The Life Stories of Teachers in Post Compulsory Education: A Narrative Exploration of Teacher Identity

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This work or any part thereof has not previously been presented in any form to the University or to any other body whether for the purposes of assessment, publication or for any other purpose. Save for any express acknowledgments, references and/or bibliographies cited in the work, I confirm that the intellectual content of the work is the result of my own efforts and of no other person.

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Abstract

This thesis centres on a narrative inquiry of the life stories of teachers in Post Compulsory Education with the aim of exploring how the 'self' is constructed within discursive environments. The study adopts a dialogical approach to narrative identity formation as an ongoing process of becoming within the life course. Grounded in social construction theory (Gergen 2009), the study acknowledges that identity is fluid and determined by context; self-creation is therefore both a collective and individual endeavour situated within the social and cultural context. The research design centres on an in-depth study of four teachers in the exploration of the meanings constructed from autobiographical memories; in addition, the study explores how narrative meanings are mediated within the organisational and political context of being a teacher. The study adopts a psychosocial perspective (McAdams 2006) to life stories and the analysis of narrative construction is conducted through the lens of dialogical self theory with the aim of exploring the multivoiced nature of the self based on a diversity of self-positions (Hermans 2001). Narrative identities are therefore viewed as relational, individuals position themselves within the stories they tell in relation to a particular audience; individuals are also positioned by the social and cultural environment in which they are embedded. The study contributes to current knowledge in relation to the crucial role emotions play in the dialogical construction of the self; findings indicate that early emotionally charged autobiographical memories play a significant role in defining individuals' moral educational values within their teaching role. Emotions were also central to placing individuals in a field of tension in reconciling their personal values within the current organisational and political environment that imposes constraints on teachers' professional practice. The study concludes that in order to sustain the moral purpose of teachers' professional practice, there is a need for the dialogical renewal of the self through transformative discourse.

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Abbreviations

ACL   Adult and Community Learning

CertEd   Certificate in Education

DfE   Department for Education

ESRC   Economic and Social Research Council

FE   Further Education

HE   Higher Education

HNC   Higher National Certificate

HND   Higher National Diploma

MBA   Masters in Business Administration

NNEB   National Nursery Examination Board

NPM   New Public Management

NQF   National Qualification Framework

NVQ   National Vocational Qualification

Ofsted   Office for Standards in Education, children's services and

             skills

PCE   Post-Compulsory Education

PGCE   Postgraduate Certificate in Education

PMSU   Prime Minister's Strategy Unit

QTLS   Qualified Teacher in Learning and Skills

TLC   Transforming Learning Cultures

UCAS   University Central Admissions Service

UK   United Kingdom

VLE   Virtual Learning Environment

WBL   Work Based Learning

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Chapter 1 - A Narrative Exploration of Teacher Identity within Post Compulsory Education

"The growth of the self arises out of a partial disintegration, the appearance of the different interests in the forum of reflection, the reconstruction of the social world and the consequent appearance of the new self that answers to the new object" *(Mead 1913 p.380)*

1.1 An Introduction to the Research Study

This thesis centres on the exploration of teachers' life stories within post compulsory education (PCE) with a focus on how the 'self' is created through personal narratives in a continuous process of evolving identity formation. The study is based on a narrative ontology of identity which is seen as an ongoing process of 'becoming' throughout the life span. Narrative identity is therefore perceived to be in a constant flux as an ongoing project of self-interpretation. To have a narrative identity is to have a sense of one's actions, commitments and traits that have developed over time and the capacity to (re)interpret these factors in the light of ongoing interactions, experiences and reflections (Christman 2008). It is through our narratives that we forge patterns of meanings within our lives and connect our personal perspectives to our history, actions, emotions, beliefs, desires and characteristics in the development of our own self-conception. Our narrative identity is therefore dynamic, provisional and open to change over the life span (Mackenzie 2008).

In this study I will aim to provide a supportive communicative space by which participants can describe, define and perhaps reshape the nature of what it is like to be a teacher in PCE. In particular, my motivation for conducting the study is to activate teacher voice with a view to exploring how teachers maintain a strong sense of individual agency in defining the values which underpin their professional practice. In this respect, I view narrative as a process through which individuals learn in and through the stories they tell. Narrative is therefore both a product and process; whilst it serves the purpose of communication with others, it also provides an internal dialogue in communicating with ourselves as a process of constructing new meanings from our experiences (Goodson et al 2010). I therefore perceive the narrative study of lives to be a more democratic form of research. Within this context, a reflexive dialogical approach to constructing meaning aims to activate teacher voice and is seen to be a more ethical approach to conducting research (Bold 2012).

The inquiry is based on an experience-centred narrative approach (Squire 2008) to dialogue through a joint meaning-making process. Therefore "as we speak together, listen to new voices, raise questions, ponder alternatives, play at the edges of common senses, we cross the threshold into new worlds of meaning" (Gergen 2009 p.5). As a teacher educator and developing researcher, I have a strong belief that teachers act as agents in the fulfilment or

reconstruction of their identity by managing critical incidents or trends which are threatening to their own aspirations within the teaching role. In particular, I have an interest in exploring the extent to which autobiographical memories, together with political or organisational discourses define teacher identity. Ultimately, the study sets out to establish the degree to which teachers feel empowered to accept or reject beliefs that are thought to be socially acceptable and valued within the organisational context of PCE. Individual agency will therefore be influenced by the strategies participants adopt to deal with the contradictions and tensions they encounter within their everyday teaching practice.

In the 1980s researchers turned their attention to the personal and biographical nature of teachers' life stories as they evolved over time. This movement to understand and explore the intensely personal nature of teaching coincided with the development of political control over teachers' practice in the 1980s and 1990s in a barrage of new policies, patterns of governance and accountability (Goodson 2008). In the period since the 1980s, teachers in all sectors of education have had their professional judgement severely reduced and replaced by a new voice in the public domain that focuses on regulation through performance measures. As a result teachers' professional practice is now "both steered and rowed" (Ball 2008 p. 150). This study aims to acknowledge that a teacher's work is both politically and socially constructed and some researchers believe that

the market forces articulated in political discourse are "seeking to turn the teacher's practice into that of a technician" (Goodson 2008 p. 3). Within the current political context of education, my aim in this research project is to develop insights, in a grounded and collaborative manner, into the social construction of teaching (Goodson and Numan 2002). It is my belief that it is through the activation of teachers' autobiographical life stories that we can better understand how a teacher's sense of 'self' has evolved within the personal meaning-making process and how a teacher's experiences shape teaching practices in the here and now. It is through the activation of teacher voice that counter-discourses could reconceptualise models of teaching from a teacher-as-practice model to a teacher-as-person concept (Goodson 2008, Sikes 2001).

There has been considerable emphasis on life story research of teachers within the compulsory education sector; for example, Munro (1998), Clandinin and Connelly (2000), Goodson and Sikes (2001), Clough (2002), Clandinin (2007) and Goodson (2008) are all researchers who adopt a narrative approach to teacher identity. These studies attempt to examine teachers' personal knowledge through placing importance on biographical and personal perspectives within life stories; in addition, these studies place emphasis on exploring how professional practice is also politically and socially constructed (Goodson and Numan 2002). Life stories therefore explore how identity is shaped; "the important interpersonal

and social relationships one has formed, and a sense of one's values, beliefs, and worldview in the storyteller's own words" (Atkinson 2007 p.234). In research conducted by Goodson (2008) 'excellent' teachers were seen to have a strong sense of mission and vocation, together with a commanding storyline that articulates their passion and purpose within their teaching role. However, standards based reforms which increasingly devalued teachers' strong sense of creativity could lead to disillusionment and the collapse in the social purpose of education (Goodson 2008).

Life story research is viewed as a process of learning from our lives which encourages self-reflection and improved self-knowledge; it focuses on understanding "where the beliefs, values and experiences" have originated from and "how our past might influence our present and our future" (Goodson and Sikes 2001 p.73). The key aim of this study is to engage PCE teachers in reflective analysis of their life stories as a process which facilitates the narrative construction of teacher identity. The study will attempt to elicit teacher voice through exploration of critical incidents in autobiographical memories which may crucially affect an individual's perceptions of their own professional practice. Narration will also provide an opportunity for individuals to reflect upon current educational discourses which frame their professional practice. The study therefore aims to provide a space for participants to reflect on their position and their practice, and to some extent clarify their

pedagogic thinking (James and Gleeson 2007). This self-formation of teacher identity is based on a reflective process whereby individuals accept or resist subject positions assigned to PCE teachers. Narrative identity construction may therefore take place in juxtaposition with current political and organisational discourses (Goodson 2008)

Research through a life story approach to narrative identity is however far less prevalent within PCE in comparison to the compulsory education sector. As acknowledged by Jephcote and Salisbury (2009) what we know about post compulsory teachers is "marginally beyond the 'shadowy figures' stage" (p.962) in comparison to how school teachers have been portrayed in research since the 1960s. Whilst there is considerable existing research in PCE based on notions of professionalism, the political context of the sector, initial teacher education and professional standards, much of this research adopts a sociocultural theoretical lens in challenging hegemonic political discourse. What is new in this study is consideration of the psychological as well as the social domain of narrative construction through the in-depth exploration of individuals' emotional and subjective meaning-making processes. In particular, the study focusses on the personal historical and social conditions in which individuals construct affective investments through adopting particular discursive positions within their narrative dialogue. The study adopts the view that rich accounts of real life "may call into

question dominant narratives that do not match the experience of life as lived" (Bathmaker and Harnett 2010 p.3). Narrative stories therefore have the potential to mobilise others and foster a sense of belonging in unheard, marginalised and silenced lives (Riessman 2008).

1.2 The Research Questions

This research project will address the following research questions:

1) To what extent do autobiographical life stories engage participants in meaning-making of their narrative teacher identity?

2) To what extent do political and organisational cultures shape teachers' narrative identity in PCE?

Teachers within the post compulsory sector are drawn from a wide range of diverse backgrounds and often enter teaching within their midlife period, after experiencing a range of varied and successful careers in their chosen vocational area. For many, the move into a teaching role is seen as career progression and a means of enhancing the knowledge, skills and life opportunities of the next generation (McAdams 2006). I therefore anticipate that these teachers may narrate diverse life stories and whilst their prior identity could be firmly grounded in their vocational expertise, the identity change from vocational specialist to a teaching role may require the

fragmentation of a prior identity. More specifically, what this study brings to the current debate is a focus on the diversity of teachers within PCE and how their varied life experiences may influence individuals' values in relation to the education process. The research process will therefore centre on how individuals construct meanings from their autobiographical memories in their journey to becoming a teacher through exploration of their personal narratives. In addition, the study aims to investigate the wider context of narrative formation by exploring how narratives are mediated within the organisational context to develop understandings of social and political construction (Goodson and Numan 2002). My overall objective is to explore how individuals' own internal resources facilitate the maintenance of a strong sense of 'self' within the post compulsory sector.

1.3 The Structure of the Thesis

This chapter will now locate the study within research literature which considers the lived experiences of teachers within PCE with a view to setting the scene for exploring how political or organisational cultures shape teachers' constructions of their narrative identity. The discussion will then consider the moral dimensions of the teaching role and the epistemological foundations of the study in relation to life story as a psychosocial construction of the self.

Chapter two will consider the methodological rationale of the research study design based on narrative constructions of reality. Chapters three and four will centre on the analysis of the narrative data collected in the study. More specifically, chapter three will address the first research question in exploring the extent to which autobiographical life stories engage teachers in meaning-making of their narrative identity. Chapter four will address the second research question on the extent to which political and organisational cultures shape teachers' narrative identity. Finally, chapter five will evaluate the wider implications of narrative constructions on the professional practice of teachers within the PCE sector giving consideration to the key role emotions play in the dialogical self, together with the possibilities for the dialogical renewal of the self.

1.4 The Lived Experiences of Teachers within Post Compulsory Education

The PCE sector has been subjected to considerable policy reform over the past two decades based on the view of education as a means of bringing about economic growth, social cohesion and social justice (Jephcote, Salisbury and Rees 2008). The sector has been perceived by successive governments as a means of providing learning opportunities which are thought to be the key to economic success; a clear association is therefore made with an educational system that develops the skills and knowledge of the workforce to

ensure economic success (Avis 2009). The Leitch Review (2006) clearly articulates these reforms as being a move towards a "demand led" market system based on funding formulae which aims to increase student achievement rates and therefore "value for money" (p.74). However, a system which allocates one-third of young people to a vocational route is viewed by some as educational warehousing (Keep 2012) based on a discourse of economic instrumentalism (Stoten 2013).

These policy drivers have the potential to create conflict with teachers' personal, ethical and moral values which may be more orientated towards empowering human beings through a process of meaning-making and reality construction (Bruner 1996). Furthermore, there are fundamental flaws in situating education within a regulated market that focuses on "products rather than processes, on customers rather than learners, on funding formulae and administration rather than pedagogy" (Coffield *et al* 2008 p.20). Some of the unintended consequences of these policy levers could result in social inequality as the market forces the sector to compete for courses that are least costly, with high volumes of students, and where the greatest financial returns can be made (Coffield *et al* 2008).

It has been argued that if public sector services are to survive and flourish in a volatile environment, organisations need to shape their aspirations in accordance with political and market forces (Williams,

Rayner and Allinson 2012). Based on the perceived need to improve efficiency, quality and equity in public services, the post compulsory sector has been subjected to a range of policy levers which include "performance targets, standards, audit, inspection, quality assurance processes and powers to intervene where public services are failing" (Steer *et al* 2007 p.117). Furthermore, the Department for Education (DfE 2014) report *Reforming the Accountability System for 16-19 Providers*, which is intended to come into effect from 2016, justifies the rationale for the development of even more rigorous league tables and performance indicators to strengthen accountability mechanisms with the sector.

This policy steering, defined as the three technologies "of market, management and performativity" (Ball 2003 p.226) is as prevalent within the post compulsory sector today as it has been in the preceding two decades. The demands placed on the sector have engendered wide ranging changes at college level in the move to compete for students and funding, be self-managing and in aspiring to become an outstanding provider of education and training opportunities (Stoten 2013). The current performative culture could however undermine the subjective approach and unique qualities which underpin teachers' professional practice through celebrating aspects of professional practice which can be objectively assessed through performance indicators (Whitehead 2005). Teachers' actions may not be purely motivated by a blind response to these external

pressures; ultimately it will be an individual's inner drive, personal beliefs, values, and reflexive consciousness (Jun 2009) that determines the professional judgements of teachers.

There has been a steadily increasing amount of literature that focusses on the lived experiences of teachers in PCE which is set within the context of these policy reforms. Emergent themes situated within the growing emphasis on a managerial paradigm relate to a "loss of teacher control; intensification of labour; increase in administration; perceived marginalisation of teaching and stress on measurable performance indicators" (Avis 1999 p.251). Targets and performance indicators are used to measure successful outcomes and thereby define the terrain in which teachers operate (Avis 2003). Furthermore, an emphasis on generating funding "produces the illusion of targets being achieved, while cutting across teachers' concerns about the real learning potential of students" (Smith and O'Leary 2013 p.259). This audit culture directs resources towards achieving pre-determined outcomes resulting in "little room for negotiation or professional judgement" (Groundwater-Smith and Sachs 2002 p.341). Self- assessment regimes also form part of the construction of what it means to be a good teacher and teachers' professional practice is now placed in the context of conditions set by others (Avis1999). Forms of surveillance therefore constrain "the discursive context" of what it means to be a teacher in PCE (Avis 1999 p.260).

