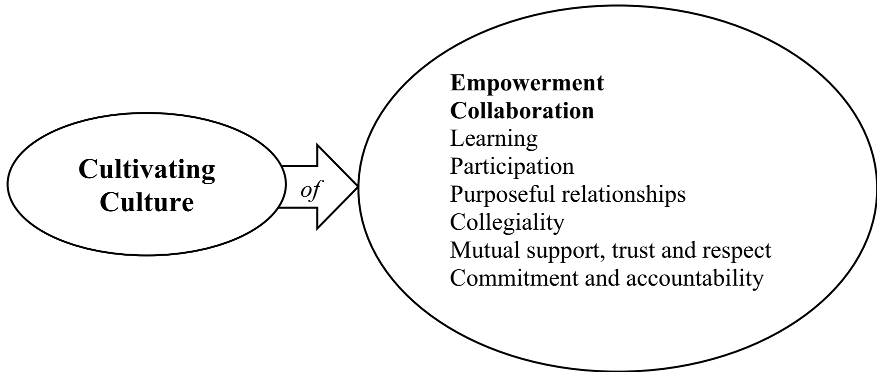

Fig. 9.2 Categorisation of codes under the broader theme: *cultivating culture*

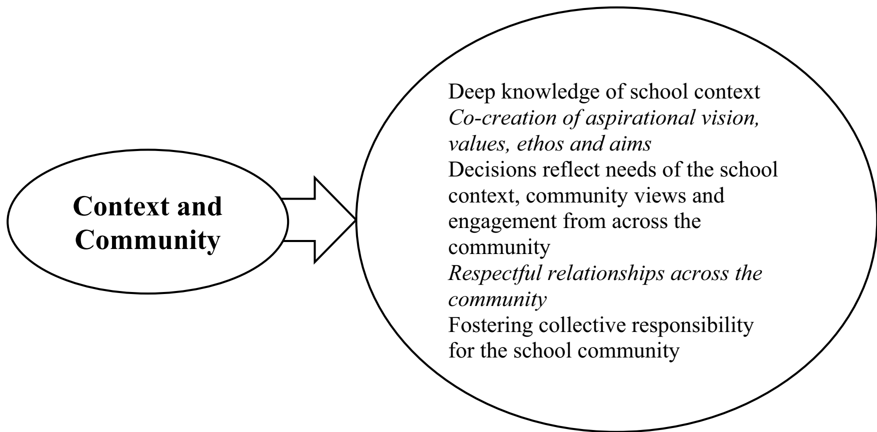

Fig. 9.3 Categorisation of codes under the broader theme: *privileging context and community*

The theoretical analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) also examined the prescribed leadership actions of the headteacher to empower and develop individuals and teams, alongside the teacher professional learning expectations within the Standard for Full Registration and the Standard for Career-Long Professional Learning (CLPL), (GTCS, 2021c, 2021d). It is evident from this analysis that there are high expectations of engagement in professional learning and demands of all teachers, but the specific responsibility for leading professional learning lies with headteachers, illustrated in Table 9.1.

The promotion of cultures of empowerment and collaboration within Scottish policy discourse is underpinned by Scottish Government commissioned national and international insights such as conclusions from the OECD review (OECD, 2015)

Table 9.1 Leading (and engaging in) professional learning (synthesised from GTCS, 2021c, 2021d; SG, 2019b)

Leading professional learning **The role of the headteacher**	
• Be the lead learner • Champion high quality professional learning for all staff • Build and sustain a professional school team/enable team professionalism • Communicate high expectations of CLPL • Establish principles and approaches that promote and offer a wide range of CLPL opportunities with equal access for all • Support and empower others to lead effectively and to improve • Support all teachers to be leaders of learning • Build capacity and capability through professional learning • Create time and space to engage in high quality professional learning using approaches that are relevant, authentic and ongoing • Facilitate engagement with networks and learning communities to develop professional practice together	
Engaging in CLPL **The mandatory requirement for all teachers**	**Engaging in CLPL** **The further aspiration in the standard for CLPL**
• Commit to lifelong learning • Engage critically with literature, research and policy to challenge and inform professional practice and critically question and challenge educational assumptions, beliefs and values of self and system • Engage in reflective practice to develop and advance career-long professional learning and expertise • Enhance learning and teaching by taking account of feedback from others • Actively engage in professional learning to support school improvement • Work collaboratively to contribute to the professional learning and development of colleagues	• Progress and enrich their professional knowledge and understanding, skills and abilities • Continue to develop as accomplished, reflective and enquiring professionals who can engage with the complexities of teaching and learning, the changing contemporary world of their learners, and the world beyond the profession and its institutions • Identify, plan and develop their own professional learning needs and ensure continuing CLPL • Focus on teacher leadership and leadership of and for learning • A strong and engaging expert, open to change and engagement with new and emerging ideas and approaches

and the International Council of Education Advisers (ICEA)[1] (Scottish Government, 2017b), that are specific about the need to establish cultures of professional collaboration to impact on student achievement. However, phenomena such as empowerment, collaboration and collegiality are complex. Implicit within policy is the assumption that they are understood and can be enacted by professionals whereas the "variables presented through professional identities, hierarchies, local context, reputation, performance measures, working conditions, positionality and agency"

[1] The ICEA was established in 2016 and draws upon the knowledge and experience of leading education and business experts to advise educators and the Scottish government on education leadership, school improvement and reform, to meet the aims of the NIF.

(Mitchell, 2019, p. 9) can adversely impact the aspiration, engagement and outcome of collaborative partnerships. Leading through COVID-19 has reinforced the imperative of social justice and equity set out in the professional standards (GTCS, 2021a) and this experience has strengthened headteachers' resolve to nurture care, connection, collaboration and mutual support, leading in their communities to determine the most appropriate approaches for their context (SG, 2018a, p. 1). However, despite the aspiration in the HT Charter, there prevails the empowerment/accountability paradox whereby actions and decisions must result in improved performance in narrow attainment measures, with increased responsibilities and mistrust of the profession around attainment and school improvement (Imrie, 2020), that can undermine the notion of leadership for equity and social justice (Forde et al., 2021a, 2021b).

9.5 Tensions and Opportunities in the Enactment of Policy Expectations: Analysis of Empirical Data

A key expectation in the role of the headteacher is the creation and sustaining of a collaborative leadership culture, within which middle leadership comprises a vital element. As part of the *FoH* project, the role of headteacher is explored through the lens of middle leaders' perceptions and experiences. In the fourth section of this chapter, we draw from empirical data gathered using the Delphi Method (Green, 2014) with school leaders. In particular, we examine policy expectations around headteachers "leading learning communities" (SG, 2018a, p. 1) to explore the implications for the understandings and practices of career-long teacher education.

9.5.1 The Complexity of Middle Leadership and the Changing Role of Headteachers

We begin by charting the evolution of the middle leader (ML) role, accorded increasing significance in Scottish schools, reflecting developments internationally. In this, we explore some of the inherent tensions in the role—with its dual focus on teaching and leading—through the international literature. Then, we turn to the findings from the FoH research strand on the role of ML to exemplify some of these tensions. Our intention here is to use the findings to help illuminate how the complexity of the role has (re)shaped the role of headteachers, changing from one of managing a school through a top-down management structure, to one where headteachers are expected to build leadership at all levels and foster career-long professional learning (CLPL) of teachers/leaders.

9.5.2 Middle Leadership: A Complex Role

The post of principal teacher (PT) represents a longstanding middle leadership role in the management structures of Scottish secondary schools (Girdwood, 1989), originally largely related to the management of a subject department or pastoral care and guidance, with little involvement in whole school development. With a review of *A Teaching Profession for the Twenty-First Century (The McCrone Report)* (Scottish Executive, 2001), greater attention was paid to this level of management with PT roles introduced in primary schools. Further recognition of the significance of this role came with the development of a professional standard, *The Standard for Middle Leadership and Management* (GTCS, 2012; revised 2021e) complementing the *Standard for Headship* (GTCS, 2021b). The development of this policy tool underlined the perceived contribution of middle leadership to whole school development, reflecting the policy focus on distributed forms of leadership across a school, with the ascribed need to build greater collaborative practice.

The role of middle leadership has evolved considerably in Scottish education, reflecting international developments. Middle leadership has become positioned as a central element in the development of school improvement strategies, with growing understanding of the various complexities of the role, inherent in the opportunities (Grootenboer, 2018) and challenges (Irvine & Brundrett, 2016) emanating from a dual (but not necessarily equal) emphasis on teaching and leading. Middle leaders face a range of challenges including balancing management and leadership demands (Láurisdóttir & O'Connor, 2017)—with management functions often dominating the practice realities of leaders—and balancing teaching and leadership (Bassett & Shaw, 2018), as well as building collaborative practice and holding teachers to account.