As professional practice has become even more regulated through inspection and audit processes, there is the potential that teachers may adopt a form of organisational professionalism, through an alliance with corporate aims which could possibly undermine the personal values and commitments that teachers bring to their work (Bathmaker and Avis 2013). However, in research conducted with trainee teachers in PCE, Bathmaker and Avis (2013) found that many individuals adopted a 'personal professionalism' which firstly "builds on teachers' responses to their own educational experience" (Bathmaker 2006 p.134). Secondly, personal professionalism focusses on a commitment to provide educational experiences for students who have missed out within compulsory education, and thirdly, teachers' commitment to their subject or occupational specialism (Bathmaker 2006). Bathmaker and Avis (2013) advocate a focus on pedagogic practices as basis for reworking professionalism through a critical and reflexive engagement with what is important in teachers' professional practice. Whilst it is acknowledged that personal professionalism could become divorced from wider social conditions surrounding educational practices; the approach could be seen as the terrain in which current reforms "may come to be understood and subsequently challenged within educational settings (Bathmaker and Avis 2013 p. 745).

Drawing on the findings from the Transforming Learning Cultures in Further Education (TLC) four year national research project within

the Teaching and Learning Research Programme of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), there was acknowledgment that the "logic of the market and of corporatism combine to create organisational professionalism" (Colley, James and Diment 2007p.175). Educational policy therefore attempts to improve teaching and learning by focussing on a "construct of teacher professionalism, driven by qualifications and standards, as the prime determinant of learning" (Colley, James and Diment 2007p.187). Policy changes were however viewed by teachers as threatening to their own constructions of ethical practice, furthermore compliance with accountability targets, based on cost-effectiveness, could lead to unprofessional behaviour and bring teachers' "professional practice into disrepute" (Colley, James and Diment 2007p.185). Some teacher participants in this study considered their position to be untenable as they found difficulties in maintaining their relationships with students based on teachers' own beliefs relating to the social purpose of education (Colley, James and Diment 2007). However, some participants refused identities imposed within the sector and drew on their own moral or political beliefs and practices as a basis for their future practice (Colley, James and Diment 2007).

Research literature on PCE teachers' lives often reflects the duality between identities which involve compliance with performative cultures, in contrast to identities which are described as authentic and are based on democratic values and practices (Bathmaker and

Avis 2007). Stronach et al. (2002) believe that questions related to the professional self can be related to the contradictions and dilemmas that frame identity which are bound up in discursive dynamics as teachers attempt to address the dilemmas they face within their professional practice. Stronach et al. (2002) further demonstrated that identity was grounded in narrative stories whereby individuals presented different versions of a professional self, together with tangential aspects of a personal self. The result was a constant jockeying of stories as individuals attempted to come to terms with the pressures of audit cultures and threats to their professional values (Stronach et al. 2002). The research concluded that the current economy of performance, which offers an impoverished intellectual and practical diet, is corrosive to teacher morale in which professional lives will not be sustained (Stronach et al. 2002).

PCE is marked by a range of contradictory discourses and is "the site of social, political and educational struggles" (Avis, Bathmaker and Parsons 2002 p.45) in which managerialism constructs teachers and learners as objects of intervention. Through exploring the discourse of staff development officers, Avis, Bathmaker and Parsons (2002) found that students were viewed as the object to be addressed and were "ultimately used to validate the construction of learning and teaching that underpins development needs" (p. 29). Within the TLC project, James and Biesta (2007) related this approach to a technical

view of improvement in teaching and learning, based on a rational process of identifying what works, then communicating this to teachers as recipes to improve learning. This change process was often viewed as driven by managers who were "constantly manoeuvring in order to retain their power in a sea of shifting sands" (James and Biesta 2007 p.105). Within this context, colleges were seen as being driven by central government, with little consideration for the implications or integrity of changes made (James and Biesta 2007). These notions of change assume that there is agreement on the aims and values which underpin the educational process; it is just a matter of finding the most effective means of achieving assumed goals (James and Biesta 2007). However, it must be anticipated that not all teachers will share a similar vision and "accept unreflexively, given notions of excellence and continuous improvement" (Avis 2003 p. 322).

In an ethnographic study conducted by Boocock (2013), there was a focus on uncovering the motivational impact of performance indicators where external interventions were perceived as controlling rather than supportive, with the possibility of undermining the intrinsic motivation and professional values of teachers. The study identified that some curriculum areas were "steeped in a performative culture" and viewed "students as commodities of financial or presentational value; this view legitimised gaming behaviours as a means of achieving a good newspaper league table position for the college"

(Boocock 2013 p. 318). However, the study also found resistance to this self-interest where some teachers remained "intrinsically motivated to help 'second chance' weaker students" and maintained an obligation-based commitment to a social justice agenda for disadvantaged learners (Boocock 2013 p.319). These pressures on managers and teachers to commodify students could lead to the under-utilisation of professional values (James and Biesta 2007) and undermines the moral purpose of teachers' professional practice. The commodification of a teacher's work by reducing it to achievement of performance targets "instrumentalises care, rendering it inauthentic" (Avis and Bathmaker 2004 p.13).

The TLC project demonstrated that within the context of the continuing raft of reforms in PCE, only narrow notions of professionalism will prevail (James and Biesta 2007). A managerialist perspective therefore only allows a restricted concept of professionality (James and Biesta 2007) "in which knowing is reduced to in-the-moment responsiveness to market pressures" (Smith and O'Leary 2013 p.262). It devalues the moral judgements of teachers and seeks short term gratification in being responsive to market pressures for political ends (Smith and O'Leary 2013). Conversely however, in research conducted by Orr (2012) there was evidence of PCE teachers having the ability to speak the language of performativity, whilst maintaining professional practice based on values related to the moral and emancipatory nature of education.

Overall, the TLC project illustrated the importance of developing an expanded concept of professionality "in the face of repeated and pervasive challenges to the autonomy and scope for self-determination of the practitioners" (James and Biesta 2007p. 139).

Educational policy adopts a market discipline which aims to make teachers more accountable within a system which meets the needs of a changing economy (Quick 2000). This occupational restructuring is justified in terms of the need to provide a more flexible workforce that can adapt to change, and from a management perspective, "one that can be more easily manipulated to meet budgetary targets" (Quick 2000 p.303). Within this context of policy reform in the post compulsory sector, my aim is to investigate the extent to which teachers are able to maintain a strong sense of the moral values which underpin their professional practice. These educational reforms are based on an assumption that teachers are passive human beings who will simply conform to the external demands. My study proceeds on the basis that through activating teachers' life story narratives; we create the possibilities for counter-discourses to arise (Tamboukou 2008) which may challenge an instrumentalist view of the teaching role. There is a need to remain mindful that teachers are likely to take responsibility for their own actions (Jun 2009), therefore the discussion will now turn to the moral dimensions of teaching to explore how individuals may perhaps resist the

discourses (Burr 2003) which define the teaching role in performative terms.

1.5 The Moral Dimensions of Teaching

Educational policy is seen as having a profound impact on educational practice to the detriment of the moral dimensions of teaching. An excessive emphasis on achievement of vocational qualifications and valuing what is being measured "has become an end in itself rather than a means to achieve good education in the fullest and broadest sense of the term" (Biesta 2015 p. 83). There is therefore a need to critique ways in which professional judgement is being constructed and confined within the political environment which could possibly constitute a threat to "good education and meaningful professional conduct" (Biesta 2015 p. 84). There is a strand of literature that develops the notion of the centrality of the moral and ethical dimensions of teachers' work. Campbell (2008) believes that the "moral dimensions of teaching and the ethical nature of teachers' responsibilities" are often overshadowed by effective approaches to teaching and learning which are "rarely viewed from a moral or ethical perspective" (p.358). Therefore, the moral and ethical dimensions of teaching are fraught with tensions and challenges when "implementing policies and adhering to expected practices" which threaten teachers' feelings of professional autonomy (Campbell 2008 p. 367).

Hansen (2001) views teaching as an intellectual and moral endeavour and "not merely the enactment of a set of discrete skills or activities" (p.730) which are embedded in an instrumental approach to the practice of teaching. As such organisational cultures can enhance teachers' "emotional, intellectual and moral well-being" or conversely they may act as a negative force-field which breeds conformity and threatens a teacher's very personhood (Hansen 2001 p.732). The moral passion teachers bring to their role fuels their individuality in 'deeming' teaching and learning as worthwhile, good teachers therefore make "deliberate efforts to be a force for good" (Hansen 2001 p. 731). The person in the role of a teacher is crucial and good teachers are more than transmitters of information, they also facilitate "modes of perceiving, thinking, questioning, feeling, judging and more" (Hansen 2001 p. 731). As such, the field of ethics in teaching as a moral profession is integral to the world of education; "it cuts to the core of human relationships, speaks to the dependent vulnerability of students and the professional dedication and dignity of teachers" (Campbell 2008 p. 377). The moral rewards of teaching are therefore "activated when educators feel that they are doing what is right in terms of one's students, the teaching profession and themselves" (Santoro 2011 p.2).

Teachers may experience moral turmoil when faced with organisational cultures based on "instrumental, technical, managerial

or political" decision making which undermine teachers' moral and ethical principles (Campbell 2003 p. 127). Within the context of public sector reforms which aim to make practices more efficient, effective and economic, there is limited investment in the moral competence of the practitioners to respond to students' learning needs (Groundwater-Smith and Sachs 2002). This rational approach to managing educational organisations can be viewed as dehumanising of the significant moral or ethical life of teachers through an undemocratic top down approach to management (Carr 2000). Good management of organisations should therefore be sensitive to the "collegial appreciation of the diversity of individual and personal perspectives and contributions" of teachers through which the moral purpose of education is constructed (Carr 2000 p. 231). The best personal attributes and values that teachers bring to their role are not just instrumental but constitute the key purpose of education (Carr 2000).

My study adopts the view of Hansen (1998) that teachers are more than skilled technicians and that many teachers view their role as a force for good. Hansen (1998) argues that teachers derive their moral dimensions from practice rather than from a theoretical or philosophical posture. All teaching is therefore viewed as a moral endeavour because the practice of teaching requires that teachers assist students to broader their horizons, become more knowledgeable, become more interested in learning and

communicating, and more expansive in their thinking (Hansen1998). This idea of rooting the moral dimensions of teaching in the professional practice of teachers is based on a view of "empowering students with a sense of agency that emerges from being taken seriously, from being given opportunities to think and talk independently and reflectively" (Hansen 1998 p.651).

Whilst the policy context of PCE focusses on preparing students for participation in the workforce, this may not be viewed as the only goal of education. Starratt (2005) challenges the purpose of a test-driven approach to accumulating knowledge in that it "provides no sense of who one is, no sense of how to live one's life, no sense of membership in the larger communities that make up these worlds" (p.406) and therefore no sense of moral purpose of the learning process itself. There may be a need to re-establish the moral integrity of the work of teaching and learning in PCE where students feel cared for, being seen as having enormous potential "not simply to produce profits for their employers" but to heal their wounds and to participate meaningfully in the adult world (Starratt 2005 p.409). The moral virtues embedded in authentic learning experiences should not be viewed as a kind of value added but as essential for the intellectual quality of learning, without them what passes for learning is superficial, artificial and possibly dishonest (Starratt 2005).

It is not the intention of this study to situate the moral and ethical dimensions of teaching within theoretical paradigms related to moral philosophy, but rather to explore how teachers uphold their moral and ethical principles within their day- to -day professional practice as a basis of their moral agency. There is a danger that when the moral rewards of teaching become inaccessible, teachers may "find little to sustain them in the pursuit of good work" which is a recipe for demoralization (Santoro 2011 p. 18). The aim of the study is to pay particular attention to teachers' voices and beliefs on the moral dimensions of teaching (Sanger 2001) based on a view that when something is morally significant, motivation to behave in accordance with moral judgements derives from an emotional state (Prinz and Nichols 2010). The focus is therefore on individuals' narrative constructions and beliefs of what is moral and ethical which are not influenced by concrete theoretical constructs of morality. The study aims to facilitate the articulation of personal beliefs related to moral professional practice which may highlight certain features while downplaying others; morality may therefore relate to "relationships, following rules, fulfilling obligations, or the pursuit of a good and meaningful life" (Sanger 2001 p.699). The study centres on aspects of morality which are important to the individuals involved by consciously encouraging participants to express their own views on moral and ethical issues they encounter and how this influences their lived experiences as teachers in PCE.

1.6 Life Story as a Psychosocial Construction of the Self

The development of psychosocial studies emerged institutionally in the 1980s from the University of East London to explore a diverse range of research topics which were driven by problems, interests and topics based on a practical orientation (Day Sclater et al. 2009). It is generally accepted that there is no one single approach or theory to frame thinking, however psychosocial studies are based on a belief that disciplinary boundaries, for example the sociological and psychological, can hinder the process of inquiry orientation (Day Sclater et al. 2009). A psychosocial approach therefore seeks to adopt a distinctively interdisciplinary territory which flags up the centrality of emotion in personal lives, together with the social and cultural world (Day Sclater et al. 2009). The development of autobiographical, ethnographic and narrative forms of psychosocial studies reflects the convergence between humanities and social sciences to explore the textures of subjective and inter-subjective experience (Rustin 2009). By exploring emotions it is also possible to "resolve long-standing splits between the individual and society, and between the social and the psychological" (Rustin 2009 p. 32). As acknowledged by Clarke (2009) there is a general acceptance of the social construction of realities, however people are also emotional and we construct our 'selves' in imagination and affect. The main advantage of adopting a psychosocial approach in this study centres on the ability of a research process to give voice to participants by

providing an encounter whereby individuals construct their identity and make meanings of their lives (Clarke 2009). Psychosocial research is consequently a practice whereby the researcher provides a space to explore the "emotional dynamics that fuel the social construction of realities" (Clarke 2009 p. 112).

Richards et al. (2009) note that there are many psychosocial approaches which vary in the kind of psychology being deployed. It is not the intention of this study to draw on classical psychological theories based on dispositional traits or characteristic adaptations of personality, but rather to adopt a narrative life story approach to identity formation in relation to the professional lives of teachers in PCE. The study is grounded in the concepts of the life story model of identity and draws on the theories of McAdams (1996, 2001, and 2009) which centre on the view that individuals construct narratives as an internal story in the development of their own self-understanding. This process involves the reconstruction of our past experiences, interpretation of our present experiences, together with perceptions of our anticipated future. Whilst these life stories are grounded in reality, they are viewed as imaginative and creative productions which give overall meanings to our life (McAdams 2009). The life story memories that we narrate are linked to the long term goal pursuits of an individual, in this respect they are more affectively intense and well-rehearsed than less significant autobiographical memories (Singer et al 2012). These self-defining memories

represent events that an individual considers to be influential in shaping who he or she is in order to effectively navigate the challenges in life. As such, these self-defining memories can provide explicit personal messages which underpin teachers' beliefs in relation to the moral and ethical values which underpin their professional practice.

Along with the diversity in how models of the 'psycho' are interpreted, psychosocial approaches vary considerably in the ways in which the 'social' is theoretically presented (Richards et al. 2009). This study is grounded in a social construction perspective where knowledge is seen to be co-constructed and fabricated through everyday social processes (Burr 2003). In particular, the study aims to explore how the lived experiences of PCE teachers are shaped within the political educational policy context "in so far as this experience is generated in and through policy processes" (Cooper 2009 p.170). Policy based on performativity projects anxiety and responsibility downwards to educational providers, who fearful for their own survival, project responsibility onto teachers by demanding that performance is measurable (Cooper 2009). However, psychosocial studies have the capacity to reconnect teachers with their lived experiences, their emotionality and critical faculties to create spaces to question, interrogate and critique the political policy context of their work (Cooper 2009). As such, a psychosocial approach can incorporate

policy analysis by focussing on the wholeness of the individual lived experience of political processes (Cooper 2009).

Psychosocial studies which focus on emotion and the policy context of teaching aspire to reclaim the lived experiences of teachers; this does however mean listening to our own experience in new and perhaps different ways and persuading others to listen to teachers' experiences differently (Cooper 2009). However, performative cultures represent authoritative accounts of the world which carry implicit values or beliefs which oppress or marginalise the unheard voices of teachers, thereby perpetuating injustice in the "self-interest of dominant groups" (Gergen 2009 p.16). Organisational cultures have the potential to restrict narrative dialogue which provides meaningful ways in which PCE teachers are able to interpret their world; this could possibly lead to a breakdown in learning communities and alienation at an individual level (Crossley 2005). My study aims to explore an alternative approach to engaging teachers, through collaborative reflexive dialogue, in the construction of new forms of understanding based on a view that "the moment we begin to speak together, we have the potential to create new ways of being" (Gergen 2009 p. 29). What is emphasised in this study is the socially constructed nature of reality, emphasising the value-laden nature of inquiry and how social experience is created and given meaning within the research process (Denzin and Lincoln 2008).

It is not however the intention of this study to focus on addressing power relations in society which are "conceived of in relation to structural patterns of inequality" which lead to social antagonism (Bathmaker and Avis 2005). Neither is the study rooted in a sociological understanding of teacher identity based on "the hegemony of capitalist interests" (Avis and Bathmaker 2004). In contrast, the study adopts a micro-political perspective to teachers' socialisation into the organisational culture (Kelchtermans 2005). Central to a micro-political perspective are the personal interpretations PCE teachers make of political processes within the organisational environment; the micro-political actions of teachers are therefore based on individual values, interests and motives which help to establish, safeguard or restore their professional practice (Kelchtermans and Ballet 2002).   The focus of analysis therefore centres on exploring how teachers construct and negotiate their professional identities within the political environment. As such, "teachers' resistance to external control may be passive as much as active, and involve actions ranging from ignoring reforms, recasting them, only using certain aspects or refusing to comply" (Bathmaker and Avis 2005 p. 9). However, in adopting a micro-political perspective, the study acknowledges that "relevant issues and problems concerning education and people's existence more generally become individualised" and could be seen as problems which may need personalised solutions by teachers (Tedder and Biesta 2008 p. 8).

A limitation of the micro-political approach to teachers' life stories is therefore its minimisation of the connections between the 'private troubles' of teachers and wider structural issues related to educational policy which could have a disempowering effect on individuals (Tedder and Biesta 2008). Life story narratives adopt an individual bias in exploring how individuals change their responses to problematic situations (Biesta and Tedder 2007). Therefore, the approach adopted in this study only offers scope for action at the level of immediate personal relationships, rather than looking more broadly at organisational structures. The extent to which individuals have control over and give direction to their professional lives will however be influenced by contextual influences (Biesta and Tedder 2007); therefore learning to cope with loss of control in a performative culture may be understood as managing or accepting alienation and isolation. However the overall impression gained in research conducted by Orr (2012) with trainee teachers in PCE "was not one of people ground down by a situation of powerlessness" but rather the impression of teachers "managing to assert their own humanity despite the difficulties they encountered" (p.62).

Drawing on positioning theory, the study adopts the view "that social discourses construct an array of subject positions" which link together individual subjects with the social world in which they are embedded (Hollway and Jefferson 2009 p.124). Narrators often

position characters in their stories as being the same as or different from other characters; they also evaluate the agency of individuals as constituted by the social context in contrast to internal personal psychological qualities (Bamberg 2011). Therefore, through the exploration of the affective choices that individuals make between the available identity positions, we can investigate meaning-making processes in a way that is neither separate from the social world, nor reducible to it (Hollway and Jefferson 2009). My aim is to investigate the emotional investments involved when individuals adopt a particular discursive position (Hollway and Jefferson 2009) and biographical life stories are important in understanding these investments and their influence on professional practice in PCE. A discursive view of identity construction opens up possibilities for the research process to explore the practices by which individuals make meanings from their experiences through time and within the social context. I have adopted this position in order to provide a communicative space in which participants can reflexively explore and reconstruct their lived experiences in the realisation of their educational aims. This dialogical space could possibly provide an opportunity for participants to challenge discourses of rationality associated with a performance culture.

Narrative stories incorporate both personal positioning and social positioning. Personal positioning arises through narrating our lives within a moral and ethical framework, social positioning arises from

societal definitions of who we should be and are often more prevalent when there are power differences in social hierarchies (Raggatt 2006). With every position that an individual may adopt in their narrative goes a storyline in which "a person may be more or less tightly constrained as to what storyline is possible, proper, or even necessary to be living out" (Harrè and Slocum 2003 p. 107). Once we take up a position within our narrative we come to experience the world and ourselves from the vantage point of that perspective. This conceptualisation of positioning attempts to develop a social psychology of selfhood as individuals move between discourses in which self and other are constituted (Linehan and McCarthy 2000).

The study will also draw on concepts of the dialogical self (Hermans 2001, 2010; Raggatt 2000, 2006) based on the view that there are multiple positions within the individual which engage in a constant state of internal dialogical discourse. By engaging in internal dialogue, the self is able to fluctuate between opposing positions and endow each position with a voice. Given the multivoiced nature of the 'self', I therefore anticipate that narrative stories may reflect contrasting positioning dialogues as a process of self-reflection and self-exploration in the process of making meanings of our lived experiences. The approach adopted will therefore focus on the discursive (Harrè and Slocum 2003) and dialogical (Hermans 2001) nature of narrative constructions which acknowledge stories as lived experiences that are constructed within a specific social and

organisational context. By adopting a dialogical approach, teacher identity is therefore seen as a continuous process of negotiating multiple I-positions in a way that is more or less coherent of teachers' self-investments through their teaching life (Akkerman and Meijer 2011).

What is attempted in the study is engagement with life story narratives as a process which is considered to be the construction of the individual narrative identity of teachers in PCE. This approach differs considerably from traditional qualitative research approaches likened to 'prospecting' for true facts and feelings. As such, dialogue facilitates interactional exchange that underpins the process of social construction of teachers' narrative identity. The study aims at gaining in-depth insights into how individuals engage in personal meaning-making processes, together with exploring the emotional experiences of participants which may provide valuable insights which could enhance professional practice of teachers in PCE.

1.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I have made a case for the study of life story narratives of teachers in PCE based on a psychosocial approach which acknowledges that within the domain of professional practice, both subjective experience and societal constraints are unavoidable

(Richards et al. 2009). At its best, psychosocial research can demonstrate a creative tolerance for paradox which "tries to hold in mind both the internal and the external" together with the "social and the psychological" (Richards et al. 2009 p. 245). Psychosocial studies also offer the possibility of adopting an interdisciplinary approach that does not limit the engagement with a range of theories from social sciences or humanities, but rather creates the space for wider exploration of our lived experiences (Richards et al. 2009). Within this context, psychosocial studies have important things to say about the working of organisations as well as individuals (Richards et al. 2009). However, the focus of analysis in this study is at the level of the individual rather than conducting a critique of organisational cultures. We all have agency, inner worlds and individual biographies; therefore we may all position ourselves in "varied relations to those processes which contribute to the shaping of subjectivities" within the social and organisational context of our lived experiences (Richards et al. 2009 p.248). The study therefore centres on the internal world of PCE teachers, together with a commitment to understanding how the social and organisational culture influences individuals' narrative constructions of their teacher identity.

A substantial amount of previous research in PCE has focussed on the construction of teacher identities which are grounded in a sociological perspective and focus on structures of power which shape teachers' professional practice. What is new in this study is

the adoption of an individualistic bias in exploring the psychological as well as the social domain of narrative construction. The study centres on individuals' emotional and subjective meaning-making processes within their biographies and within the organisational culture in which they are embedded. The study therefore assumes a micro-political perspective in the exploration of how individuals adopt or resist the rational and instrumental discourses of educational policy. A substantial criticism of the psychosocial approach adopted in this study could be that it is viewed as simply another manifestation of a therapeutic culture which does little to challenge the fundamental structure of a capitalist order (Richards et al. 2009). There is a danger that in focussing on the emotional and subjective understandings of PCE teachers, individual therapeutic notions are favoured (Tedder and Biesta 2008) at the expense of analysing how educational policy shapes teacher identities. A limitation of this study is therefore that by focusing on the individual, there is a danger of overlooking wider structures of power which shape the professional practice of PCE teachers.

Conversely however, when PCE teachers engage in reflection and narration they may resolve issues "about self in relation to others, or issues about life, or issues about meaning" (Tedder and Biesta 2008 p.18) which may be helpful in achieving personal insights that can used to enhance individuals' own professional practice. The study therefore provides participants with the opportunity to make sense of

their individual biographies in the ongoing formation of their teacher identities (Avis and Bathmaker 2009). PCE teachers' life stories are important vehicles for learning and play a crucial role in articulating teachers' narrative identity; as such articulation of a sense of self is a form of identity work (Biesta 2008). This study is seen as having benefits for participants in providing an opportunity to develop greater self-knowledge, a stronger self-image and greater self-esteem (Atkinson 2007) which may increase self-confidence and individual agency (Biesta 2008) within teachers' professional practice.

The study does however acknowledge the need to "translate private reflections into more collective learning processes" (Tedder and Biesta 2008 p.19) in order to facilitate any significant change within the PCE sector. The psychosocial approach could therefore be viewed as a process which activates teacher voice and provides an opportunity to critique the organisational cultures in which individuals are embedded. Goodson and Sikes (2001) highlight the potential that biographical work has for the personal and professional development for teachers and this study may provide valuable insights which could inform strategies for the professional development of teachers in PCE. For example, sharing individual life stories with colleagues could possibly aid in the exploration of a diverse range of values which underpin professional practice of teachers. Collaborative autobiographical strategies also facilitate the development of stronger professional communities which may reaffirm teachers'

values and practice or may lead to change of some kind (Goodson and Sikes 2001). This process may prove more empowering for teachers and provide the necessary understanding to question and perhaps challenge the organisational culture in which teachers are immersed.

To summarise, in adopting a life story approach, this study provides an opportunity for individuals to tell their own stories from an insider's perspective. The study adopts an ideographic and subjective approach based on an inner sense of what participants' experiences mean to individuals (Atkinson 2007) and how these meanings inform the professional practice of teachers. Analysis of narrative data will consider the mutual constitution of the individual, together with political and organisational culture which defines teacher identities in PCE. Within this context, the psychosocial approach creates a foundation, based on the individual, to construct upward critiques and counter discourses (Richards et al. 2009) to the rational and instrumental discourses of educational policy. This study therefore centres on a humanistic concern in how PCE teachers look for meaning in their lives (Singer 2004), whilst remaining sensitive to the nuances of the political and organisational context of teachers' narrative identity construction based on:

> *"a deep respect for the centrality of experience, the 'inner' world of the individual, ourselves as conscious decision makers, and a subject who reflectively puts together the possible stories that might be told as narrative episodes of one's life" (Smith and Sparkes 2008 p.9)*

Chapter 2 - Narrative as a Methodology for Constructing Reality

"The self is best thought of as a process that 'arises in social experience'; individuals can conceive of their own being and convert that identity into a form of consciousness" (Mead 1934 p.140)

2.1 Introduction to the Narrative Study

This inquiry is based on an in-depth study of the life and work narratives of four teachers, giving close attention to the autobiographical, social, political and emotional context of identity formation. Narrative research has a common practice of devoting much more space to fewer individuals than do other qualitative forms of research; the study therefore aims at a depth of understanding which is not considered to be generalizable to a given population (Chase 2008). The study approaches narrative as the "possible relationships between a narrator's active construction of self, on the one hand and the social, cultural, and historical circumstances that enable and constrain the narrative, on the other hand" (Chase 2008 p. 79). Drawing on the concept of the 'sociological imagination', narrative construction may be a fruitful form of raising the 'self-consciousness' of teachers by exposing the 'troubles' which teachers encounter in an environment of political domination which may potentially threaten individual's 'cherished values' (Wright Mills1959). Within this context, the narrator is his or her own audience and the

act of narrating significant life events may itself facilitate positive change (Chase 2008).

The discussion in this chapter will now explore key aspects of the research design and the analytical framework which underpin the study. The chapter will conclude by considering issues related to researcher reflexivity and by acknowledging my role as an active participant in the interactional terrain of the narrative interview.

2.2 The Research Design

The research design consists of a four stage model based on an evolving approach to strategies which encourage narrative incitement (Gubrium and Holstein 2009) and the construction of the narrative understandings. The first stage consisted of a pre-interview orientation session to ensure that each participant was sufficiently aligned to the focus of the study in preparation for the oral narratives. Two activities were adopted in this session; in the first, participants were requested to complete a mind mapping diagram which identified key personal and institutional factors that had influenced their identity as a teacher. In the second activity, participants were provided with a set of forty cards, on each of which was written an emotional word. Individuals were required to select and order key cards that reflected the emotions they had experienced as a teacher within their organisational context. These activities were selected to

act as advanced organisers (Ausubel 1960) for the narrative interviews, thereby enabling participants to reflect on the focus of their personal narrative in preparation of the active interviewing process.

The following stages consisted of three narrative interviews with each individual over an eight month period. The series of three narrative interviews helped to ensure the internal validity of the study through analysis of narrative construction across the three occasions (Seidman 1998). The first interview focused on autobiographical memories and the work stories of participants' journeys to becoming a teacher. Within this interview, narration was activated by asking an open question at the commencement of the interview where participants were requested to 'explain their life story and how they progressed into the teaching role'. Individuals were also requested to select a photograph from 96 images provided; this picture functioned as a visual metaphor of their life and/or career development. These photographic images were used as a visual signifier (Schostak 2002) from which the participants could narrate the mental constructs associated with the image they had selected.

In the second narrative interview, the narrators were requested to focus on aspects of their present experiences as a teacher within the post compulsory sector. This interview again commenced with an open question to explain 'how you see yourself as a teacher and

what you aspire to within your teaching role'. The third narrative interview aimed at exploring how teachers demonstrate individual agency, together with emotional, ethical and moral investments in their narrative identity formation. My objective in this session was to move narrators from discussing generalities to the more specific emotional aspects of their teaching role. The third interview was therefore more structured than the preceding two narrative occasions. The session started by requesting participants to select a photograph, again from the 96 images provided, that best expressed their feelings towards each of the following statements:

a) How you experience individual agency as a teacher

b) How you experience vulnerability as a teacher

c) Your self-image as a teacher

d) How you are motivated as a teacher

e) How you experience self-esteem

f) Your feelings on the moral dimension of teaching

g) How you aspire to be a teacher in the future

These photographs provided visual stimulus for narrative incitement (Gubrium and Holstein 2009); the narrators were thereby telling a story about the images and positioning themselves in relation to the visual metaphor they had selected. An abridged version of participants' responses to the visual metaphors they select may be found in Appendix 1-4.

The four stages in the research process are summarised below:

Stages in the Narration Process	Focus of the Activity
Orientation Session	To provide advanced organisers (Ausubel 1960) for the narration process that focused on personal, organisational and emotional aspects of teaching.
Narrative Interview 1 Autobiographical life and work story	To examine the individual biography of narrators and key influencing factors on narrative identity.
Narrative Interview 2 Experiences as a teacher within the organisational context	To explore individual experiences of being a teacher within the organisational context.
Narrative Interview 3 Emotional, ethical and moral dimensions of the teaching role	To explore mental constructs associated with visual metaphors in relation to the emotional, ethical and moral dimensions of teacher identity

Table 1 - Summary of the key stages in the research design

2.2.1 The Pilot Study

The pilot study in preparation for the main study was conducted with one individual with the aim of exploring the methodological implications for narrative incitement (Gubrium and Holstein 2009) in

storytelling and how this enables individuals to construct subjective meanings. Two interviews were conducted with one individual and focussed on the following themes: a) autobiographical memories and work stories and b) experiences of the teacher within the organisational context. These interviews began with an explanation of the focus of the session before providing an open question as narrative incitement (Gubrium and Holstein 2009). The pilot did not however include the use of orientation activities or photographic images as was the case in the final study. In relation to life story, the participant proved to be a very fluent and articulate narrator who needed minimal encouragement in the construction of a coherent story in relation to the developing plot of becoming a teacher. However, narration in interview two was less fluent which may have reflected the individual's early stage in developing a teaching career. An outstanding feature was how the participant positioned himself as an objective spectator (Boler 1999) within the organisational context rather than being immersed in the culture of the college.