The multifaceted nature of the ML role creates challenges in trying to find a common and succinct definition of the role in the international literature. This lack of clarity is evident even in Scottish education with the *Standard for Middle Leadership* applying equally to either principal teachers (and so, in a formal management post) or teachers undertaking an informal leadership role. At an operational level, this lack of role clarity and definition creates tensions for middle leaders and headteachers (Javadi et al., 2017). The multifaceted nature of middle leadership potentially connects classroom practice with the strategic leadership of the school. However, fulfilling this potential necessitates the reframing of hierarchical relationships, with MLs occupying formal management posts, holding positions in school leadership structures, part of an extended whole school leadership team, negotiating multiple accountabilities faced within and beyond the school.

As a policy lever, the revised set of professional standards in Scotland (GTCS, 2021a) is designed to take forward national policy priorities around raising achievement for all learners and closing a poverty-related attainment gap. Against the backdrop of these policy expectations, various initiatives such as the *Scottish Attainment Challenge* and *Pupil Equity Funding,* have led an expansion in the areas of responsibility for middle leadership. In addition to subject/curriculum leadership and pastoral care leadership, MLs in both the primary and secondary sectors, take on

roles such as raising attainment, parental and community liaison, additional support needs and equity issues. In broad terms, through their leadership, MLs are expected to foster teacher agency, build collaborative relationships and practice with the teachers they led, hold these teachers to account and be held to account (Lipscombe et al., 2021). A critical issue in the positive impact of MLs on teacher development, classroom practice and pupil learning is the context of the school, including the role and expectations of the school principal, as well as the school's culture and leadership structures (Gurr & Drysdale, 2013). Therefore, much rests on the headteacher being able to create the conditions in which MLs can foster improvements in teaching and learning (Lipscombe et al., 2021). With this appreciation of the contribution of middle leadership to galvanise school improvement efforts comes the need for nuanced understandings of leading staff (a shift from management), and supporting career-long professional learning, alongside the specific professional development needs associated with the role.

The multifaceted nature of the ML role creates challenges for schools and headteachers in trying to structure this role (Forde & Kerrigan, forthcoming). We were interested to explore these issues within the Scottish context, through a focus on ML practitioners' constructions of tensions and opportunities in their enactment of policy expectations.

9.5.3 The Role of the Headteacher: Perspectives of Middle Leaders

To explore the way in which the role of the headteacher in Scottish education has evolved, we draw from the *FoH* study. In one research strand on middle leadership, we explored the contribution of middle leadership to social justice leadership (SJL). In the Scottish context, social justice underscores the aims and values of all schools and the expectations placed on all teachers/leaders (SG, 2016c). We use the lens of MLs reflecting on their contribution to SJL, to explore the implications for the role of the headteacher.

The Delphi Method (Green, 2014) was used to gather empirical data from thirty middle leaders across a secondary school. This method consists of a series of rounds in which MLs respond individually to a set of questions, their responses are then collated and analysed thematically (Clarke & Braun, 2018). From this analysis, summaries are prepared and then circulated to all participants. Participants can then offer further comment, material or corrections and/or confirm the summaries. The questions used in the *FoH* study covered the MLs' understandings of social justice, their role in SJL, factors that facilitate and hinder this role, formative experiences in their SJL development, school development priorities and professional learning priorities identified by MLs. We draw from this data to discuss two issues: factors that hinder or facilitate the exercise of middle leadership; the professional learning of MLs. The data underlined the critical role of the headteacher in shaping the context and conditions

in which middle leadership might make a positive contribution. This data illustrates the pivotal importance of headteachers in fostering a developmental culture where career-long professional learning is central to the practice of all leaders.

MLs detailed a range of facilitating factors which illuminate the increasing complexity of the role of the headteacher. The MLs reported that school culture, fostered by the headteacher, provided them with the context to exercise SJL. Several facets emerged from their descriptions: the approach and stance of the headteacher; the place of values in the work of the school; relationships and communication as critical dimensions of the headteacher. The emphasis was on the relational dimensions of the headteacher's leadership (Eacott, 2019), rather than structural issues.

The data highlights the way in which headteachers are now expected to set aside long-established management hierarchies and instead, work with and through leaders across the school including MLs. However, the way a headteacher exercises their leadership, highlights the complex nature of headship and the multiple expectations placed on headteachers. A crucial facilitating factor was the importance of the headteacher leading with and through a school leadership team: *"Having a good senior leadership team in school who understand the importance of social justice, inclusion and equality and can support the wider team to deliver this"*. Middle leaders appreciated: *"Allowing for distributed leadership – allowing staff to thrive in areas of strength"*. Further, MLs reported that through distributed leadership, appreciated as members of the leadership team, they were able to develop as leaders: "*Another help is being included in senior management discussions about plans for aspects of school life. This helps me to feel included, playing a role in shaping the future and respected for my opinion and contributions"*. Through the practice of distributed leadership, MLs looked to headteachers to build and support collaborative practice and foster shared values. Collective commitment to values, focused on the positive experiences of all pupils, were factors that greatly supported social justice leadership: "*Being part of a leadership team that refuses to stand still, but always wants to move forward and improve - and is willing to take risks and be creative to do so – provides exciting opportunities for social justice leaders"*. Working with the leadership team was one element of the wider role of the headteacher, in developing the culture of the school to realise these shared values in practice.

A recurring idea in the data is related to the context of the school and the relationships between staff, and between staff and pupils: *"positive work environment and a 'can do' attitude from staff enthuses our young people"*. Within the school, the headteacher's role was deemed pivotal in shaping the culture. However, expectations about the influence of the headteacher were wider than the school context. Several MLs noted the importance of working with parents, families and the wider community. This outreach work was also shaped by the culture of the school: "*Being part of a school where the leadership team as well as the staff (on the whole) are working together as a community for the good of the whole community*". The headteacher's role in structuring the expanding middle leadership level to include a wide variety of roles, helped build connections across the school: "*What helps social justice leaders in the school is that there are a lot of us!*".

The Delphi study also explored what the MLs saw as the formative experiences in the development of their SJL. The MLs highlighted significant family and educational experiences that shaped their role as a teacher/leader and their commitment to social justice. In addition, MLs pointed to their experiences in the school context as formative: "*Staff are afforded opportunities to partake in awareness-raising sessions which highlight our school context within the bigger picture of local authority/national priorities to promote inclusion and equality*".

Another element in the headteacher role evident in the middle leadership data, was that of creating and sustaining a developmental culture: "*Very supportive school leadership who are keen to facilitate opportunities for staff to develop their practice and to take on leadership roles*". At the heart of this culture, is a headteacher acting as a role model of leadership oriented to social justice: "*I have been heavily inspired by my headteacher's quiet, calm and supportive approach to difficult situations*". The modelling of leadership complements development opportunities that headteachers are expected to provide: "*Opportunities to attend quality CLPL*". Indeed, a lack of opportunity to engage in professional learning and reading was a hindering factor. The headteacher's role included making provision for middle leadership development and support for collaborative leadership approaches which MLs also found important in their development: "*Being heavily involved in the embedding of [school] values […] and this helped me gain a wider perspective on ethos, vision and values*".

A radical shift is evident when this ML Delphi data is compared with the historical relationship between headteachers and PTs. This represents a significant move away from top-down line management, where PTs' previous focus was to manage their departments. Currently, MLs play an important connecting role between classroom and faculty practice and the overall leadership of the school (Forde & Kerrigan, forthcoming). However, it is through the multidimensional role of headteachers that the role of MLs is realised.

9.6 Career-Long Teacher Education: Implications for the Role of the Headteacher

The ML Delphi data highlighted the pivotal role of the headteacher to build and support collaborative professional learning cultures that recognise context and community and are built on shared values and understandings of social justice. It exemplified how empowerment of teachers and teams, nurturing of social justice, agency and self-efficacy, and leadership of enriching professional learning are, still in the gift of the *empowered* headteacher, despite mandates to implement externally prescribed policy. Empowerment is not without challenges, however, and this chapter concludes by highlighting key implications for the role of the headteacher leading and facilitating career-long teacher education in their communities, within an empowered system (SG, 2019a).