In general, the stories relating to teaching experiences needed more proactive incitement and there were considerable hesitations and time required for thought. Furthermore, stories related to the college environment tended to focus on stories that were communicated by the curriculum team; this could perhaps reflect a process of socialisation into the organisational setting. There were also hesitations related to the participant's personal positioning in terms of

values and beliefs on teaching and learning, together with broader aspects on the purpose of education. Overall, the pilot study demonstrated that the participant needed to be better informed about the focus of each narrative interview, and as a result of this pilot, orientation activities were developed as advanced organisers (Ausubel 1960) for narrative incitement (Gubrium and Holstein 2009) in the final study. There was also a need to strengthen the exploration of emotional investments in teacher identity, thus in the final study, I introduced a third interview which adopted the use of photographic images as visual metaphors. This strategy provided a more structured approach to the third interview which enabled a more detailed excavation of the emotional dimensions of teaching.

2.2.2 The Selection of Participants

This inquiry focusses on an in-depth narrative study of four teachers who are currently employed with the PCE sector. A purposive sample of participants was identified giving consideration to a gender balance of individuals who currently teach in a variety of subject areas in PCE. In selecting these participants, the opportunity to learn was seen as a more important criterion to representativeness (Stake 2008). Achieving a relationship for open and honest dialogue was viewed as an essential element, together with strategic selection of participants who would feel confident and willing to engage in a number of in-depth interviews. The study therefore adopted criterion-

based sampling in relation to participants who would yield in-depth information to achieve the study aims (Patton 2002). Given the need for open dialogue, all participants were selected from former students which enabled me to give consideration to criteria such as their reflective abilities, a willingness to question the taken-for-granted and reveal or share personal experiences. The benefits of having a previously established relationship with the participants facilitated the development of building a trusting relationship relatively rapidly (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). In addition, our prior relationship helped to avoid the common resentment on the part of occupational practitioners towards detached, often invisible 'experts' through utilising the 'mutuality' of myself as a practising teacher (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). It was however anticipated that my prior relationship with individuals would influence participants' preconceived notions of stories which could be told and the interactional terrain of the narrative interviews will be considered in the conclusion of this chapter. An outline of participants is provided in the table below:

Name	Qualifications	Subject Area(s)	Teaching Experience
Keith	Degree in Geography and Economics Post Graduate Certificate in Education MA in Education	Business and Management (NQF level 1-6 HNC and HND) Teacher Education	30 years teaching experience on a part time and full time basis at a polytechnic and further education college
Jayne	CertEd Teaching Qualification BA in Post Compulsory Education and Training	Early Years and Access Courses for Adult Learners	10 years teaching experience on a part time and full time basis as an NVQ assessor and teacher in a further education college
Helen	CertEd Teaching Qualification BA in Post Compulsory Education and Training Recently commenced an MA in Education	Numeracy courses (entry level 1 to NQF level 2) for adult students with learning difficulties and disabilities	5 years teaching experience on a part time basis across a range adult training providers within the community context
John	Degree in Business and Management MA in Business Administration Post Graduate Certificate in Education	Business Studies (NQF level 2 - 6 HNC and HND awards)	1 year teaching experience on a full time basis in a further education college

Table 2 - Summary of participant profiles

2.2.3 Recording and Transcribing Interview Data

Given the importance of the interaction between the interviewer and interviewee in relation to the situated practice of storytelling, all interviews were digitally recorded. As the interview is the site for the production of meanings, I considered that it was essential to capture all the detail of the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee; recording thereby allowed me to give full attention to the discursive construction during the interview process. Transcription of the recordings included all discourse from the interviews in a form that Elliott (2005) describes as clean transcripts; however, transcription of ungrammatical or colloquial speech was not 'tidied up' to make it sound better (Poland 2002). Clean transcripts helped to focus on the content of the narratives, capture the chronology of events, explicit evaluative statements and the precise words chosen by participants (Elliott 2005). I felt that verbatim transcripts would maintain the integrity of a holistic content analysis in the understanding how each individual lives through time, with a past, present and future.

To ensure the integrity of the data, all transcripts were checked against audio recordings to ensure transcription quality; in addition, direct evaluation of the audio recordings together with transcripts was conducted throughout the analysis stages of the study. Maintaining confidentiality of the data was considered as essential, therefore

copies of audio recordings and transcripts were only maintained by the researcher. Each interview lasted for approximately an hour and a half to as long as two hours and the total wordage of each participant's transcription across the three narrative occasions amounted to between 22,761 to 44,990 words. In total, the transcription in this study amounted to a wordage of 131,782 across all four participants which provided a rich wealth of in-depth material for analysis.

2.2.4 The Analytical Framework

This study focuses on two aspects of narrative identity formation. The first relates to exploration of teachers' autobiographical life stories in understanding how a sense of 'self' has evolved through personal meaning-making processes which could possibly shape teaching practices in the here and now. The second aspect of narrative identity formation relates to exploration of how narratives are mediated by participants' lived experiences within the social and cultural organisational context of the PCE sector. The analysis therefore focused on an idiographic and contextual interpretation of the meaning-making process of narrative constructions through exploration of how individuals reflect on and make sense of their experiences (Smith, Flowers and Larkin 2009).

The analysis process examined each individual case, giving priority to the narrators' voices in their own right, before moving to more general claims across participants. The initial focus on each participant's experience-centred narrative enabled intensive examination of narrative construction (Wells 2011) where each case was studied in its complex entirety. The approach was based on a view that social phenomena and human dilemmas are situational and embedded in a range of historical and cultural contexts (Lincoln and Guba 2000). The trustworthiness of case-centred research therefore rests in the depth rather than breadth and in the real-life situations with all their messy detail (Riessman 2008). Once the inductive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006) of emergent themes had been conducted at an individual level, a collective case-centred approach (Stake 2008) was adopted to identify shared super-ordinate themes across the participants' stories. The analysis process therefore moves from the particulars of each case, before examination was made of patterns or higher order concepts that are shared across participants (Smith, Flowers and Larkin 2009).

The initial analysis of the narrative data aimed at a bottom-up inductive interpretation (Squire 2008) with the objective of seeking the particular more than the ordinary (Stake 2008). The central focus was on the meanings and understandings that narrators convey in the stories they construct of becoming a teacher. The process involved immersion in each individual case through repeated

examination of the audio recordings and transcript data with the aim of providing a comprehensive set of notes. In addition, the transcripts were divided into meaningful units related to themes within the narrative. The initial analysis also involved highlighting specific text on the transcripts where the content appeared to be important. This first order analysis of each participant was entirely inductive and based on holistic content analysis through the identification of key themes. These themes related to three key areas; a) life story of becoming a teacher b) experience of being a teacher within the organisational context and c) emotional investments in teaching. Given the idiographic nature of analysis, each case was presented in detail and incorporated a significant proportion of transcript extracts to ensure the evidentiary base was transparent for the second stage of analysis.

The second stage of analysis involved looking for connections and patterns across the four individuals; as such, this stage aimed to identify higher order themes which were shared across the participants. Identification of these broader level super-ordinate themes involved the negotiation of individual themes within narrative stories with common themes which were shared across participants (Smith, Flowers and Larkin 2009). The aim of the second order analysis was to provide an epistemological narrative of participants' stories in relation to wider conceptual and theoretical frameworks; it is therefore through our storying of stories that we as researchers

bring to the forefront a particular understanding of the social world (Harling Stalker 2009). This process of storing stories involves an interpretive process on the part of the researcher which:

> "explores individuals' understandings of their experience in the context of their everyday lives while simultaneously looking to the wider social and cultural resources on which people draw to help them make sense of their lives" (McCormack 2004 p.220)

The epistemological narrative therefore takes the form of my interpretive analysis of the participants' subjective versions of their lived experience, together with the wider social and cultural influences on narrative construction. The thematic analysis thus acknowledges individuals' meanings of experience and explores how the social context influences the meaning-making process (Braun and Clarke 2006). This second stage of analysis forms the basis of the ensuing two analysis chapters which focus on an analysis of early autobiographical memories as the building blocks for self construction and the competing educational discourses of participants' evolving stories of being a teacher.

2.2.5 Ethical Considerations

In relation to ethical concerns, university ethical approval was achieved prior to negotiations with the participants who were initially provided with a written outline of the study. Following this, an initial meeting was conducted with individuals to discuss the broad aims of

the study, the focus of the orientation session and the following three narrative sessions. Issues related to the anonymity of the data, the right to withdraw and remove personal data from the study at any point, together with details of the publication of the research project were also outlined in this meeting. However, as noted by Clandinin and Connelly (2000), meeting ethical guidelines for human subjects, although technical, detailed and legalistic does not take into account relational issues which underpin the entire narrative inquiry process.

There are considerable ethical issues involved in a study of this nature relating to the implications of informed consent, together with the need for taking time for building a respondent's confidence in telling stories about their own personal experiences. In particular, how can a participant consent to an interview when the questions and therefore the responses cannot be entirely predicted in advance (Wells 2011)? To partially address this issue and to ensure participants were sufficiently aligned with and aware of the focus of the project, the initial orientation session was conducted with each individual. Given that this study views emotions as the beacons of our true selves that provide an inner perspective for interpreting and responding to experience (Hochschild 1983), it was seen as essential that the participants were aware of the aims of the project, together with the intrapersonal aims of the research relationship (Wolgemuth and Donohue 2006).

However, ethical matters can shift and change throughout the narrative inquiry and this will raise questions related to relational responsibility; researchers should therefore privilege participants' feelings, experiences and needs over and above the gathering of data (Wolgemuth and Donohue 2006). This is particularly the case with active interviewing (Holstein and Gubrium 2003) where individuals are encouraged to construct and share experiences within the interview. There are also considerable ethical and power issues which may arise when encouraging participants to question their fundamental certainties and where individuals are unwilling to consider subjective change, this must be respected. As such, narrative inquiry requires a close relationship akin to friendship and, as the research proceeds, researchers may find themselves in grey areas as far as informed consent is concerned (Clandinin and Connelly 2000).

Even when the research topic is not considered to be sensitive, once participants are given the space to discuss their experiences, distressing accounts may emerge which will require sensitivity on the part of the researcher. This proved the case on one occasion where a participant became distressed due to circumstance in their person life. In this instance, the interview was suspended for a short while to allow time for the individual to express their emotions. Whilst it may not be harmful for participants to experience distress within the interview and it may be cathartic to be given the space to discuss

upsetting events, this does require that the interviewer is experienced enough to manage the interaction (Elliott 2005). The relationship I therefore adopted in this study was aligned to the Rogerian person centred approach involving active listening, unconditional positive regard, empathy and genuineness (Rogers1961).

Ethical issues also extend beyond the initial data collection phase to the analysis and interpretation of the data, and re-presenting narrative accounts of the life or work stories that are being studied. If we consider that narratives are socially constructed within the interview process with a particular audience in mind, we must also accept that the researcher, through deconstruction and interpretation of the narrative, also provides a storied version of the lives being studied. As Sikes (2010 p.11) notes "writing is never neutral or innocent because it is a social and political activity" and as such, re-presenting the lives of others carries a heavy ethical burden. In re-representation of stories, our own values and beliefs are implicated and it is essential that we make clear the lens through which we present our research narratives and demonstrate reflexivity and honesty with regards to our own positionality. Contrasting perspectives can reveal multiple interpretations and it is important to remain mindful that any analysis is only provisional and alternative understandings should be considered throughout the analysis stage.

Likewise, how can we maintain anonymity where participants narrate important life experiences? It was considered essential to obtain participant approval of interpretations of their narrative stories; therefore the first stage of holistic content analysis was returned to individuals for commentary and approval prior to conducting the second order analysis. All participants gave approval to this interruptive analysis as an accurate representation of their narrative story. However, one participant requested that some colloquial speech was tidied up before being presented in the final report. Above all, is the responsibility of not causing harm to the participants by ensuring we represent lives respectfully and not use our narrative privilege to demean or belittle the experiences of the individuals we have studied (Sikes 2010).

2.2.6 Authenticity and Plausibility

When considering authenticity and plausibility in terms of narrative research, the trustworthiness of the inquiry can only be established from within the situated perspectives of the research design. How we position ourselves in relation to the epistemological agency of interviewers and respondents will influence our notions of the authenticity and plausibility of the data that is produced. A social constructionist approach does not aim at communicating factually correct 'truths', but rather understanding their meanings for the individuals being studied. To this extent the study focuses on the

meaning-making of the narrators, the participant therefore emerges within the interview itself and is fleshed out, both rationally and emotionally, in the give and take of the process (Gubrium and Holstein 2003). There is a need to acknowledge that bias is only a meaningful concept if respondents are seen as passive repositories of knowledge and researchers often advocate narrative because it empowers respondents to speak in their own voice. As a consequence "the focus of interest is on individuals' subjective interpretations and the meanings they make of their lives" (Elliott 2005 p. 23).

Reissman (2008) believes that good narrative research persuades readers of the trustworthiness of data and interpretations. This can be achieved by providing descriptive evidence of the precise words spoken by narrators as evidence of the plausibility of theoretical claims being made. The use of direct quotes therefore allows interviewees to speak out from the page to ensure credibility (Blaufuss 2007). Given that the study is based on a small sample of participants, the second stage of analysis, which focuses on the identification of broader level super-ordinate themes, will include extracts from each participant's account to illustrate each theme. However, it is important to remain reflexive to researcher interpretations; as researchers we are bound by our own voice and experiences and will choose which voices to listen to (Estola 2003). In the story told by the researcher, we have the creative power to

choose which quotes to use in our analysis and we give some voices more weight than others as we actively shape our narrative. In this respect our choices; be they conscious or unconscious are a result of our specific positionality related to both the political and academic intentions of the research endeavour. As acknowledged by Blaufuss (2007), deciding on what is included or excluded from the narrative in the final text produced will be based on our own values and beliefs and demonstrates the power of the research narrator not only to record and report, but to create. The following section on reflexivity will therefore consider my own positionality as an active social and political participant in the inquiry.

The trustworthiness of the analysis in this inquiry will be enhanced by adopting a comparative approach in terms of the similarities and differences amongst participants' stories (Reissman 2008). No interpretation is ever final and a researcher's current framework or lens through which data is analysed will change over time (Andrews 2008). Therefore narrative text could be viewed as a crystal; what we see depends on our angle of repose, it "combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes" (Richardson and Adams St.Pierre 2008 p. 478). This crystallization of narrative deconstructs the traditional idea of validity. It provides us with a deeper, complex and partial understanding of the topic; we know more and doubt what we know (Richardson and Adams St.Pierre 2008). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) warn that narrative relies on criteria other than that

which is adopted by scientific approaches and "it is important not to squeeze the language of narrative criteria into a language created for other forms of research" (p.184). This study therefore attempts to adopt alternative criteria to measuring research findings as having an explanatory invitational quality, authenticity and plausibility (Connelly and Clandinin 2000).

2.3 Reflexivity of the Researcher

For the purposes of this discussion, I will adopt the notion of reflexivity as developing an awareness of myself as a researcher situated within the research process. In the context of narrative inquiry, it must be acknowledged that participants' narratives do not simply emerge as un-situated objective truths, but emerge as lived experiences between participants. In this respect I have an active voice in the development of socially constructed understandings. Given this notion of socially constructed reality, we must anticipate that research accounts will be partially shaped by the researcher's interests, biography and values; as such research is not insulated from a wider society or the personal characteristics of the researcher (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009) call for a greater focus on the researchers themselves in terms of their political, ideological and theoretical context, through a process of self-examination that enables individuals to relate more freely to the reality being studied. However, it is recognised that self-

examination will not rid research of theoretical and other ballasts. Researcher positionality is also multi-faceted and will be reflected in the various stages of the research process; initially during the interview process, then during the interpretation of underlying meanings in data analysis and finally when presenting the research findings. In this discussion, I therefore aim to recognise myself as an active social and political participant in the inquiry, where the research process is itself an act of persuasion (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2009).

This study does have a strong political intention of heightening teacher agency in relation to the fulfilment or reconstruction of narrative identity by managing critical incidents or trends that are threatening. As such the level of teacher agency relates to the ability of individuals to adopt strategies to deal with contradictions and tensions. Drawing on research that investigated variations in teachers' work and lives and their effect on students, Day et al (2006) concluded that some teachers do find different ways to sustain stability in what appears to be fragmented identities, and this capacity was related to positive factors within personal life situations and educational contexts. This view is supported by Zembylas (2003) who holds the belief that the construction of teacher identity is fundamentally affective and is influenced by power and agency. This involves an interpretive activity which makes connections between emotions and identity through a study of teachers' narratives.

Narrative methodology is therefore viewed as an opportunity to engage in the interpretive reconstruction of a person's life by exploring the "personal, social and cultural/historical aspects for teacher identity formation" (Zembylas 2003 p.215) together with the role of power relations in constructing social realities which shape teacher agency.

The research approach therefore draws on a critical perspective as a creative response to the increased politicisation of the teaching role. The study attempts to examine the extent to which political or organisational discourses define teacher's narrative identities; of particular interest is the extent to which some teachers adopt strategic compliance (Gleeson and Shain 1999) to instrumental ideologies that are known to be socially acceptable and valued within the institutional context. This resonates with what Riesman (1950) defines as an outwardly orientated social self, based on bland conformity which may result in individuals who are not innovative, self-reliant or self-governing (Holstein and Gubrium 2000). The research methodology is therefore grounded in a social constructionist approach on two fronts; firstly in terms of the extent to which political or organisational discourses define teacher identity and secondly by adopting an active interviewing approach (Holstein and Gubrium 2003) which stresses the socially constructed nature of reality. As a researcher, I will be part of this construction process; therefore there is a need for reflection on the conditions of what one

is doing. The methodological approach adopted was based on active interviewing as a form of interpretive practice (Holstein and Gubrium 2003) with the aim of stimulating the interviewee's interpretive meaning-making processes. As such the process aims at empowerment in giving voice to participants which has been marginalised in current political discourses.

Whilst qualitative methods aim to address power imbalances better than more quantitative methodologies, they cannot be assumed to be empowering in themselves and questions related to the vulnerability of the researched must be continually acknowledged (Blaufuss 2007). Narrative identities are often constructed as 'shows' or 'performances' that are used to persuade the listener, as such the researcher is implicated in this act of storytelling (Riessman 2008) and there is a need to remain aware of the multivoiced nature of stories for different audiences. Likewise, as Andrews (2008) acknowledges, whilst researchers may listen attentively to storytelling, their orientation may be entirely directed towards those aspects of accounts which are relevant to their specific interests. There is always the dilemma of wanting to diminish the power imbalance; however as researchers we are firmly grounded in our own political and ideological positionality and will focus on the aspects of the narrative that are central to our research focus. As such, narratives are always contextual, communal and relational and there are always researchers making claims and counter claims about the stories

collected through narrative research. The researcher is also a narrator and meaning-maker both in the way the stories of others are analysed and also presented. Therefore, presentation of findings will be supported by extracts from participants' narratives to ensure that knowledge claims are transparent and accountable to readers (Stanley and Temple 2008).

2.4 The Interactional Terrain of the Narrative Interview

It is essential to consider the reflexive relationship between what stories are told to particular audiences and what purposes the narrator has in mind; within this context, individual accounts are scenic entities that are shaped by the positions and purposes of storytellers and listeners (Gubrium and Holstein 2009). The narrative context therefore influences what stories and characters are likely to be evaluated as believable and important within the narrative occasion, together with the moral evaluations that are attached to these stories and characters (Loseke 2007). An important consideration in this study was my prior relationship with all participants as former students on a range of awards incorporating a diverse range of subjects. Within the context of this student-teacher relationship, narrative performance will be influenced by the construction of a subject position in relation to the audience and the particular context of the interaction; it also obtains meaning situationally within storylines (Törrönen 2001). Narratives are

communicatively shaped by roles adopted in the telling and responding to stories; audience and purpose are always at play to give accounts a distinctive emotional resonance in which the moral horizons of stories are paramount (Gubrium and Holstein 2009).

In discussing the collaborative construction of storytelling Pasupathi (2006) identifies global differences in the way individuals communicate stories by adopting either reflective or dramatic modes of narration; "reflective modes efficiently communicate information" and "dramatic modes make for more vivid, dramatic, and entertaining stories" (p.131). The social context of storytelling affects not only whether memories are told but also how they are told. Stories told to convey meanings tend to reduce exaggerations and increase selectivity; in stories told for dramatic or entertaining purposes the opposite pattern appears as increased exaggeration and reduced omissions (Marsh and Tversky 2004). My prior relationship with the participants in the study will influence their perceptions of expected storylines and modes of narration that are expected within the narrative occasions.

Giving consideration to the collaborative nature of construction in Keith's life story, the mode of narrative was highly reflective and based on a longstanding and collegial relationship. Our shared background as fellow teacher educators manifested within the narrative dialogue as an appreciation of shared moral values based

on our positioning as colleagues. This relationship facilitated open reflective discussion where the interaction was more aligned to conversational collaboration. The dialogue often took the form of a joint exploration of ideologies that underpin educational policy and practice and Keith adopted of a critical stance towards current educational practice. The collaborative nature of Jayne's narrative story also adopted a highly reflective mode of narration characterised by open and trusting dialogue. My previous relationship with Jayne was one of a tutor on the Guidance and Counselling module within her degree programme; it was felt that this prior relationship facilitated an open empathic environment where Jayne felt at ease to discuss aspects of her personal life, in addition to exploring the nature of her experiences within the teaching role. In particular, Jayne's narrative incorporated well formed in-depth stories of her early school experiences that were highly emotionally charged and significant to her perceptions of the teaching role. The collaborative nature of Helen's life story also adopted a reflective mode characterised by open and trusting dialogue throughout the narrative occasions. My previous relationship with Helen was initially as a tutor on her Certificate of Education Award, followed by the Guidance and Counselling module within her degree programme. Helen's interactive style took the form of reflective self-talk in relation to her emotional experiences and there were often many digressions from the starting topic in her narrative constructions. In particular, at the end of narrative occasions Helen often thanked me for listening and

expressly stated that she required the opportunity to talk about her experiences within her teaching role. In contrast to other participants in this study, John's life story adopted a dramatic mode of narration, with a particular focus on very detailed accounts of his business experiences on a worldwide basis. John proved to be a very fluent and articulate narrator who needed minimal encouragement and his story had all the hallmarks of a well-formed narrative. My previous relationship with John was as a tutor on his Post Graduate Certificate in Education on a module that focused on educational politics, policy and practice. Given this context, John felt at ease to explore the philosophical and moral dimensions of society as a whole, in addition to maintaining a critical stance to the current educational policy.

When evaluating the nature of stories told by participants, there is a need to acknowledge that the social context of narrative occasions will draw on the subject positions of participants within both the discourse dialogue and the storylines adopted. As a researcher we may give weight to participant storylines which resonate with our own experiences at an unconscious level; we may therefore adopt a more active role in narrative incitement on these occasions. During the analysis stage some storylines may come to the foreground, whilst others slip into the background by segregating objects from their surrounding context (Iran-Nejad, Marsh and Clements 2010). How we position ourselves is therefore "something which happens in the course of an interaction; as such it is a discursive process. It can be

deliberate, inadvertent, presumptive or taken for granted" (Harré et al 2009 p.10). It is therefore essential to appreciate that the participants in this study would adopt what they consider to be appropriate storylines for narration based on how they have positioned me through our previous relationships, for example as a colleague, a teacher or a counsellor.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have made a case for the exploration of narrative life stories that are considered to be the construction of individual narrative identity. The following two chapters will now focus on analysis of narrative stories; chapter three will address the first research question in exploring how autobiographical life stories engage participants in subjective meaning-making of their narrative teacher identity. Chapter four will then address the second research question in exploring the extent to which political and organisational cultures shape teachers' narrative identity. These chapters will focus on the second stage of the narrative analysis which is based on the identification of broader level super-ordinate themes across all participants. The discussion will therefore constitute an epistemological narrative story which will take the form of my interpretive analysis of the participants' collective stories drawing on external theory that is prompted by the identification of broader level super-ordinate themes. In particular, the analysis will evaluate

narrative stories based on a view that life stories are psychosocial constructions (McAdams 2001) given the psychological consequences of the meaning-making process, together with the socially constructed nature of reality. Analysis will focus on constructed meanings viewed through the lens of positioning theory (Harré et al 2009) and will also draw extensively on dialogical self theory which acknowledges the multivoiced nature of the self as mediator in meaning production (Hermans 2001 and 2007; Hermans and Hermans-Konopka 2010; Raggatt 2000, 2006 and 2007).

Chapter 3 – Analysis of Early Autobiographical Memories

"It is by means of reflexiveness, the turning-back of the experience of the individual upon himself, that the whole social process is thus brought into the experience of the individuals involved in it" (Mead 1934 p.134)

3.1 Introduction

This chapter centres on participants' narration of their constructed 'self' through the analysis of participants' individual stories of their early experiences which have influenced their narrative identity as a teacher. These stories will be analysed through a psychosocial theoretical lens which reflects "who we are, and they also reflect the world in which we live" (McAdams 2001p. 117). Narrative approaches to the self view autobiographical memories as the building blocks for self construction based on the belief that it is through assembling aspects of personal history that we "bolster present claims of and about ourselves" (Holstein and Gubrium 2000 p.169). When we make various attempts to explain our previous experiences, we make interpretations of what counts as a significant experience. In this way "we interpret the make-up of our phenomenal world and imbue it with unique, constantly altering (or plastic) significance and meaning" (Spinelli 2005 p. 31). In relation to the concepts of the self, it is through memories that we construct a

narrative, "of who we are, or, more accurately, who we claim to be" (Spinelli 2005 p. 100). When narrating autobiographical memory, individuals provide an interpretation of events that result in new attributions of meanings (Smorti 2011) of our actions and the events in our lives, our narrative identities are therefore a means by which we attempt to make important life altering decisions (Westlund 2011). These meanings of the events in our lives are shaped by what comes later, a sort of 'backward living' (Lloyd 2008) where we engage in self understanding by identifying causal meanings of our experiences.

The analysis will take the form of an anthology of super-ordinate themes that have emerged from the inductive first order analysis of individual participants' stories. In particular, this analysis focuses on individuals' attempts to make sense of their early experiences and their journey to becoming a teacher. The process involves an iterative and inductive cycle by exploring the connections of particular themes of individual cases that "also represent instances of higher order concepts which the cases therefore share" (Smith, Flowers and Larkin 2009 p.101). Analysis of the narrative will therefore focus on super-ordinate themes expressed at a very broad level, with the aim of "retaining an idiographic focus on the individual voice at the same time as making claims for the larger group" (Smith, Flowers and Larkin 2009 p.107). The analysis in this chapter will consider three super-ordinate themes related to early autobiographical memories. The first super-ordinate theme (3.2) Narrating Self-defining Early

Memories of Educational Experiences will consider significant events within the life story that define an individual's self-image. The second super-ordinate theme (3.3)   Narrating Causal Connectivity in Becoming a Teacher will consider how individuals make causal connections in the journey of becoming a teacher that either consolidate or transform aspects of the self. Finally, the third super-ordinate theme (3.4) Self Characterisation and Teacher Identity will consider the influence that autobiographical stories have on individuals' moral dimensions of their teaching role.

3.2 Narrating Self-defining Early Memories of Educational Experiences

Recollection of early memories enables individuals to make sense of their early experiences by infusing self-defining meaning to significant experiences within their life story. This process involves what Habermas and Bluck (2000) describe as autobiographical reasoning that focuses on self-reflective thinking in the "evolution of a biographical perspective that frames one's individuality" (p.749). Within this context, life story construction "operates to produce coherence through the formation of meaningful connections between past experiences and the self" (Pals 2006a p.177). These self-defining memories often share similar narrative themes and can often relate to individuals' enduring concerns or unresolved conflicts from childhood (Conway, Singer and Tagini 2004).

An emergent theme within the narratives of the participants in the study focussed on how individuals storied their self-defining memories in relation to their own early school or college experiences. The thematic elements in Keith's narrative account of his early school memories demonstrate how he positioned himself in relation to other learners. Keith attended a small private school from the age of five and explains how he felt excluded in comparison to other children who were family relatives of the teachers employed at the school. Keith explains that these children *'always performed extremely well. Everyone else was on the periphery, so I hated the experience'.* Keith powerfully describes how his negative experiences continued at grammar school:

> '*I vied for bottom place every year through my senior school; it was 30th, 31st or 32nd in the class and the attitude of the teachers were 'you don't understand it; tough, you find out yourself''…… you always knew that you wouldn't perform or achieve which stays with you I think and it's that lack of achievement that gradually affects how you feel you will achieve or your approach in the future'.*

In Keith's self-analysis of his school experiences, he presents his self-image as a non-achiever in comparison to other learners. The development of an identity is achieved through the comparisons we make with the constructed others in our world; "in order for an individual to assign any descriptive features of the self, some acknowledgement of, comparison with and distinction from others is required" (Spinelli 2005p. 95). In relation to 'others' Keith evaluation is that he was marginalised at school because he was *'at the bottom*

of the hierarchy' which he attributed to the authoritarian teaching approaches adopted at the grammar school. Keith concludes:

> *'I respected what they* [teachers] *did, I respected their knowledge, but in hindsight you can't respect their approach because it didn't work …… if I said I didn't understand it, they would turn it round and I would be 'put on the spot'. I felt that whatever I did for the teachers it wouldn't satisfy them, so what was the point?'*

Overall, Keith's narrative demonstrates the profound impact that inequitable teaching practice has on his self-construct of his academic ability: *'it was an 'us and them' …… I found it an unpleasant process because I came to the view that I didn't achieve and couldn't achieve'.*

Jayne's reflective narrative demonstrated her early childhood passion to become a primary school teacher:

> *'What I wanted to do from a really early age was be a primary school teacher and I wanted to have a reception class and be that lovely teacher that all the children loved'.*

However, the majority of Jayne's narrative of her early school experiences was infused with powerful negative emotions, for example, memories of going to a new school at the age of 6:

> *'I loved my teacher, I remember going in and really admiring her and wanting to be a teacher like her until she hit me across the knuckles with a ruler for something I didn't do! …… I was really crushed, crushed'.*

Jayne's perceptions of her academic ability were strongly influenced by her interactions with the teachers and a recurring theme throughout Jayne's story centred on her fear of studying Mathematics.

This perception was closely associated with negative teacher expectations and lack of teacher support in Jayne's early school years:

> '*I remember the maths teacher said "Jayne, just sit at the back of the classroom and read a magazine; you'll never be able to do any maths" …… I don't remember anyone encouraging or support me and I scraped through my O Levels ……I didn't get maths, I didn't even bother, I got 9% in Physics and I thought that took me 5 minutes, I just didn't bother'.*

Jayne also defines her own self-construct by making comparisons between self and other in the narration of her early memories; a recurring theme related to how Jayne defined her self-construct as an academic non-achiever in comparison to what she perceives to be her very successful siblings:

> '*my sisters all went to school and excelled at school all of them and I didn't. I did my O Levels and then I was off to college, and they did their A Levels and they went to Uni and got firsts and they were very successful. I always felt I was the thicko of the family and then I couldn't do any teaching because I hadn't got my maths 'O' Level'*

Overall, Jayne makes the causal connections between her non-achievement and the teaching approaches adopted throughout her early school experiences:

> '*we weren't encouraged to be independent learners and we weren't encouraged to think for ourselves and pursue our own lines and it was very much 'this is what I do and this is how I teach and you listen to me and get on with it'….. and it didn't work for me'.*

Jayne's self-defining memories of her school experiences were very affectively charged because they directly relate to the attainment of her life goal (Singer 1995) of becoming a teacher. However, Jayne

does reach some compensatory resolution to her negative experiences and lack of positive support during her school years:

> '*its held me back because I never got to teach in a school and I never will now because I can't be bothered to do maths and I actually like what I'm doing so, you know I like being in the world of adult teaching so…*'

Helen's reflective narrative of early memories also demonstrates the extent that her negative school experiences had on her ability in Mathematics:

> '*I always liked maths when I was at school and I still remember being taught the times tables and how to add and subtract and things like that*'.