9.6.1 Professional Learning: For What Purpose?

There are tensions between the constructions in policy of the headteacher role—to champion, support empower and enable every teacher to realise the mandatory and aspirational CLPL requirements outlined in the GTCS Standards (GTCS, 2021c, 2021d)—and the practice realities. Headteachers are reconciling the paradox of public accountability for their school's performance within a neoliberal performativity agenda, alongside a social justice-led aspiration to lead schools with an ethic of care that will privilege human relationships, well-being and development over human capital (Forde et al., 2021a, 2021b). While attention to accountability can raise standards, it is an ambiguous concept that, when used as a key driver for professional learning, can compromise school leaders' core ethical purpose in favour of actions to increase productivity with statistical performance data as the key measurement of the success of headteachers and schools. If CLPL is to support and empower all teachers to lead learning effectively and to improve (GTCS, 2021d), it should be meaningful and impactful on individual and collective professional practice (Harris & Jones, 2019) with clarity around desired outcomes for children and young people (Guskey, 2021). School leaders must also take account of the school's vision, beliefs and values, as strategic unifiers to underpin decision-making (Davies, 2011) around principles, approaches and opportunities for professional learning.

9.6.2 Professional Learning: What Is Valued?

What is valued as best professional learning practice differs within different societies where politics and micro-political systems shape and form the culture and values of people on the ground. Policy borrowing is a problematic phenomenon if it is simply seen as a quick fix and takes no account of context and culture (Colman, 2021; Pashiardis & Johansson, 2021; Priestley, 2002; Sahlberg, 2007; Sellar & Lingard, 2013). It ignores the fact that the process of policy enactment involves a myriad of actors who interpret, translate and reproduce policies on a continuous basis as appropriate to their context. Many countries have tried to emulate Finland's success, by adopting its educational practices. However, Sahlberg (2011) stresses that the success of the Finnish educational system has been the result of developing a culture of trust across sectors and creating a cohesive network which integrates education and other social policies. He emphasises the necessity of policy *learning*, rather than simply policy *borrowing* and argues that context, history and culture are of the utmost importance and cannot be borrowed. Sahlberg and Walker (2021) suggest that what is crucial to school improvement is the "ability to engage people more in what they do, encourage them to take risks in trying out new ways to do old things, and the creation of a real sense of ownership" (Sahlberg & Walker, 2021 p. 21).

This aligns with the aspiration in An Empowered System (SG, 2019d) and asks that school leaders "understand the school's context and culture … the ways in which staff think, act and respond, set within a particular community which has either been enabled or constrained over time" (King et al., 2021, p. 1990).

9.6.3 Professional Learning: Collaboration

In best practice, professional learning models are "collaborative and grounded, rather than individual or top down" (Netolicky, 2016, p. 271). Datnow and Park (2018) assert that impactful professional collaboration is not about implementation of education policy: "Rather, it is a long-term process of rethinking teachers' professional work that requires sustained engagement on the part of leaders and teachers" (2018, p. 214). However, there are tensions to be navigated if we are to have sustained engagement in models of professional collaboration. The construct of collaboration is complex and context-dependent, determined by a myriad of personal, political, structural and situational factors, explored by Mitchell (2019). Time is a key factor with a lack of collaborative time available within the current working day in Scotland, due to the high level of class-contact time. In 2017, the average statutory contact time in lower secondary OECD schools with available data was 700 h per year. Of the 37 countries listed in descending order of teaching hours per year, Scotland was seventh highest with 850 teaching hours, and Finland had the fifth lowest statutory teaching time, with under 600 h (OECD, 2018). Many teachers still tend to perceive of both formal and informal professional learning as an individual responsibility and activity, as and when time is available, their perception being (Kennedy, 2011) that non-contact time is at their discretion for individual marking or preparation, rather than engagement in professional learning or collaborative activities. The Scottish Government has committed to facilitate teachers' access to extended professional learning and collaborative planning opportunities within the school day, by reducing class-contact time for teachers by 90 min per week by August 2022, giving a further 60 h a year (SG, 2021c). Headteachers will have the challenge of structuring this precious time to facilitate collaborative professional learning models that are meaningful and fulfilling if we are to have sustained engagement of and lasting impact on the school community.

To actuate the Standard for Headship (GTCS, 2021b) aspiration that the professional values of social justice, trust and respect and integrity should underpin teachers' relationships, thinking and professional practice in Scotland (2021b, p. 4), headteachers must mediate conflicting national policy agendas (including education reform in Scotland), the impact of and learning from the pandemic, and local systemic and cultural factors within their communities. The stance and approaches of the headteacher to fostering trusting relationships, and agentic, enquiring practice within the community, strengthens a culture where Career-long Teacher Education

is welcomed and valued as an individual and collective responsibility, in order to continually improve and develop educational provision to meet the changing needs of pupils and society.

9.7 Conclusion

The construction of the headteacher role continues to evolve internationally and in Scotland. Through this chapter, our intention has been firstly to contribute to the discussion around these shifting constructions and the implications for career-long teacher education; and secondly, to propose key challenges that need to be engaged with if systemic educational improvement within an empowered system is to be achieved and sustained. The interrogation of changing policy articulations in relation to the role of the headteacher internationally highlights the impact of neoliberalism and the prevalence of policy borrowing, offering alternative constructions for school leaders enacting policy in Scotland and beyond.

The empirical data drawn from our multi-strand research project—*The Future of Headship*—offers unique perspectives on the role of the headteacher through middle leaders' experiences and insights. The case study school in Scotland has embedded a collaborative professional learning culture, built on shared values and understandings of social justice, providing a rich context for developing understandings of practice realities. Explicit in the perspectives of middle leaders are key contextual solutions to the challenges and tensions of the constructions of headteachers as leaders of professional learning. We offer these insights, identified through the chapter's thematic analysis, in support of developing understandings in the field of educational leadership: *cultivating culture*, *context and community.*

Within the case study school, the headteacher's role in *cultivating a culture* of career-long professional learning was understood, practised and experienced by the middle leaders. This culture was at the heart of creating and sustaining teacher development within which teachers are valued, respected and supported as professionals. The headteacher proactively models professional learning (as the lead learner), consistently exercising leadership oriented to compelling values, social justice, care and curiosity. *Context and community* were also found to be key. The headteacher fostered clear understandings of the school context, along with care and respect for the wider community: its challenges, strengths and aspirations. Staff engaged in collaboration and professional learning with an understanding of their role and its contribution to the school's collective aspiration to impact specific, agreed outcomes designed to make a positive difference within the school's unique context and community.

The COVID-19 pandemic and its impact has challenged and extended constructions of school leadership and professional learning. It is more important than ever that headteachers, as social justice leaders, have the knowledge, conviction and confidence to challenge policy borrowed from other systems as reactions to perceived failings in international measures of schools' success. Policy underpinned by neoliberalism that privileges human capital over human relationships, care, well-being and

development is challenged by school leaders with the courage, always, to be and do what is right for their school community and context. The models and practice of leadership endorsed and emerging in Scotland are increasingly contextually informed: contextual intelligence perceived as central in the forming of strong, respectful and responsive relationships across the school community; the cultivation of a culture designed to nurture career-long teacher education that includes the development of leadership at all levels; a collective conviction that lifelong professional learning together with collaborative school improvement improves student learning.

In Scotland, the contextual nature of the evolution of headship has resulted in the term *headteacher* being retained for the most senior leadership position in the hierarchical school staffing structure, reflecting a construction of headship that places learning and teaching at its heart. This is distinct from other constructions in systems such as that of England (Woods et al., 2021) which reflect more of a business model, with roles including *executive heads* and *CEOs*. In Scotland, the headteacher is understood as playing a direct and pivotal role in various facets of the professional learning of staff, including development of their leadership capacities (GTCS, 2005, 2012, 2021a; Scottish Executive, 1998), as with the emphasis on middle leaders' voices and contributions, explored in this chapter. Indeed, contemporary constructions articulate the role of the headteacher as the lead learner within a senior leadership team, rather than a focus on management functions within a senior management team (GTCS, 2021a).

An emphasis within some education systems on a business model of school leadership can be counterintuitive to the construction of school leadership as a collaborative endeavour within a distributed perspective. Given the variance across transnational policy contexts, from the name of the role (headteacher, principal, administrator) to the duties, standards or expectations in practice, we suggest more research is needed into both international articulations of headship that privilege high administrative accountability, and the extent to which these articulations in practice are at the expense of relational, collaborative and community-oriented professional practice.