However, Helen explains that having a serious illness at the age of 10 resulted in her being absent from school for a considerable time. On returning to school from this absence she recalls:

> '*my first day back, because I had missed all this work, she* [the teacher] *brought this big pile of workbooks, dropped them on the desk in front of me and said 'try and catch up' and just walked away. And I can remember my panic and fear and thinking, there were about six of these things, and I thought 'how on earth can I do this, I can't do this'. And that was the beginning of the end for me….*'

Helen's reflections on this lack of encouragement and support from teachers triggered her growing awareness of differentiated classroom practice based on ability:

> '*the other thing that I had noticed …… was the way we were split, there were six tables in the classroom and two with the brightest kids, those were the top tables, and two in the middle for the average kids, which is where I was, and two for the children who really needed the most help. And the people who got the most help in that classroom were the two top tables*'.

In relation to Helen's self-construct within her early memories, she makes comparisons between the achievements of constructed others on the *'top tables'* who were seen as being favoured in comparison to the achievements of the rest of the group, who she perceives as being unfavoured:

> *'and of course all the ones on the two top tables were the people that went to the convent. They didn't get to secondary school like the rest of us and they passed their 11+ because they had lots of help, whereas the rest of us were just left to get on with it really'.*

In contrast to the other participants in this study, John did not discuss his early school experiences other than stating that he attended the local grammar school. This absence of reflection on his early school experiences could perhaps indicate that John does not consider these memories to be self-defining or affectively charged (Singer 1995). John did however expressly state that his *'first interesting experience'* was in relation to his degree programme, which may indicate that his early school experiences were unproblematic and that "positive events do not tend to press for larger meanings (Thorne, McLean and Lawrence 2004 p.536).

John commenced his life story with his Bachelors of Arts Honours Degree in European Business Administration where he explained the *'peculiarity'* of the degree as being:

> *'a four year sandwich course, but two years were spent in France, and two years in England and it involved 18 months of education in one of the top ten private Business Schools in France'.*

John reflects on his rationale for selecting this course in contrast to a more conventional degree in the UK:

> *'what appealed to me about that was going out and being taught in French by French lecturers, and then there was 6 months placement in industry in France …….I wanted to do it as a challenge rather than go through the typical University route which at the time, I didn't find particularly stimulating'.*

John makes a distinction between self and other in the selection of this more challenging degree programme in comparison to the majority of his peers who participated in a conventional '*typical University route'.* He also makes comparisons between self and other in his approach on this course where he aims to progressively immerse himself in the French culture in comparison to other English students who maintained a more English group identity:

> *'I was the only one actually from the start who shared a flat with French people. All the other English folk all grouped up together and I had found a flat with two French lads on the course which actually meant that very quickly, my French came on and not just the language but it was getting involved with the culture and understanding them'.*

This immersion in a range of diverse cultures was a recurring theme throughout John's story and his varied work history involved business management roles within a number of multi-national organisations, living in three different countries and travelling extensively throughout the world. His life story was narrated in detail and supported by rich anecdotal stories that demonstrated a wide range of cultural experiences, as he concludes:

> *'I must have done business in about 60-70 countries from Canada and Africa and right across to the Middle East as well,*

so I got to experience a lot of cultures, a lot of different ways in life and a lot of outlooks to things'.

Overall, John's story had all the hallmarks of a well-formed migration narrative that was structured, polished and ready for presentation (Boenisch-Brednich 2002). In terms of John's own self-definition, his personal biography is clearly centred on his growing multicultural awareness through the wide range of experiences he has encountered within his varied work history throughout the world.

The above discussion demonstrates how all of the participants in this study positioned themselves as 'self' in comparison to 'others' within their peer group. For three of the participants, early childhood decisions regarding their academic ability evolved through dialogues with more powerful people in the form of teachers. As such "the child is able to transform 'you are . . .' utterances from the community to 'I am . . .' utterances in constructing a self-narrative" (Hermans 2001p.264). It is through the narration of these highly emotional memories that individuals can engage in careful processing which "can potentially lessen the tension associated with recall" (Thorne, McLean and Lawrence 2004 p.517). These views can be imaginatively constructed and reconstructed in the course of an individual's development and whilst the views of others are very powerful, they can be taken up in the continuous self-dialogical process where the adult 'answers' to these influences (Hermans 2001 p.264). Memories therefore emerge to allow us to construct a

particular meaning of the past 'to give substance or validity to the currently experienced self-concept' (Spinelli 2005 p.100).

3.3 Narrating 'Causal Connectivity' in Becoming a Teacher

In telling life stories, individuals are involved in an interpretive process of self-making by highlighting significant experiences and infusing them with self-defining meaning that has a causal impact on the growth of the self (Pals 2006a). Put simply, our connections with past experiences highlight the transformation of the self which can be either growth-promoting or growth limiting experiences (Pals 2006a). However, there are differences in narrative construction in terms of how individuals conduct an explanatory analysis of the impact of early events on the self and the ability of individuals' to construct positive resolved endings to these events (Pals and McAdams (2004). The healthiest narrative pattern is the 'transformed self' where a person openly acknowledges the negative impacts of difficult events on the self and through active analysis, transforms the event for positive self-transformation and growth (Pals 2006a). Participants in this study demonstrated the "springboard effect" concept (Pals 2006a p.192) within their narrative, where experiences of their early years were explored and used as a springboard to create growth in their life stories of becoming a teacher. The reflective re-telling of stories creates cohesion that is empowering for the individual through the distinction between what happened then and what it means now;

negative events therefore take on positive meanings in later life (Thorne 2000).

For Keith, the strong negative emotions that were embodied within his early school experiences created further tensions when trying to reconcile these feelings with his father's expectations of his academic achievement:

> '*he wanted me to be better than him ......hence when I got to grammar school he was highly delighted, but disgusted when I got bad marks and he showed it...... But almost I felt in the middle of two camps, I wanted to please him but I literally hated school with a passion*'

Keith's father was the causal impetus for Keith's progression to University, as he explains:

> '*When it came to applying to university I threw my UCAS form away because I didn't want to go. When dad found out he said 'right what's available now' and it was polytechnics and I still didn't particularly want to go, but reluctantly I went for interviews*'

Whilst Keith did not actively seek to progress onto a degree route, he evaluated his time at polytechnic as being very positive in comparison to his school years:

> '*it was the first time really I had achieved from the 11+ onwards ......I think looking at the style of teaching that I was having at the polytechnic, again very much relaxed although structured, but you were credited for what you did and you were encouraged to follow success with greater success*'.

On completing his degree Keith was appointed to a research post in higher education; however, Keith explained that this post also required a teaching commitment:

> *'I turned up the first day and was told that in addition to my research I would be doing some teaching …… I said I didn't want to do it and he said 'tough, you've got to do it' and I started that week teaching economics….. I very quickly realised that I enjoyed the process of interaction, the process of learning, the process of teaching other people how to learn'.*

Whilst Keith's father was a causal influence in Keith continuing his academic career, the move into a teaching role was not a conscious career choice which reflects the view that in some stories "many of the experiences and events that constitute a person's life are accidental, unplanned, and uncaused by an ongoing pattern of events" (Christman 2004 p.702). Keith does however construct his own self-defining meaning of his teaching career as being preordained:

> *'I am a great believer in your life is almost planned out …… there are elements of it over which you've got little choice ……I suppose that comes from my religious background in some ways…... So I'm where I am, because it's in a plan, wherever that plan might be. So it's not by accident where I am. Now I could hate it as much as I liked in the early stages, but if it's predefined, it's where I am'.*

Keith's story demonstrates the accommodation of early negative school experiences for positive self-transformation; he constructs and gives meaning to his journey of becoming a teacher as being a massive success given his early school experiences. Through reflective self-talk, Keith rehearses the reasons for spending a lifetime in teaching:

> *'Was it that I wanted to achieve and felt I couldn't and suddenly someone gives me the opportunity to achieve and perhaps that colours how I teach, because there are people I am teaching that have probably not achieved, to some extent I have got the ability to encourage them to achieve'.*

Overall, Keith constructs a story of early disadvantage in his own learning experiences which are "transformed or redeemed" through his "expanded radius of care" in contributing to the progressive development of students within his own teaching practice (McAdams 2009 p. 418 - 419).

In Jayne's self-interpretation of her journey to becoming a teacher she reflects on her decision to progress onto a National Nursery Examination Board (NNEB) course on leaving school:

> *'well I wanted to work with children and I still thought at that time that I will be a teacher and change the world and not be like the teachers that I have had ……so I thought I'll go and do the NNEB, which I really enjoyed'.*

After completing this NNEB award, Jayne explains the appeal she had for working overseas for a period of 10 years in a variety of roles as a nanny and within the travel industry before returning to the England and commencing work in a nursery:

> *'But I still wanted to teach ……and my NNEB is the best qualification I could ever have got because it just got me in wherever I wanted and that's what got me back into the nurseries to update my skills'.*

Jayne continued to work in nurseries for a number of years and progressed into management posts which also incorporated a training element in her role, throughout which the theme of wanting to teach continued:

> *'I was managing a nursery and was training the staff ……again I was in that sort of training role and that sort*

of giving of information, encouraging and I just wanted to teach'.

It was through this role as a nursery manager that Jayne became aware of National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Assessor Awards that were being advertised at a local college, as she explains:

> *'and before I knew it I was down at* [name of college] *doing what was then D32 and D33 course … … and it just so happens that I heard on the grapevine that* [name of college] *…… wanted an assessor and it's a bit of a long story there but I got it'.*

Once appointed as an NVQ assessor within a college, her programme manager was the causal impetus in requiring that Jayne complete the first stage of a teaching qualification:

> *'you know you've got no choice …… she was quite blunt …… and it was the first part of teacher training and before I realised what I was doing, I was doing it and I thought 'oh my god it's teacher training!'*

After Jayne completed this initial award she commenced the Certificate in Education (CertEd) and progressed into a teaching role. Serendipity seems to be the central component of Jayne's story of becoming a teacher, and like Keith, Jayne adopts a fatalistic view of the unexpected chain of events that have ultimately led to her teaching role:

> *'But then when I look back, this has always happened to me and maybe it is because I have just been in the right place at the right time or maybe it's because everything I have applied for it was meant to be, it's fate I don't know but I just have been really lucky to have ended up doing exactly what I wanted to do'.*

Helen's self-defining story of becoming a teacher also acknowledges that teaching was never a conscious career choice and her reflective narrative attempts to make meaning of her career progression by rehearsing the causal influences of becoming a teacher. Helen explains how she commenced a clerical career and worked in three companies for approximately 13 years before experiencing a need for a change in direction:

> *'I'm the kind of person who has a low boredom threshold and once I can do something really well, almost with my eyes closed, I lose interest in it ….. I always knew I wanted to do something else and it wasn't clerical work but I didn't know what it was'.*

Once leaving employment, Helen completed an Access to Higher Education course before progressing onto a Degree in Business and Psychology. However due to family circumstances of being in a caring role for a relative, Helen needed to withdraw from her degree programme and had a break from employment for about 12 years. Once Helen's situation had changed, she experienced a turning point in wanting to focus her energies on meeting her own needs which ultimately led to her commencing a career in teaching:

> *'I said to my husband 'I want to do something now; I want to do something for me' …… And then one day this thing about learner support just popped into my head…… I had not thought about teaching or anything like ……that is how it all started'.*

At this stage Helen approached an adult training provider with a view to becoming a volunteer classroom support assistant and was advised to complete a Level 2 award in learning support:

> *'I enjoyed it and that allows you just to be a volunteer and I thought well it would be quite nice to be paid for it as well, so then I did the Level 3 which is when you start to specialise a little bit which took me into the numeracy, and I passed that'.*

It was after completing these awards that Helen's tutor suggested that she could progress into teaching by commencing the CertEd award;

> *'I honestly never thought about going that step further ......and the next thing I know I'm on the CertEd course doing the numeracy specialism and I sort of felt like I was being kind of swept along, almost out of my control!'*

Again, like Keith and Jayne, Helen constructs a belief that life is determined by preordained paths and demonstrates a fatalistic view of the future:

> *'I think there are particular paths that are preordained with particular things on those paths ..... I am a great believer that you are where you are supposed to be at a particular time and place in your life, and hopefully it's the right place'.*

In John's self-interpretative story, there seems to be a number of factors that proved to have a causal influence on his move into a teaching role. On John's return to England following extensive travel throughout the world, he continued to work in business for a number of years in addition to completing a Masters in Business Administration (MBA) which he found stimulating:

> *'I really enjoyed the academic atmosphere ...... the whole environment and I found it more stimulating.....well more stimulating than doing business to be honest, more thought provoking'.*

On reflecting on his business career, John outlined how he was finding business development, sales and marketing '*boring*' and through self-refection he was able to identify that the most rewarding aspects of his role related to mentoring colleagues, as he explains:

> '*mentoring people; training the team; managing the team; getting my team working well as a team, the relationships between the team...... I always felt for me the main objective, if I'm actually getting the team gelling well and working well and supporting each other and working together*'.

This self-realisation that the interpersonal aspect of supporting others was the most rewarding feature of John's role acted as a turning point for reflecting on alternative career options. A significant influencing factor in considering teaching was inspired by John's daughter who was completing Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) in secondary education:

> '*because I had done the MBA I knew the sort of style that was expected and working with her on some of the assignments .... I found that I was really actually quite interested in it and I was looking at the academic theory behind education and I was beginning to think that this was interesting stuff*'.

For John, moving into teaching seemed to come as a sudden flash of insight and his story demonstrated developmental coherence in his conscious decision and causal explanation for becoming a teacher:

> '*I was looking at teaching and thinking it would be more intellectually stimulating for me. And dealing with people ...... interest in the job and interest in working with people, so I had this brainstorm where I thought I need to teach*'.

John subsequently completed a full time PGCE course before being appointed to a teaching post and he concludes:

'I have really enjoyed the contact with the staff and the environment of the college has been good …… with students it has been really stimulating …… I find myself really happy to get up and go in and do it and I enjoy it'.

An outstanding feature of the causal connections in becoming a teacher was that three participants narrated stories of the fortuitous events which set into motion influences that changed the course of their lives. Keith, Jayne and Helen constructed meanings of these events as being preordained or fate; however, whilst these occurrences may have been unforeseeable, the personal resources of individuals enable them to make the most of opportunities as they arise unexpectedly (Bandura 2006). In viewing human development from a life span perspective, life trajectories can be seen as a dynamic interplay between personal and environmental influences (Bandura 1998). It is through living an active life that we increase the number of fortuitous encounters that we experience and we "can exercise significant control over their impact" (Bandura 1998 p.98). Fortuity therefore does not mean uncontrollability of its effects and it is through participants' own proactive efforts in continuing their education that they created favourable opportunities to shaped their own destinies and give meaning, direction and satisfaction to their lives (Bandura 1998). Fortuity therefore creates the conditions by which individuals can have influence over the course of their lives through the agentic management of the fortuitous events which they encounter (Bandura 2006).