While the nature of headship may always be contested internationally, we suggest that new practices developed during the COVID-19 pandemic have the potential to shift conceptions and constructions of headship from an administrative and hierarchical role to a role that privileges developing the capabilities and capacities oriented to relational leadership, building community to support transformative education. In this conception, career-long professional learning is both a fundamental right and responsibility of all teachers at all levels, individually and collectively, focused on improved learning for all students. Collaborative constructions of school leadership have implications for career-long teacher education with headteachers ultimately pivotal in the enactment and enablement of such practice across their school communities.

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Chapter 10
Teacher Education as a Complex Professional Practice: Reflecting on the Contributions and the Way Forward…

Stephen P. Day

Abstract The international education literature illustrates both the importance of teacher education to National education systems and the complex, dynamic, and evolving nature of teacher education as a site of practice across the career trajectory of a teacher (Henry in J Teach Educ 67:291–305, 2016). The contribution that teacher educators make to the development of early career teachers is profound. However, the contribution that both university and school-based teacher educators make to the ongoing development of early, mid and experienced teachers is illustrated within the chapters in different ways. This concluding chapter reflects on the main themes that the contributors to this book discuss. The chapter draws together the key themes and reflects on where some of the theoretical and practical tensions exist within national and transnational policy by framing the discussion within Michael Eraut's Learning Trajectories framework (Eraut in Stud Continuing Educ 26:247–273, 2004; Developing a broader approach to professional learning. Springer, Dordrecht, pp. 21–45, 2012; McKee & Eraut in Learning trajectories, innovation and identity for professional development (Vol. 7). Springer 2011).

Keywords Teacher education · Career-long professional learning · Teacher identity · Teacher agency · Learning trajectories

10.1 Introduction

Teacher education is a complex, dynamic, and constantly evolving professional practice. In its widest sense, teacher education takes different forms across the career span

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of a teacher, regardless of national context. Globally, teacher education is heterogeneous in nature and as such different countries engage in teacher education in a variety of different ways. We believe that this is a strength, not a limitation, and we have tried to capture a flavour of this heterogeneity throughout the chapters of this edited book. The nature of teacher education as a field of research, scholarship, and practice is characterised by the various ways different stakeholders within different national education systems interact with, and influence, one another. However, as Mifsud (Chap. 1) indicates policymakers tend to focus on the notion of teacher quality, seeing teacher education as a 'policy problem to be solved' and frame teacher quality as an intrinsic characteristic of both the individual and their initial teacher education (sometime referred to as pre-service education or training), without considering that the different career pathways within the profession require different types of learning and exposure to different experiences to facilitate teachers' development.

There are several problems with the way policymakers view teacher education 'as a policy problem to be solved' (Ellis & McNicholl, 2015; Mifsud, 2022). First, politicians and civil servants, who are the main policymakers in the education system, often view learning, teaching, and teacher education in rather simplistic terms as diffuse, disconnected, linear processes which it clearly is not. Second, they often view these processes as unproblematic when they are often highly problematic. Third, they assume that the best way to improve educational outcomes for children and young people is to improve the quality of teachers (however that is defined), and by extension teacher education, without viewing the learning and teaching process, as well as teacher development, as separate but interrelated social enterprises. Lastly, they seem to believe that the only way to resolve perceived deficiencies in the education system is through policy reform. We would argue that such thinking is wrongheaded, at best, and detrimental to the system, at worst.

It is our contention that both the learning and the teaching process, as well as teacher education are complex, dynamic, interconnected, nested, hierarchical, and highly problematic processes within a larger education system. When policymakers view these processes in reductionist and/or in deficit terms, there is little hope that teaching and teacher education will be seen by all educational stakeholders as academic work that is characterised as praxis, which is both temporal and spatial and influenced by differing environmental factors that act as drivers that can both push and pull learning in different directions, and in often unpredictable ways.

This final chapter is structured around reflections on the main themes that emerge from the various contributors' chapters. The discussion within this chapter will attempt to follow the developmental trajectory of a teacher, beginning with concepts that are central to our understanding of the purpose of teacher education, before exploring these in the context of initial teacher education (pre-service) before moving on to induction of early career teachers into the profession and gradually progressing to teacher developments in the mid through to later years of a teacher's career. Before we go on to outline this discussion, we must first frame our understanding of teacher education as a learning journey and trajectory.

10.2 Teacher Education as a Learning Journey and Trajectory

The metaphor of teacher education as a journey sums up the learning that teachers undergo across the span of their careers. The concept of 'learning trajectory' introduced by Eraut (2004) and further developed by McKee and Eraut (2011) provides some useful insights into what teachers as professionals learn over time. Across all the chapters of this book, we see that teachers learn in a variety of ways and in different contexts. They learn *formally* when they undertake qualifications with a university or other educational providers, for example, in initial teacher education at the beginning of their career. They learn *informally* through self-directed reading, observation, collegial discussion, and debate or through professional enquiry from early in their career to the end of that career. They also learn *non-formally* every day through reflective practice on direct classroom experiences. It is through this complex series of interactions between the school(s) context, culture, and departmental ethos and the formal, informal, and non-formal learning that the teacher engages with over time which facilitates the development of both their own teacher identity, self-efficacy, and agency as well as their professional competence.

The trajectory approach taken within this book allows teacher education scholars to explore the notions of teacher education beyond a simple focus on 'teacher competences' towards a more developmental approach to teacher education and the learning that occurs within a teacher's career. The work of Eraut (2007), Eraut and Hirsh (2007) provides a typology of learning trajectories that develop and progress (or regress) in different ways and at different times over the course of an individual's whole career. These typologies relate to task performance; role performance; awareness and understanding; academic knowledge and skills; professional development; decision-making and problem solving; judgement; and teamwork. When viewed through the perspective of professional performance, progression within a career trajectory depends on the range and complexity of its contribution to those performances in which they were used within a particular context, thereby being more reflective of what happens in the workplace, the type of work carried out, and the opportunities and challenges that the teacher encounters during their career (Sharu, 2012).

The importance of viewing teacher education as a career-long trajectory has been underscored in England by the aftermath of recent reforms to teacher education, under the auspices of the market review of Initial Teacher Training and Education (ITTE), where the complexity of teacher education is 'on the face of it' reduced to an apprenticeship model. From an outsider's perspective, this reform seems to be ideologically driven and one that privileges 'learning on the job' over a partnership model where staff from university schools of education work together in partnership with school-based staff to develop, support, and nurture initial teacher education student teachers. University expertise is also used by schools to support the career development of experienced teachers throughout their career. Central to the reforms to ITTE in England is the argument that a teacher can be trained rather than educated,

an argument that we will return to later in this chapter. However, the question for us to consider is *how do we develop pre-service and in-service teachers to thrive in the profession and be secure in their abilities to deliver quality teaching and learning?* We would suggest that to be able to answer this question, we need to understand what the role of a teacher is. Teachers today are expected to do much more than merely teach and develop within children and young people the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and dispositions that society deems appropriate. So, w*hat lies at the heart of what it means to be a teacher?* To begin to answer these questions, we need to look more closely at the role and tease out some of the main features of a teacher.

Two complex concepts are gaining increasing traction and prominence in teacher education and teacher education research, since they lie at the heart of the purpose of teacher education, these concepts being teacher identity and teacher agency (Jenlink, 2021; Mifsud, 2018; Priestley et al., 2015). The reason why these two concepts have risen in prominence is in part, due to the way educational stakeholders and educational policymakers in general, engage with teacher education both as a 'policy problem to be solved' and 'as academic work' but also due to them being essential concepts to the development of teachers' (both pre-service and in-service teachers) and how these concepts influence the way teachers' go about their everyday work.

10.2.1 Teachers' Professional Identity

As a central concept of teacher education across the career-long trajectory, the development, refinement, and shaping of teachers' professional identity is arguably the prime concern of the academic work of teacher educators across different national contexts. Teacher identity, as a concept, has struggled to feature deeply in the minds of many teacher educators as it is rather ill-defined, if defined at all. This situation led Alistair Henry to state that "…the inner dynamics of teacher identity transformations remain a 'black box'" (Henry, 2016). This lack of a common definition points to an uncomfortable truth—identity is a particularly complex concept to pin down (Vermunt et al., 2017). We will argue that in the context of this book, growth in teacher identity is conceptualised more as one of 'becoming' and 'being' a teacher (Gomez et al., 2007) that occurs within and between the interactions that individual teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and values undergo when they intersect with learners, peers, and leaders of the educational contexts in which they happen to find themselves (Geijsel & Meijers, 2005; Walkington, 2005), rather than an exercise in gathering knowledge and skills as a linear process of professional development over time.