The specific events narrated in stories all proved to be biographically consequential; as such this autobiographical reasoning frames one's individuality into a developmental history that actively creates coherence between events and how previous experiences have shaped one's self (Habermas and Bluck 2000). As is congruent with previous research in the post compulsory sector, participants "drew on their own formative experiences of schooling to illustrate their own values, attitudes and beliefs" in relation to their educational practice (Jephcote and Salisbury 2009). Drawing on the notion that to maintain identity, life stories need to fulfil four needs of meaning: purpose, efficacy, self-worth and value/justification (Baumeister and Wilson 1996) we can see that all participants narrated purposive connections in events that led to becoming a teacher. In relation to efficacy, whilst the move into teaching was constructed as serendipitous for some participants, becoming a qualified teacher was the "product of their own efforts and actions" (Baumeister and Wilson 1996 p. 324). Self-worth was demonstrated in all stories in relation to personal growth in educational achievements and occupational success. Finally, if we consider the concept of value, the moral justification of the life story comes to the forefront through the development of a reliable sense of right and wrong as a critical component of personal ideology (de St. Aubin et al 2006 p.232). The following section will now consider how participants connect their early memories to the moral values they espouse to within their role as teachers.

3.4 Self Characterisation of Teacher Identity

Individual stories can challenge the negative impact which events have on the self; it is through embracing the negative emotion generated by these events that we construct positive endings and "an enduring sense of positive self-transformation within the identity-defining story" (Pals and McAdams 2004 p.66). Self-transformation manifests itself in participants' stories through self characterisation based on educational practice which "encompasses belief-based opinions, convictions and assumptions one might hold" (de St. Aubin et al 2006 p.223). This ideological setting relates to the person's "ethical beliefs and values as they are instantiated in the story, including individual accounts of how those values and beliefs came to be" (McAdams 1996 p.308). An emergent theme which arose within the life stories of the participants was the powerful influence that autobiographical stories of early school experiences had on the participants' perceptions of their educational values in relation to effective teaching and learning practice. Three of the participants adopted what Grundy and Hatton (1998) describe as a 'lived recognition' of the psychological impact of negative school experiences. This 'lived recognition' manifests itself within the narratives as a reflective and conscious awareness of the problematic nature of the participants' early school experiences in relation to inequitable teaching practice. Three of the participants'

accounts demonstrated strong negative emotions of non-achievement which now influences their own approaches to supporting learners and ensuring equity within their own teaching practice.

Keith's narrative clearly constructs and gives meaning to his negative school experiences in relation to his own personal values:

> '*I would never teach in the way I was taught and I would never be as undermining I suppose as others were undermining my skills and attributes'.*

A personal event memory in Keith's story demonstrates how a learning experience in sixth form has proven to be self-defining (McAdams 2001) in providing a moral directive that characterises Keith's own relationship with students:

> '*I found his method of teaching in the sixth form distinctly different to what I have experienced in prior years in the school …… He was human, the way he taught and he wasn't afraid of talking about other things ……so he would relate it to something that I knew and understood …… I would say when I first started to teach I adopted some of his methods, in a around about sort of fashion'.*

Keith gives meaning to this turning point of his first positive teaching experience which has significantly influenced his own teaching approach based on building relationships and students' confidence:

> '*So I heavily base my approach on discussion starting with what they* [students] *know, rather than with what I know …… so it's all built around, really the relationship that I've got, and the knowledge I've got about individual learners'.*

This personal event memory has become a guiding statement and moral directive (McAdams 2001) which characterises Keith's own professional practice as demonstrated in his visual metaphor related to the moral dimensions of teaching in Figure 1.

Moral Dimension of Teaching	*'…… the moral dimensions of teaching, I think it's what teaching is always about isn't it? A little puppy is behind trying to force the little boy to stand up, and the teacher is the person that is giving them the opportunity to hold on and pull themselves up; …. It's not what's forcing them through the qualification, it's us giving them the ability, the tools … the power to learn for themselves …… they've got to be independent and that independence comes form the ability to solve problems.*

The above metaphor demonstrates how Keith makes a clear distinction between his own early school experiences of traditional teacher-centred approaches which he associates with forcing students through to qualification success. In contrast, he advocates more student-centred strategies (Rogers 1969) which could be viewed as being more empowering through encouraging independence through self-directed learning (Knowles 1980).

Jayne's narrative also demonstrated that her early school experiences have resulted in a strong emotional commitment to support students: *'because I didn't get support at home or at school and so I do support them* [students]*'.* In terms of Jayne's self characterisation, she describes herself as a *'dedicated and*

passionate' teacher who is '*very caring and nurturing'* towards her students. In particular, Jayne explains her aim as:

> *'wanting them to enjoy the course and it's a wanting for them to be able to do things and if I can help them to do something and to enjoy the course to qualify; then I think that's part of my role'.*

Jayne does however indentify the moral dilemmas she has to face in balancing the extensive support she provides to learners, whilst also instigating disciplinary procedures in relation to student behavioural difficulties. These conflicts lead to feelings of self-doubt as demonstrated in her visual metaphor related to the moral dimensions of teaching in Figure 2.

Moral Dimension of Teaching

'But my moral dilemma …….I see myself as the enemy to [student name]…… *I've done this note of concern, and I'm not the only teacher…… but she is going to be kicked off the course…... I see that as the villain on something that's soft, so you do have to be quite hard with the students and it might not be what you want to do'.*

The above moral dilemma demonstrates the emotional labour (Hochschild 1983) Jayne experiences in following disciplinary procedures that are contrary to her nurturing ethic of care towards students as she concludes: *'it doesn't take me very much to think oh my god what have I done, have I handled this wrong?'*

Helen's narrative also acknowledges her negative school experiences and this lived recognition of her experiences have influenced her sensitivity to student needs in her own professional practice of teaching numeracy:

> '*I am quite aware of the fact that a lot of people have had horrendous experiences, particularly with maths ….. when I am teaching I try to always keep that in the forefront of my mind, that maybe this person may have had a bad experience of maths as I did, to be quite careful with them, the way I treat them and help them with maths'.*

Like Keith, Helen identifies a personal event memory when completing her Access to Higher Education (HE) course which has proven to be self-defining (McAdams 2001) in her relationship with learners:

> '*I had an absolutely brilliant teacher…… she was always calm and she was really laid back and if you made a mistake, she would say let's have a look and she would help you find where the problem was …… So I absolutely loved the course and then I realised that I could not only do the maths, but I absolutely loved it'.*

Helen gives meaning to this turning point in her own education which she relates to her non-judgemental approach to students and clearly articulates strongly held beliefs in developing learners' confidence in their own ability. Helen explains how her own learning experiences have had:

> '*a profound effect on me …… if I know someone has got problems or a learning difficulty, I will go out of my way to spend a bit of extra time with them if I can'.*

However, Helen faces a dilemma when reconciling students' unrealistic ambitions, whilst also developing students' confidence;

this dilemma is clearly articulated in her visual metaphor on the moral

dimensions of teaching in Figure 3.

Moral Dimension of Teaching

'I have chosen the rainbow ….. you know, they come in and have really high aspirations …… I want a GCSE or I want a degree, and in some ways it's a moral thing because I'm thinking …… I don't ever think you are going to get or to achieve that high …… And I think should I actually tell them that, do I have really a moral duty to tell them……. And then I think if you tell them they can't, and they're completely demoralised by that …… so it could become a self fulfilling prophesy'

Again, like Jayne, Helen remains sensitive to nurturing students'

confidence in their own learning ability whist also maintaining their

realistic expectations of their future ambitions.

John evaluates his role as being multifaceted due to the nature of

learners' prior educational experiences and the varied socio-cultural

backgrounds of the students. In particular, he adopts a broad

approach to educating learners by developing their abilities to

engage in critical thinking as a life enhancing process:

> *'If they can do that then I think they're better off and they are richer for it, they can then start to pick up a newspaper and instead of just reading it at face value, they should then be able to start and analyse and evaluate'.*

He places great emphasis on raising students' awareness of ethical issues, together with the moral values of society and is critical of a present culture based on individualism:

> 'In our society in general, we have a lack of morals, it's all about what can you get away with, I would say morals in the sense that it is all about the individual …… for me morals is about how your behaviour affects society, affects other people. And yet our whole society is not geared around that …… it's geared around the individual; what does society owe you'.

For John, raising awareness of moral issues is integral to his professional practice:

> 'I feel that whether it be a duty or an obligation or whatever, I see that I have the opportunity to include over the course of time, to try to give these students a different moral perspective'.

John clearly articulates his aim as exposing students *'to a different journey'* and powerfully explains his view on the moral dimension of teaching in the visual metaphor in Figure 4.

Moral Dimension of Teaching

'The puppies are the students and that perhaps putting them in a different framework in terms of the moral obligations …… it's within our remit to give and help provide a moral framework for young people. And particularly young people who ……do drugs and alcohol, its pretty savage out there for them, and they sometimes do lose track of the moral dimension of things; it is very much dog eat dog world for them'

For John, his wide ranging experiences in a variety of diverse cultural settings appear to have provided implicit lessons related to societal values; these worldwide experiences seem to have become guiding

principles in his interventionist view of his teaching role by raising awareness of moral frameworks with students.

In the above examples from participants' stories, personal values within a teaching role have been attributed to early memories in the justification of the moral dimensions of the teaching. These memories proved to be instrumental in self-definition; for three of the participants, their professional moral directives were clearly justified in relation to emotionally charged imagery of their early school experiences. For John, his worldwide experiences have provided moral values which facilitate a social justice agenda within his professional practice. The life stories narrated have therefore reconstructed past experiences in the development of personal beliefs and values which provide a moral compass (McAdams 1996) which characterises participants' current professional practice.

3.5 Autobiographical Memories and Concepts of the Self

In relation to autobiographical memory, Conway (2005) believes that "memories may be altered, distorted, even fabricated to support current aspects of the self" (p.595) in ways that make memories consistent with the individual's current goals, self-images and self-beliefs. In this way memory is used to provide a coherent system of beliefs and knowledge about the self which is confirmed and supported by memories of specific experiences (Conway 2005).

However, the meanings individuals make within their narrative constructions of autobiographical memories are not simply personal, they are also political in nature and may challenge the status quo of inequality or other forms of injustice (Hammack 2011). In this respect, all participants in this study engaged in critical reflections of their early experiences which were crucial in defining the current principles they endorsed as embodying a valued life (Christman 2008). Three of the participants told stories of triumph in overcoming their own early negative experiences of education by becoming a teacher in later life. In this way, negative school experiences changed in relation to their emotional quality by gaining positive consequences (Thomsen and Brinkmann 2009) within individuals' professional teaching practice by placing emphasis on caring for students and engaging students in dialogue (Cranton 2006). Therefore, through the narrative processing of lived experiences, we engage in a lifelong process of self-understanding which may prove transformational in activating silenced voices and could possibly "serve some end toward making the world a better place for all" (Hammack 2011 p.315). Narrative constructions are therefore "an internalised and evolving story of the reconstructed past and imagined future that aims to provide life with unity, coherence and purpose" (McAdams 2010 p. 179).

This chapter has centred on aspects of participants' stories of their early experiences and the meaning-making process of becoming a

teacher. In this respect participants engaged in autobiographical reasoning which links together autobiographical scenes from the past into causal sequences (McAdams 2010) that characterise aspects of their personal ideology as a teacher in the present. However, whilst these autobiographical memories explain how 'I came to be who I am today', individuals continue the process of narrative identity construction throughout their lives; as such narrative identity is a story of an evolving self, set within a cultural context (McAdams 2010). The next chapter will consider the participants' evolving life stories as a social phenomenon constructed within the political and organisational context of being a teacher within PCE.

Chapter 4 – Analysis of Competing Educational Discourses

"What people do in narratives is never by chance, nor is it strictly determined by cause and effect; it is motivated by beliefs, desires, theories, values, or other 'intentional states' (Bruner 1996 p.136)

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter there was exploration of how the participants in this study made meanings of their early autobiographical experiences through a process that develops a cohesive sense of identity. In contrast, this chapter will now focus on the participants' evolving life stories of being a teacher set within the context of the organisational environment. In particular, the analysis will focus on how the participants create and sustain their narrative meanings in relation to current political and organisational discourses on education by adopting a psychosocial theoretical lens in the analysis of data. This analysis acknowledges that stories told and shared by members of a social group can serve as a vehicle for self-expression and definition (Nelson 2003). Narratives can therefore solidify social structures and provide common ways of understanding the world; they may also establish political hierarchies and legitimise power. Within this context "narrative is assumed to be a group construction, one that turns individual memories into shared conceptual systems" (Nelson 2003 p. 127). Whilst the preceding chapter maintained a focus on individual autobiographical memories as the building blocks

for self construction, the focus of this chapter will locate the field of inquiry within a broader framework which acknowledges micro level stories of narrative identity, together with wider political and organisational policymaking discourses that could structure or reconfigure the narrative identity of teachers.

In common with the preceding chapter, the analysis will take the form of an anthology of super-ordinate themes that emerged from particular themes within individual participants' stories. The analysis will consider three super-ordinate themes related to competing educational discourses. The first super-ordinate theme (4.2) Personal Narratives of Teacher Identity will consider themes related to the participants' personal beliefs on the learning and teaching process. The second super-ordinate theme (4.3) Political and Organisational Narratives on Learning and Teaching will consider themes related to current educational policy discourses on effective learning and teaching practice. The third super-ordinate theme (4.4) Organisational Control and Individual Agency will consider themes related to the extent that teachers feel empowered to define their own professional practice within the context of the organisation environment and wider PCE sector.

4.2 Personal Narratives of Teacher Identity

Making sense of the self as it changes over time involves the construction of self-narratives as a 'selfing' process through life story construction (McAdams 1996). Life stories therefore spell out personal truths which are embedded in the discourses of everyday life (McAdams 1996). The self combines personal narrative musings with "public narrative manoeuvrings that are strongly driven by role and situational demands" (McAdams 1996 p.307); identity is therefore the story that binds these things together. This self identity requires "establishment of some sort of moral stance, an implicit perspective on 'the good' from which the individual can judge the quality of his or her own life" (McAdams 1996 p.308). It is this moral perspective in relation to the ethical values and beliefs that will now be considered within the context of participants' narrative constructions of being a teacher.

Keith's narrative story demonstrates strongly held values on learning and teaching and the majority of his narrative discourse was dedicated a dialogue on educational practice. A dominant value which underpins Keith's professional practice is the empowerment of students in the learning process:

> '*it's probably getting them* [students] *to learn for themselves, getting them to take control of their own learning because that's the only way that it will work…… I want to be the catalyst in that process'.*

Keith characterises his teaching approach as being very interactive, collaborative and discussion based through encouraging students to

share their own experiences and thereby building confidence in their own ability. Overall, Keith sees his role as being a catalyst in engaging students in a self development journey:

> '*it's getting them to recognise their current position and look at where they want to move to and through that process they become hopefully engaged in that self development journey*'.

Fundamental to this learning journey is encouraging students to take risks; this pushing the boundaries in students' learning experiences will therefore require the development of active trust in personal relationships which "depends on an assumption of the integrity of the other" (Giddens 1994 p. 127). Keith powerfully explains how he is motivated as a teacher in the visual metaphor in Figure 5.

Motivated as a Teacher

'*I suppose as a teacher getting other people to take a risk, and what more of a risk is there from stepping from one small pillar to another pillar …..what motivates me is getting people to take that step…..It's all about building up their own self confidence to be able to say 'well this is what I am like, but this is what the opportunities are out in front of me'; getting them to take that step of faith is almost part of our role as a tutor ….what you're trying to do is get people to push the boundaries…..*'.

Keith clearly articulates the learning journey as building the self confidence of students and challenging students' assumptions, which could be aligned to concepts of transformational learning (Mezirow 1997). This process will require effecting change in the frame of reference which defines the life world of individuals through re-

examining their prior assumptions (Mezirow 1997). In the process of questioning the meaning perspectives of students, unpleasant emotions may arise which will call for sensitivity on the part of the teacher as an accompanist in this developmental journey (Mälkki and Green 2014). The teaching role may therefore be defined as a way of being present with students and offering acceptance and support to individuals as they explore their emerging life worlds (Mälkki and Green 2014).