Jenlink (2021) posits that teachers' professional identity influences all aspects of 'becoming and being a teacher', and agrees that teacher identity formation is a complex, dynamic, and emergent construct that can at times be an unstable process. We would extend this by adding that teacher identity is constantly formed, negotiated, and reformed under the influence of a multitude of different factors and experiences at both the personal and professional level over time. Teacher educators need to nurture the development of teacher identity in their students as they first learn to teach,

and as they journey through their career gathering different experiences of teaching over time. Jenlink (2021) contends that teacher identity influences the decisions that teachers' make in relation to teaching practice, the content and context of teaching and learning, and the nature of the interactions and relationships that a teacher has with their learners, peers, and school leaders over time.

We would argue that teacher identity is best conceptualised as a complex, dynamic, evolving, and emergent process (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2011; Beijaard et al., 2004). Where identity development arises from the way that the teacher (and student teacher) interacts within the confines of the socially constructed roles, meaning systems, and symbols of the cultural context within which they find themselves. It also forms because of the encounters they have as part of their initial teacher education and in the episodes of teaching practice that they experience daily. For example, educational researchers conceptualise teachers as more or less functioning by asserting and receiving different identities across their teaching experience. Therefore, teacher identity in this sense refers to the way an individual comes to know and understand themselves, and how they perceive the way others view them (at least within certain parameters) where identity is formed from a complex array of different factors that influence their perception of self within the context of the roles they perform personally and professionally (Beijaard, et al., 2004).

A key factor in teacher identity formation is the fact that teaching can be described as a process of socialisation (Beijaard & Meijer, 2017; Meijer et al., 2014; Bennett, 2013), that is made more complex by the culture and often the micro and macro political nature of schools. Inherent within this complexity are the tensions that lay between the differing philosophies of teaching and learning, underpinned by the teachers' understanding of self (their values, beliefs, and behaviours), which in turn influences what is taught (the enacted curriculum), where this is further complicated by the way teachers interact with other factors such as national policy and school policies and procedures; and the structural constraints of the schools ethos and the cultures that exist within the school, for example, the teacher, learner, and Leadership cultures (Day & Grant-McMahon, 2016).

'Becoming a teacher' is a complex process that many student teachers struggle with, since it involves them adopting the identity of 'teacher'. Student teachers often bring to the work of becoming a teacher a history that informs both their beliefs about teaching and what teachers are supposed to do. Often, they bring their personal experiences of school (conceptions and misconceptions of what teachers do) and of being taught as part of the 'becoming' process. Jenlink (2021) suggests that a clear self-image and a sense of ownership of an emerging and nascent professional identity is a necessary condition to help student teachers effectively apply the knowledge and skills that they have acquired from ITE into eventual workplace situations. Thus, teacher identity as a concept, has a psychological, sociocultural, and political dimension that is situated within the temporal and spatial plane.

It is the role of the teacher educator to support teachers in developing an awareness that the image they have of themselves under the reality of their performance in the classroom could be different from that which they perceive. It is through reflective practice that teachers and teacher educators can support student teachers to reflect

on their learning experiences, to make sense of themselves, and where need be help them to incorporate themselves into their developing identity. This process supports both their developing professional identity but also their sense of self-efficacy within the role.

In their review of the concept of teacher identity, Beijaard et al. (2004) note that identity is relational, in that it shifts depending on context, is flexible as the individual adopts different roles and is therefore often role-focused since identity develops as the teacher engages in acts of practice and forms as an individual's awareness of their growing identity increases through reflection on practice. Rodgers and Scott (2008) suggest that teacher identity is unstable and requires a psychological shift in the way the teacher thinks of themselves as teacher, therefore, the development of a coherent teacher identity involves the individual continually trying to answer the 'what kind of teacher am I?' and 'who do I want to become?' questions as well as the 'who am I at the moment?' question. As Day and Grant-McMahon (2016) suggest teacher identity affects the "sense of purpose, self-efficacy, motivation, commitment, job satisfaction and effectiveness" one has as a teacher (p. 601).

In Chap. 4, Mena et al. (2023), quantitatively explore how pre-service (student) teachers experience of practicum (school placement teaching experience) impacts their developing sense of self-efficacy as part of their professional development towards becoming a teacher. They found that pre-service teacher's sense of self-efficacy was impacted by several factors, including whether teaching was their first or second choice programme of study, the level of school-based support they received from teachers and mentors and the educational content of the lessons they were teaching. This study highlights the importance of school practice to the pre-service teachers growing sense of self 'as teacher' and that as pre-service teachers' sense of self-efficacy increases, their performance in the role improves and their professional identity grows.

Drawing this discussion on teacher identity back to reflecting on Eraut's (2012) learning trajectories framework for one moment, it is important to note that as a teacher progresses throughout their career, their identity shifts in a myriad of directions depending on personal preferences and how the individual see their career progressing. Some teachers may want to remain as an experienced classroom practitioner, while others may want to gain promotion to a leadership and management role such as a principal teacher of a curricular area or move into a formal leadership role such as deputy head teacher or Head Teacher. Some may want to develop their knowledge and skills with further specialised training in additional support needs or support for learning roles, while others may see themselves in a pastoral support and guidance role.

The question of what motivates a teacher's career choices and direction of development, is also a complex set of personal and professional factors ranging from personal satisfaction, financial reward to a natural desire to lead. McKee and Eraut (2011) draw our attention to the way that different professionals apply their *learning trajectory* in action and exemplify the fluctuations within their professional 'identities' over time as they develop and transition between old and new roles. What Sharu (2012) highlights in their research is that practitioners who are allowed to take

on greater responsibility, do so with support and further training and have a clear sense of agency to reach the desired level of performance demanded by the new role without having to move to a new organisation. What is clear from this research is that the cultural setting of the workplace is a factor in whether an individual can develop or not, with some individuals not being able to progress due to a lack of opportunity or affordances that meet with their development needs, so they move on to another setting. This is a scenario that is all too common in teaching and is one that both co-editors have experienced in our careers. However, as both Jenlink (2021) and Sharu (2012) highlight the fact that teacher identity is a complex relational; flexible; context-dependent and role-focused concept.

Indeed, a few chapters in this book touch on this point, specifically in Chaps. 2 and 9 where Carol Campbell (Chap. 2) highlights the ways that ITE programme accreditation regulations in Canada proscribe the kinds of topics that student teachers must encounter during their ITE programme. It is arguably in this phase of a teacher's development that they develop interests depending on individual preference, which once qualified and certified, may grow into an area of specialism that take them down a particular career pathway. Mitchell et al. (2023), (Chap. 9) also discuss the way that teacher leadership can grow into positional leadership in areas such as pastoral support and curriculum management roles within schools where aspects of distributed leadership provide the context and affordances for teachers to take their careers down a particular path.

10.2.2 Teacher Agency

Priestley et al. (2015) suggest that the terms agency and teacher agency are often applied loosely and uncritically. In much the same way as teacher identity, teacher agency is conceptually difficult to pin down and can be described as a much-contested term, to the point where Priestley et al. (2015) say "… that some people may wonder why we need such a concept in educational and social research in the first place or why we would need to have a notion of teacher agency" (p. 19). They further go on to suggest that the difficulty with pinning down the notion of agency can clearly be seen in a common tendency to conflate agency with action. In the context of teacher agency, we concur with the view that teacher agency is an emergent phenomenon which is something that can be achieved by individuals, through the interaction between the personal capacities and resources, affordances, and constraints of the environment into which that individual must act (Priestley et al., 2015). This perspective sees agency as an individuals' capacity to work within the contextual dimensions of their professional setting to shape *their* agency and views the development and achievement of agency as a temporal process rather than an innate capacity that may or may not be possessed, to varying degrees. It is also our contention that the concepts of teacher identity and teacher agency co-develop in different ways but in an interrelated manner across the career trajectory of a teacher dependent on context.

The main issue with how we define agency is the distinction between *agency as variable*, *agency as capacity*, and *agency as phenomena*. The trouble is that regardless of how we define the concept of agency, we run into problems when we fail to fully explore our stance on agency since the term has been theorised within many different intellectual traditions such as the post-modernist, post-structuralist, or sociocultural traditions to name but a few. However, discussions about agency are often conducted in terms of the structure-agency debate, as can be seen in the example of Jill in Chap. 6, where there is a tendency to focus on the socialised macro view of agency, thereby ignoring the local and specific (proximal), or to concentrate overly on individualised notions of agency thereby ignoring questions of structure, context, and resource (Fuchs, 2001). Agency involves the capacity to formulate possibilities for action, the active consideration of such possibilities, and the exercise of choice, which Priestley et al. (2015: p. 23) suggest is the essence of intentionality. However, agency also includes the influence of contextual factors such as the social and material structures and the cultural norms that influence action and behaviour.

Looking more specifically at the importance of identity and agency, Lord (2023) (Chap. 6), discusses details of a new Teacher Reflexivity, Agency and Identity tool (TRAIt) which focuses on how reflexivity, in particular, communicative, autonomous reflexivity and meta-reflexives position the teacher, within both their sense of self as a teacher in the present, and the educational context within which they work, where she suggests that reflexivity[1] can perhaps be best described as our 'inner conversations' and that reflexivity is the bridge that mediates 'deliberatively between the objective structural opportunities confronted by different groups and the nature of people's subjectively defined concerns' (Archer, 2007, p. 61).

Lord (2023) posits that it *[reflexivity]* has a crucial role in determining social action and is potentially powerful and emancipatory. By drawing on empirical work to illustrate the developmental trajectory of a teacher—Jill—Lord (2023) shows how different factors (both personal and professional) impact on her Identity and agency over time and how she acts within her role, since she has responsibility for supporting learning but is also accountable for attainment given her position. The TRAIt model also maps both transitions in her professional life (moving from one school to another) to having responsibility for a department to working with more able pupils in her new school. The proximal, meso- and macro-level clusters contained within the TRAIt model indicate how the wider policy and school cultural context orientate and focus the way Jill functions within her role and sets the micropolitical context around which Jill came to be in her current post in addition to her affective state—how she felt 'forced by circumstances' to take on that role. Lord (2023) also shows how issues around performativity and accountability, in this case for attainment results, also impact on identity and agency which highlights the influence of external and contextual factors on a teacher's identity and agency which taken together can be disruptive, but not necessarily in a wholly net negative way.

[1] We suggest that reflexivity as a higher form of critical reflection which draws specifically on the complex array of factors to come to make meaning from any given situation and how these influences both what and how a person thinks and acts.

Campbell (Chap. 3) explores how teacher education, and the notion of agency is conceptualised, formed, governed, and influenced in postcolonial Hong Kong by the interaction between eastern and western philosophies. Campbell suggests that while many teachers and teacher educators align their perspective on teacher Identity and agency with Priestley et al. (2015) view that teacher agency is a complex interaction between the sociocultural context of the school and wider system and the teachers' ability to act in accordance with their own professional values for the good of the pupils they teach. However, Campbell also suggests that within a context of sustained neoliberal influences over the political structuring and restructuring within education systems, he questions the possibilities for teacher agency in Hong Kong, where managerialist reform serves to disempower rather than promote teacher agency and where career-long teacher education emphasises compliance over criticality and professional collaboration. Drawing on the psychological perspective from the work of Albert Bandura, Campbell suggests that agency is the capacity to exercise control over the nature and quality of one's life while affirming that the notion that professional agency is practised when teachers and/or communities in schools influence, make choices, and take stances in ways that affect their work and their professional identity. This perspective highlights how agency might be understood in relation to a teacher's ability to act independently or collectively with intentionality, where the aim is to reach a pre-defined goal. In many respects, this view dovetails nicely with Lord's (2023) case study of Jill who spoke of the way that external factors, for example, how local educational policy forced her to move to another school. While it would be unfair to characterise teacher agency within Hong Kong as restricted, it is clear from Campbell's analysis that teacher agency and how it relates to teacher education in postcolonial Hong Kong requires a nuanced understanding of how ecological factors influence individual teachers' capacity to act with agency. It also requires an understanding of the structural norms, practices, and influences that enable or establish barriers to agentic forms of action.

10.3 Initial Teacher Education

It is fair to suggest that initial teacher education is regarded by all educational stakeholders as an important phase of a teacher's professional development. However, as Mifsud highlights in Chap. 1, policymakers tend to view the initial phase of teacher education as a policy problem to be solved in respect of questions relating to teacher quality. This is problematic in many respects since there are several different models of initial teacher education being enacted across the globe. If we take the United Kingdom as an example, the four nations of the UK deploy very different models of initial teacher education. In Scotland, teaching is a graduate profession with over 60% of all new entrants to the profession coming into teaching from the

Professional Graduate Diploma in Education[2] (Gray & Weir, 2014). The rest come in through either a concurrent four-year undergraduate bachelor's degree in a subject with Education or a bachelor's degree in Primary Education.

This contrasts with what currently happens in England where there is a complex mix of university-led Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programmes, School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) programmes, Schools Direct and Teach First that enables graduates to undertake their training within a school environment, leading to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) (Whiting et al., 2018). SCITT's courses are usually run by local groups of schools, giving graduates the opportunity to learn 'on the job' thereby providing 'trainees' hands-on teaching experience with at least two schools. Most (but not all) SCITT programmes offer a PGCE qualification. Similarly, Schools Direct courses, like SCITT programmes involve the 'trainee' spending a year with at least two schools, getting first-hand teaching experience. These programmes can also (but not always) lead to a PGCE award. On successful completion of the programme, 'trainees' receive QTS. Often those who learn through the School Direct route are offered a job at the schools in which they have 'trained'.

Central to these different models of initial teacher education, seen particularly within the UK, but is also prevalent in Canada (see Chap. 2) is the clear distinctions between how university-based teacher educators and educational policymakers view the development of new teachers. University teacher educators use the term 'education' whereas educational policymakers, and more importantly politicians, use the term 'training'. However, these two terms signify different pedagogical cultures with training being the more 'practical', and education being more 'learned' (Stephens et al., 2004).

University-based teacher educators argue that they 'educate' student teachers to be critically reflective professionals, who can apply educational theories and adapt their practice to the ever-evolving demands placed on the profession across the career trajectory. Whereas policymakers and politicians often use the term 'training' to suggest that they view teaching as a technical act where teachers act like technicians' who apply 'techniques' within their teaching practice in a more formulaic manner to support efficient delivery of the curriculum rather than professionals. Stephens et al. (2004) summarise the tension between these two perspectives by suggesting that education is a process of cultural formation and enrichment whereby education emphasises the development of character, whereas training views teachers' knowledge as a series of practice heavy, theory light professional skills (standards?), with competence being measured against external benchmarks. They go on to highlight that the school *system* can be likened to 'a delivery system where knowledge is packaged and transmitted, where quality control consists of checking to see if technical "mastery" of the required knowledge has been achieved' (p. 113). The issue with this perspective on training being that while this approach looks neat, tidy, and efficient on paper, it fails to consider the complex and often messy kind of wisdom/teacher

[2] Professional Graduate Diploma in Education is a nine-month programme (18 weeks on University campus teaching sessions with 18 weeks on School on placement) undertaken by graduates wishing to enter either primary or secondary teaching.

knowledge that can only be acquired through practice, critical professional reflection and discussion with knowledgeable peers which is the main feature of the education perspective on teacher preparation.

Initial Teacher Education programmes, regardless of how they are configured, undergo incremental changes over time as their programme teams respond to changes in policy that effect schools and universities, while incorporating new ideas from research and practice. They also construct their teaching carefully to reflect the changing nature of schooling and teaching practice as well as incorporating demands from national accrediting bodies. The nature of this process is illustrated in Chap. 7 where Wimmer et al. (2023) explore the changing trends in the course reading lists of special education teacher education programmes in Sweden. Wimmer et al. (2023) analysis clearly indicates the way that the shifts in readings over time in these programmes mirror the shifts and trends in policy, practice, and research by looking specifically at reading lists. What leaps out at the reader from this analysis is the fact that lists of obligatory reading are both a fertile source that maps the dynamics in teacher education over time but also that, in the context of special education, there was a 'paradigm' shift from a high proportion of psycho-medical-oriented texts towards more pedagogical-based texts in the last forty years, mirroring the trend in the research literature and in practice. This research indicates that shifts in trends within the wider field of education impact on the types of readings set for students by teacher educators and by extension influences what they do with their students in terms of teaching, engagement with policy discourse, and preparation for practice.

A recurring theme touched upon in a number of chapters in this text (specifically Chaps. 2, 4, and 5) highlight the importance of practicum to ITE programmes, where episodes of school experience are highly valued by student teachers as a way of bridging the theory–practice gap, and as an environment where they can test out their ideas, reflect on their successes and failures, receive advice from many different people from differing perspectives, and hone their teaching practice. Teacher educators also value episodes of school placement as a space where they can both support and assess their students developing teaching practice. It can also be used as a negotiated site of research through partnership with schools, student teachers, and local policy actors.

10.3.1 Teacher Induction

The preparation of new teachers does not end when student teachers graduate from their ITE programme. Most well-developed education systems provide further support for 'novice' teachers as they transition into the profession through systematic induction and mentoring. While teacher induction programmes might mark the beginning of the transition from a student teacher to being seen by school colleagues as a full-fledged teacher, this transition comes with some expectations on the part of the inductee, the school, and the system. Also, at the beginning of induction, inductees come with a natural mixture of anxiety surrounding the expectations they

might face from the school, or the department they will be working with, as well as their own expectations for the experiences they might gain from the school and a healthy level of enthusiasm to get started working with the children and young people they will be teaching (Day, 2020). It is therefore important for early career teachers to be nurtured and supported into the profession in a way that orients their thinking and their practice in a way that sets them on the correct pathway that meets their development needs for the early part of their career.

In Chap. 5, Day and Shanks (2022) show that teacher induction, in the Scottish context, is designed to support early career teachers' developing sense of teacher identity in a way that allows the early career teacher to consolidate their classroom practice, while simultaneously giving them classroom and whole school experiences that will allow them to build their sense of professional efficacy within a 'safe space'. Indeed, Day and Shanks (2022) highlight that several factors influence the success or failure of induction with the role played by the induction mentor and the relationship between them and the inductee being pivotal to the induction process. With other factors such as school context, enculturation, and socialisation into the school community being major factors for successful induction and by extension in the development and orientation of the early career teacher.

By focusing their research on the inductee's perspective, Day and Shanks (2022) pinpoint tensions within the induction system in Scotland that are useful for key educational stakeholders in Scotland. They also provide some critical questions that might be useful for the Scottish Government, who owns the Teacher Induction Scheme, the General Teaching Council for Scotland, who manage the scheme on behalf of the Scottish Government, and for Local Authority Induction managers who operationalise the scheme. In addition, Day and Shanks (2022) research poses some questions for teacher educators and their employers to reflect upon. For example, to what extent do teacher educators currently get involved in the induction system and how might this best work for the benefit of the education system in terms of partnership working.

What is clear from this work is the need for teacher educators, teachers, schools, and local authorities to work together in close partnership to better support early career teachers since the experiences of the inductees within their study indicate a mixture of experiences which are less than ideal, if the induction scheme aims to support early career teachers learning journey and help to retain the talent that many early career teachers clearly have for teaching moving forward.

10.4 The Role of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Within Education

As the previous discussions within this chapter indicate, continuing professional development is an important element of teacher education that supports the ongoing development of the teaching workforce. However, the availability of quality CPD

over the last 15 years has been highlighted as a weakness in the system. In Chap. 8, Gibson et al., highlight the fact that in England, access to quality continuing professional development, particularly for the development of future leaders, has moved away from university-based CPD towards third-sector providers, who generally focus more on the delivery of functional knowledge at the expense of offering theoretical perspectives on the focus of development. In addition, Gibson et al., argue that in the context of leadership development, CPD should continue after an individual has been appointed to a leadership position since new leaders require different forms of leadership development as their needs differ from those of established leaders. In terms of supporting the establishment, development, and negotiation of differing teacher identities dependent on role within the education system, we would argue that a strong partnership model is needed to support the development of teachers and leaders between universities, schools, and local authorities or municipalities to strengthen the link between theory and practice, and to infuse a deeper understanding of how local context impacts notions of school improvement. The value of such support both in terms of self-improvement for the individual and for organisational improvement is understated.

By comparing three national contexts (England, Sweden, and Russia), Gibson et al., show the impact of neoliberal agendas on the development of leaders. For example, in England, the notion of system leadership, of organisations assisting each other in a 'self-improving school-led system' (SISS), has taken hold in a way that has significantly altered the role of the school leader and consequently the way that school leaders are developed. In addition, Gibson et al., highlight that in the English context the privatisation of schools in the form of Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) has led to a shift in control of the education system to a point where 39% of all schools are now academies with over half of all pupils (52%) in England attending this type of school (Department for Education, 2021). Furthermore, Gibson et al., point to the impact that transnational assessment systems have had on educational reform in Sweden, where these reforms have shifted both the curriculum and the way school leadership is conceived to accommodate such assessments. What this indicates is the complex ways in which transnational, international, and national policies impact, to varying degrees, on how education systems operate. The main determinant factor being the extent to which different National governments engage with and take on board the results of such assessments. This point is highlighted in the way that different European governments reacted to the 2009 results from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) now referred to as PISA Shock (Baroutsis & Lingard, 2018). The theme of neoliberal marketisation within the education system is also touched upon in Chap. 3 where Campbell notes that as part of a broader neoliberal culture, Hong Kong has to navigate the complexity of maintaining and extending the region's reach as both a global financial centre and a high achieving education system as evidence by its placing in the PISA rankings as well as its status as a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China. Neoliberal utopian ideals come to characterise policy responses in the SAR as it relates to teachers, teaching, and education more broadly.

A worrying feature of Gibson et al.'s analysis of Leadership development is the situation they illustrate in Russia, where it is possible to be a school principal without even being a teacher if you have a Public Administration or Management background. Given the complex nature of schools, we would argue that it is imperative that a school leader has an intimate working knowledge of how learning occurs within different classroom settings to be able to make educationally sound decisions on how best to improve educational outcomes for all children and young people in their charge. The notion that anyone with management or administration experience can take on a school leadership role without the pedagogical understanding is disturbing. Also, the fact that in the Russian context, there as school principals that when in post, have the option of taking on a non-specialist development programme to support their leadership journey suggests that the Russian government views schools like businesses as opposed to educational establishments. This situation is contrasted in Chap. 9 where Mitchell et al. (2023), outline the pivotal role head teachers play in career-long professional learning (CPD in the Scottish context) within their schools. Mitchell et al. (2023), also highlight the fact that the role of head teacher is not comparable with leadership in other organisations and provide an image of school leadership, within the Scottish context, which shifts the balance in school leadership away from top-down management towards a distributed leadership model. With the positioning of head teachers as 'Lead learner' facilitates the move towards placing professional learning at the heart of the school improvement agenda.

Mitchell et al. (2023), point to tensions arising from several Scottish government policies along with the General Teaching Council for Scotland's standards for Full Registration, Career-long Professional Learning, Middle Leadership, and Leadership and Management that teachers, middle leaders, and Head Teachers have to negotiate with respect to the goal of actively tackling issues of social justice within their teaching practice, while also being responsible and ultimately accountable for, pupils' attainment. Mitchell et al. (2023), suggest that these tensions are reconciled by the Head Teacher being positioned as the Lead learner who facilitates and supports professional learning within the school community which is purposeful and impactful on practice. However, we would question the value of such positioning when access to support from experts in university who can act as critical friends is at best piecemeal. It is possible to argue that without outside support, many schools are susceptible to fads which suck time and money for little tangible reward. Without critical support from outside the school context, there is plenty of scope for confirmation bias to creep into evaluations of initiatives designed to reduce inequity and improve social justice.

10.5 Concluding Remarks

Throughout the chapters of this book, the contributing authors have illustrated the complex, heterogeneous nature of teacher education across the career trajectory of teachers. There are some areas of the world where university-based teacher education

is under real threat, for example, in England where the Conservative government has instigated policies that will potentially exclude many universities from participating in teacher education within schools. However, there are other parts of the world where university-based teacher education is valued as a key partner in the education system.

The arguments put forward within this book suggest that educational stakeholders, particularly politicians, need to reflect on how educational policies steer the way teachers think about their everyday work. It is clear from the debate surrounding the use of seemingly simple terms such as training or education that a nuanced understanding of the complexity of teacher education across a teacher's career trajectory is required by all educational stakeholders to take forward any reform agenda. We argue that education and schooling, requires a longer-term strategic focus on developing and improving the system beyond the current political cycle where politicians attempt to make short-term improvements in order to fulfil their manifesto pledges to the electorate. It is the ongoing politicisation of education that we see happening across international boundaries that is of particular concern.

Many politicians see education in simplistic terms since they at one point in their life attended school. However, they failed to understand that the school system that they experienced is no longer the school system they are faced with today. Discourse around the quality of teachers and teaching needs to be seen beyond teacher education as a policy 'problem to be solved'. When governments view education as complex, non-linear contexts, they will see that simple policy solutions are not effective. What is required, in our view, is a depoliticisation of education systems where policy actors (and politicians) view schooling as a 30-year project rather than a five-year intervention. In many national contexts, policymakers often 'tinker' with education to varying degrees, resulting in cycles of reforms that despite being well-meaning, often fail to deliver the desired outcome. Teacher education, in its widest sense, is not immune to such tinkering, as can be seen within the English context at the present time.

When educational policymakers and teacher education academics work together in partnership and view teacher education, teaching and learning as a praxis and academic work, then it should be possible for consensus to form around the need for educational reform where the policies that emerge from such reforms might lead to successful implementation and a net improvement in educational outcomes. At present, what comes across from each of the chapters within this book is the view that for some national policymakers, political ideology drives the policymaking process rather than educational priorities, as exemplified in the ongoing discourse around initial teacher training and education in England. When national governments disenfranchise universities from engaging in teacher education, particularly from the ITE phase of teacher development, there is the risk that teacher education across the career trajectory will become narrowed, will lack a theoretical foundation, and ultimately renders teachers, school leaders, and other actors within the education system as subject to the directives of government rather than as servants to the communities that they serve.

There are several reflective questions that teacher education needs to tackle over the course of the next few years to develop a stronger educational work force.

- How can teacher educators constructively engage with other educational stakeholders to take forward positive solutions to key educational priorities?
- How can university-based teacher educators engage more effectively within the political discourse to better advocate for their expertise and have their professional voice heard by policymakers?
- How can teacher educators better support teachers and school leaders to navigate the tensions within their roles?
- To what extent can teacher educators influence teaching practice by engaging more constructively in partnership work with educational stakeholders involved in supporting early career teachers?

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Index

A
Agency, 8, 13–15, 18, 19, 34, 41, 42, 47–49, 53–59, 61–63, 65, 66, 119–127, 129, 136, 138, 139, 163, 168, 182, 186, 195, 208, 211, 212
Aided schools, 50
Archer, M., 119–122, 125, 134–137, 139, 140, 212
Autonomous, 51, 54, 73, 74, 88, 122, 212

C
Career, 7, 10, 13, 15–18, 27, 30, 35, 36, 40–42, 47, 48, 52, 56, 60–63, 71, 75, 76, 85, 86, 97–100, 105, 107, 111, 113, 123, 127, 131–133, 138, 161–163, 168–171, 174, 175, 185, 205–207, 209–211, 214, 216, 218–220
Career-long, 17, 19, 47, 48, 50, 51, 53, 54, 56, 58, 60, 62, 66, 98, 112, 163, 181–183, 188, 189, 191, 193–195, 197–199, 207, 208, 213, 218
Career-long Professional Learning, 50, 51, 185, 186, 188–191, 193, 194, 198, 199, 218
Compliance, 11, 51, 56, 61, 213
Confucian-heritage, 64
Constitutional, 47, 55
Continuing Professional Development, 4, 25–27, 29, 35, 100, 105, 216, 217
Critical Realism, 121
Culture, 11, 14, 17, 27, 32, 51, 53, 58, 63, 64, 66, 73, 86, 123, 139, 144, 181, 182, 184, 185, 187–191, 193–199, 207, 209, 214, 217

D
Direct subsidy schools (DSS), 50

E
Ecological influences, 56
Economic, 3, 5, 6, 48, 53, 55, 56, 167, 170, 184, 188
Enacted, 7, 18, 54, 59, 134, 164, 190, 209, 213
European Commission, 1, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 16, 17, 89
European Union, 2, 6, 8, 10, 73, 89

F
Flexible Route to Registration, 19, 97, 98, 100–103, 112

G
General Teaching Council of Scotland, 99
Global Education Reform Movement (GERM), 2, 8, 13
Globalisation, 27, 49, 52–54, 62, 63, 65, 157
Government schools, 50

H
Headship, 131, 165, 181, 182, 185–188, 192, 194, 197–199

I
Identity, 1, 8, 11, 14, 15, 18, 19, 54, 56, 57, 59, 60, 64, 65, 72, 74, 76, 119–121,

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123, 126, 127, 129, 138–140, 156, 161, 167, 186, 187, 190, 207–213, 216, 217
Induction managers, 105, 108, 110, 112, 216
Infrastructure, 7, 40, 47–49, 51, 65
Initial teacher education, 6–8, 15–18, 25–27, 29, 30, 72, 97–101, 103, 105, 110–113, 141, 206, 207, 209, 213–215
Innovation, 6, 18, 49, 50, 86
Intersectionality, 123, 129, 134, 139
Iterational, 54

L
Leadership preparation England, 19, 161–163, 173
Leadership preparation Russia, 19, 162, 163, 173
Leadership preparation Sweden, 19, 162, 163, 173
Local Authority, 99–113, 164, 168, 188, 195, 216, 217

M
McCrone Agreement, 99, 108
Mechanisms, 16, 30, 39, 49, 50, 57, 60–63, 110
Middle leadership, 17, 186, 191–195, 218
Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs), 164, 165, 217

N
National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH), 165, 166, 173, 174
National Professional Qualifications (NPQs), 165
Neoliberalism, 27, 48, 52, 53, 183, 198
Normative order, 61, 64

O
OECD, 1, 2, 6–10, 12, 16, 17, 34, 41, 51, 55, 86, 157, 167, 184, 185, 189, 197

P
Performative, 52, 184
Philosophies, 12, 16, 31, 47, 48, 63, 64, 167, 209, 213
Policy, 1–16, 18, 19, 25–30, 32, 35, 40, 42, 47, 49–53, 58, 59, 61–63, 65, 66, 89, 98, 101, 105, 107, 119, 120, 123, 125, 129, 130, 134, 135, 138, 139, 143, 146, 157, 158, 161, 163–168, 174, 175, 181–186, 188–193, 196–199, 205, 206, 208, 209, 212, 213, 215, 217, 219, 220
Postcolonial, 47–49, 52, 57, 63, 64, 213
Practical-evaluative, 54, 55
Pre-service teachers self efficacy beliefs, 89
Probation, 10, 17, 99, 104, 106, 113, 114
Professional Development, 7, 16, 17, 25–27, 29, 30, 33, 35, 36, 38, 39, 86, 97, 99, 100, 105, 109, 110, 112, 113, 119, 120, 122, 136, 139, 162, 163, 166–168, 172, 173, 175, 193, 207, 208, 210, 213, 216, 217
Professional Graduate Diploma in Education, 99, 214
Professional learning, 3, 12, 13, 17, 28, 30, 35–42, 47, 49–51, 53, 55–59, 64–66, 97, 107, 108, 110, 112, 169, 181, 182, 186, 188–190, 193, 195–199, 218
Professional standards, 10, 12, 13, 15, 50, 51, 171, 175, 181, 186, 187, 191, 192
Projective, 54, 55
Purposes, 28, 32, 41, 48, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59–62, 64–66, 72, 88, 105, 107, 133, 134, 136, 140, 147, 148, 184, 187, 196, 206, 208, 210

Q
Quality, 1–13, 16, 25, 26, 28, 30, 33, 35, 37, 40, 48, 50, 51, 54, 57, 74, 80, 98, 102, 103, 105, 108–110, 147, 165, 175, 185, 190, 195, 206, 208, 213, 214, 216, 219
Quality' teachers, 6

R
Reflexivity, 5, 119–125, 127, 129, 135–140, 212
Research-informed Framework for Induction, 107

S
School-based mentors, 104, 108, 109, 113

School community, 108, 188, 197, 199, 216, 218
School context, 107, 127, 194, 195, 198, 216, 218
School culture, 17, 194
School learning communities, 109
Standards for Full Registration, 218
Structure, 4, 7, 15, 17, 50, 55–59, 63, 79, 99, 100, 121, 123–125, 129, 136, 139, 168, 184, 191–193, 199, 212
Systemic goals, 50, 51, 59
Systemic structures, 49, 60

T

Teacher, 1–19, 25–42, 47–59, 61–66, 71–89, 97–105, 107–112, 114, 119–125, 127, 129, 132–135, 138–140, 143–145, 147, 156, 157, 161, 164–170, 175, 181, 182, 184–190, 192, 193, 196–198, 205–220
Teacher education, 1–10, 12, 14, 16–19, 25–33, 40–42, 47–53, 56–66, 71, 72, 78–81, 85, 87, 89, 98, 99, 101, 102, 112, 140, 141, 143, 144, 146, 150, 154, 156, 161, 165, 167, 173, 181–183, 188, 191, 195, 197–199, 205–208, 213, 215, 216, 218–220
Teacher education reform initiatives, 4
Teacher Induction Scheme, 19, 97–104, 106, 107, 109–114, 216
Teaching practicum, 71–73, 76, 77, 89
Teaching profession, 1, 2, 4, 6, 11, 17, 19, 27, 48, 50, 51, 53, 54, 73, 75, 78, 97, 99, 143, 167, 192
Teaching Scotland's Future, 101