Jayne's narrative story demonstrates that she places considerable emphasis on the individual support she provides to students to ensure their successful achievement on awards:

> '*It is important to me to ensure that the students are successful …… I see it as a personal failure if they're not, even though I totally recognise the fact that you could have students in the group that don't put the work in or, don't come into college to attend the lessons, plagiarise. I'm aware of all those issues but I still see it as a failure*'.

This emphasis on student achievement reflects Jayne's views of what is important in her professional practice:

> '*it's important that my class is lively and nice and interesting …… that we work in a way that suits them …… it's really important that the course is enjoyable and it's sensibly delivered which is meeting the learners' needs …… so I try to be very clear with the candidates*'.

On a number of occasions Jayne made reference to providing a good service to students and referred to students as customers; when these concepts were explored further in the narrative dialogue, Jayne clarified:

> '*I think they are our customers because if it wasn't for the students I wouldn't have a job, so they are our customers so and yeah I think we do provide a service in a way*'

This re-conceptualisation of students as customers reflects current political narratives and demonstrates how Jayne has internalized the language and values of the market and in so doing regulates herself (Coffield et al. 2014) as she articulates:

> '*And my values …… it's to not to let the students down, to go in and produce and to have an exciting lesson…… my personal value is to not let yourself down and not to go in and think 'I'll get away with this on a wing and a prayer' because I'm not prepared, I like the preparation of it all …… I won't short change anybody*'

As a student however, Jayne clarifies that she has never considered her own education in this way:

> '*I mean sitting in your classes I have never thought you're providing a service, I've never sat there and thought that …… I've never looked at it as a student that way, no, no I haven't'.*

These contradictory views may be explained in relation to the field of tension between social and personal positioning as manifested through collective voices in the self:

> "because collective voices are not only outside but also in a particular individual self, the relationship between a collective voice may constrain or even suppress the meaning system of an individual, although the individual may fight back in order to be heard" (Hermans 2001 p. 263).

In this respect, Jayne articulates the high level emotional satisfaction she derives within her own teaching practice which overrides negative organisational constraints as demonstrated in her visual metaphor of how she is motivated as a teacher in Figure 6.

Motivated as a Teacher

To me that picture of a wave coming back in the sort of grip of the tide and then coming crashing over. And I think sometimes you can get caught up in all the politics and all the woe is me and all the misery and be sitting moaning about you haven't got enough time and resources etc, etc. And that's the sea there all sort of flat. And then suddenly when you get in the classroom it's really fantastic and you're having a good lesson and it all explodes and it's lovely…… when I come out of a class and I'm buzzing because we've had a really good time……And to try to stay out of all the moaning and groaning…… when I am in the classroom and it's so good….. so it's all that splashing and whirling and niceness'.

It would seem that for Jayne, her self-realisation is grounded in the excitement she experiences within her own classroom practice. In this respect, her story indicates a more isolated individualistic identity based on her own professional practice where she attempts to distance herself from the negative organisational culture which derives from the intensification of the teaching role.

Throughout Helen's narrative there was also a strong emphasis on learning and teaching where the majority of the narrative text included lengthy reflections on Helen's professional experiences of teaching numeracy to adult learners. Helen clearly articulates strongly held beliefs in developing a supportive environment that is conducive to learning and demonstrates a high level of sensitivity to the needs of learners who return to learning on adult community courses:

> *'if I can take somebody who comes to me and says they couldn't do multiplication and show them a method and they leave and can now multiply, then I'm happy because I know they have achieved something that they couldn't do before'*

However, Helen reflects on the current dilemmas she faces due to the reduction in class contact time with learners; rather than teaching for understanding through experiential learning strategies, she now needs to adopt a more directive approach of teaching to the test:

> *'because you don't have the time to spend with them, to let them explore or do some discovery learning…… I used to feel that they had actually got a much better understanding whereas often now you're just teaching them to pass the test and you're not really teaching for understanding'.*

Helen's narrative explores the tensions she faces in reconciling her own values with funding requirements which appear to have a significant impact on her motivation as a teacher:

> *'when I first started as a teacher, what really motivated me and I was probably far too idealistic …… a lot of people have a lot of problems with maths …… you think maybe I can get that sorted ….. But of course that soon disappeared …… they have to achieve because college funding depends on it, if there is no funding there are no jobs or teaching for me anyway….. that is not what teaching is about and it isn't what I wanted to do'*

To a great extent Helen's narrative story seems to reflect the internal dialogue between collective voices (Hermans 2001). Helen's personal positioning seems to be grounded in values related to learners' personal development through a process of discovery learning which can be life enhancing. However, it would seem that within the organisational context, teachers are socially positioned as

'*teaching to the test*' to enable students to acquire knowledge and qualifications in the generation of college funding. As Helen explains:

> '*I think it's a case now that we get them* [students] *in, get them through, get them the qualification and get them out again. In fact that was actually said to me by the manager*'.

The tensions that Helen faces in reconciling these competing discourses create a sense of conflict with her own deeply held beliefs which seem to be overwhelming Helen's identity as a teacher:

> '*I really do hate it and I'm getting more and more upset and dissatisfied with it, so I can't really see me staying in teaching that long because one day I will just wake up and think 'I've had enough of this; I'm not doing it anymore'*.

It would seem that Helen is further de-motivated when learners are reluctant to actively engage in problem solving and take more responsibility for their own learning and development; this could be a by-product of the current emphasis on competence based and assessment driven curriculum delivery. These factors have a considerable impact on how Helen is motivated as a teacher as demonstrated in her visual metaphor in Figure 7.

Motivated as a Teacher

'*With the learners that I'm getting now, that's this picture I have chosen where he is trying to drag this lad into the back of a car and I often feel like that with my learners now, that even though most of them have come on the course as they want to ...... you're still sort of dragging them, kicking and screaming to that place ...... as a teacher you're not in the business of knowledge, you're actually in the business of teaching people how to think ...... most of them don't seem to want to and I find that really de-motivating as a teacher*'.

Helen's story demonstrates a growing disillusionment with an educational process driven by funding requirements, coupled with the challenges she faces with learners who are reluctant to actively engage in self-directed learning (Knowles 1980). Overall, Helen's narrative seems to indicate that performative regimes are intensifying; this may have significant implications for the morale and retention of teachers within the post compulsory sector.

John's narrative also demonstrates strongly held beliefs that underpin his teaching practice and perhaps the overriding theme throughout John's story focuses on *'making a difference'* through changing peoples lives:

> *'well I say changes someone's life is perhaps a bit pretentious, you can perhaps awaken them, make them realise what they are capable of doing and thereby shall we say stimulate the potential within themselves'.*

Facilitating students' realisation of their own abilities centres on John's vision of teaching *'students to think'* as he explains:

> *'if they can look at a situation or a scenario, they can describe it, they can then analyse it and they can then think and come up with their own conclusion, judgements and evaluations …… if they're able to go through that process, then I think I have achieved'*

John views his role as being multifaceted due to the nature of learners' prior educational experiences and the socio-cultural backgrounds of the majority of 16-19 year old students he encounters:

> *'it's almost a parental role ……a lot of them can have no manners whatsoever, it sounds old fashioned but just getting them to say please and thank you and being polite and respectful in terms of education and that's a major step for a lot of them'.*

Providing personal support to these learners is an essential element of John's professional practice where he feels '*it's important to establish a relationship*' with students:

> '*For me it comes naturally to be honest…… you either care or you don't, and unfortunately a lot of staff don't. The only thing a lot of staff care about is getting the grades*'.

John clearly demonstrates his personal positioning as educating students in opposition to other colleagues who may adopt organisational positioning related to narrow views of qualification achievement: "*we should be educating them as well as getting them to achieve qualifications*". As is congruent with the views of other participants in this study, it would seem current policy has reconstructed education as an accreditation process in contrast to the more liberating potential of education (Freire 1972). John's identity is firmly based on a wider life enhancing view of education as demonstrated in his approach to developing interpersonal skills:

> '*they need to be able to build up their confidence ….. you're not only teaching them knowledge but you're giving them skills that they can use in the working environment and they need to be comfortable with working with other people…… you've often got to challenge and push them without being threatening*'.

Overall, John seems to maintain passionate commitment to a wider view of educating learners, thereby enhancing their life prospects as

a gateway to their future which is demonstrated in his visual metaphor on how he is motivated as a teacher in Figure 8.

Motivated as a Teacher

'Well I mean okay this is a gateway in a field effectively and for me I would have liked that gate to be open …… I see myself and my motivation is the future of the students …… I am motivated by my students achieving, and my students moving on to higher education, to jobs and what they get out of it …… if I can help them to really move on to careers, point them in certain directions, then that's my motivation; the gateway to the future and the big wide world'

In the above discussion, all of the participants in the study presented narratives that clearly articulated their personal values and beliefs which act as guiding principles in the development of their professional practice with students. Throughout these stories there was evidence of common values related to the teacher's role in nurturing students' wellbeing and worth through a relational restorative culture (Vanndering 2014) These views challenge authoritarian learning based on a presumption that the teacher is the primary content expert whose task is to fill the mind of students (Adamson and Bailie 2012) which reflect the traditional goals of ''banking'' knowledge models in education (Freire 1972). In contrast, participant stories seem to advocate a more transformational view of education in which students' perspectives may change through a process of critical reflection in challenging their existing values, beliefs and assumptions (Mezirow 2000). The narratives constructed by participants seem to be in contrast to current organisational

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environments which view students as part of an assembly line that are only measured by their outputs thereby creating disadvantages for many groups (Anderson 2007).

Whilst personal identity requires assigning moral values, our storied world often contains multiple and competing narratives (Loseke 2007) and dominant social and political contexts can deconstruct or reconstruct the individual's sense of self. Meaning is thereby "negotiated and continually in process as we adopt particular positions, rejecting others that have little resonance with our lives" (McCormack 2000 p.295). Whilst the above analysis focuses on exploration of personal identities through the establishment of a moral stance (McAdams 1996), there was some evidence of accommodation of political narratives in relation to reconceptualising students as 'customers' and the teacher's role as providing a 'service' in Jayne's narrative story. In the case of Keith, Helen and John, their self narratives demonstrated a strong resistance to organisational narratives related to teaching for examination purposes. However, for Helen, the conflicts between her personal values and organisational requirements seem to engender such strong negative emotions that she is considering leaving the teaching profession. The remaining analysis in this chapter will now consider how participants "construct or reconstruct their sense of self through acts of accommodation, challenge, or resistance" (McCormack 2000 p.287) to the political and organisational discourses on education.

4.3 Political and Organisational Narratives on Learning and Teaching

Current educational policy based on the concept of performance management has resulted in modes of regulation that employ measures of performativity in which "organisations are 'enabled' to think about themselves differently; in terms of, or in relation to their performance" (Ball 2012 p. 30). These judgements of performance are manifested through results-driven accountability and the bureaucratic surveillance over teachers' professional practice (Ball 2006) which may work "most powerfully when it is inside our heads and our souls" (Ball 2012 p. 31). This political context of teaching could act as a mediating system that shapes teacher identity; conforming to external demands could result in the other-directed self (Riesman1950) that "slavishly takes shapes that are known to be socially acceptable and valued" (Holstein and Gubrium 2000 p.44). Given the current political context, there is a danger that some teachers may submit to becoming whatever is required to survive resulting in the closing down of autonomous ethical codes based on shared moral values. However teachers are not simply pawns in this process, they are active agents who can adapt, adopt or ignore policy mandates; "seen in this way, agency is always mediated by the interaction between the individual (attributes and inclinations) and the tools and structures of the social setting" (Lasky 2005 p.900).

A theme that arose in all the participants' narratives related to perceptions of the value and worth of procedures for observing and grading teaching practice through Office for Standards in Education, children's services and skills (Ofsted), and college observational processes. Keith's narrative story makes reference to teachers becoming '*institutionalised*' through the college observation system which he describes as '*judgemental*' and based on college expectations of how lessons should be structured:

> '*it's meeting what their pattern is of a good tutor, if you don't tick the boxes and you haven't done the paperwork, then you get an unreasonable grade*'.

Despite Keith's resistance to this prescriptive approach to learning and teaching, he justifies why he adapts his teaching practice during observed sessions and conforms to the college observation criteria;

> '*so you put more effort into designing your lesson for the observation and in my view, it's probably the less effective lesson than your standard lesson …… I feel that if as teacher trainer I achieve a bad grade because I don't tick all their boxes, that has a reflection on me …… so I have got to play the game in order to get that good grade, even though it is alien to me*'.

Keith further clarifies that observation processes have a significant impact on how teachers structure sessions:

> '*everybody does what is expected at that observation because, if you don't then you're graded not so well as if you follow the requirements …… rather than the learners' needs*'.

Keith evaluates the process as being prescriptive in '*conforming to a pattern*' and further questions:

> '*what is an ideal lesson? Everybody is different …… but there's no encouragement to be inventive with the pattern of*

how you do it, and that means that tutors become almost automatons in delivery'.

Keith remains consciously aware of the limitations of college processes in judging effective learning and teaching based on '*ticking the boxes'* and completing the required '*paperwork'* and experiences tensions when his personal values are compromised by institutional factors that impede the realisation of his aims. Throughout Keith's narrative these constraints manifest themselves through feelings of vulnerability as a teacher as demonstrated in his visual metaphor in Figure 9.

Experience of Vulnerability as a Teacher

'….well it's the amount of bureaucracy and paperwork, systems that has now become an increasingly large percentage of the job and it's not being able to cope with that that makes you feel vulnerable as a tutor ….. you can't cope with that level of bureaucracy, so much so that the time spent on planning your lessons is almost minimal, it is overshadowed'

Keith's narrative portrays how success within the current performative culture is evidenced through a bureaucratic paper trail which focuses on ticking boxes. However, the amount of time required in following elaborate systems and procedures detracts from enhancing the quality of the students' learning experience (Whitehead 2005). Furthermore, performative cultures damage trust relationships where teachers "feel they are no longer trusted and

relied upon to be able to make informed and professional judgements" (Whitehead 2005 p.18) and thereby place teachers in a constant state of vulnerability.

Jayne's narrative story tends to adopt a fatalistic view of observation and the Ofsted inspection process:

> '*I can see the farce Ofsted is, they come in for one hour and you're judged on one hour's teaching, it's pathetic but you have to get it right because you don't want to let the college down'.*

Jayne demonstrates resistance to an educational discourse based on '*tick box criteria'* which she feels is inappropriate given the nature of her students, many of whom are adult returners to education:

> '*you've got to have your group profile which I think is just nonsense …… this ridiculous business about if a student comes in late to challenge them as they come in; I teach moms and people who have got full time jobs …… …… but I think it's embarrassing to have to say something…… it's humiliating for that person …… but we all do it because it's Ofsted'.*

Jayne's narrative clearly reflects the view of teachers fabricating performances (Ball 2001) for Ofsted that are far removed from their everyday practice. Whilst Jayne remains critical of Ofsted for '*looking for a regime in the classroom',* she explains that at a time of redundancies, the college will be:

> '*looking at poor teaching and staff who don't teach particularly well …… so you've got to look after yourself as well, you know so….'*

Overall, Jayne's narrative demonstrates resistance to the political discourses that define her teaching practice; however there is

evidence of her compliance and accommodation of hierarchical systems of control at a time when there are threats to job security:

> *'I think we're institutionalised …… I don't like the grading system as such and I don't like being observed by somebody who I know is not as good a teacher as me …… but that's just the hierarchy isn't it'.*

These institutional factors are reflected in Jayne's feelings of vulnerability which are demonstrated in her visual metaphor in Figure 10.

Experience of Vulnerability as a Teacher

'It's a very sort of typical kind of picture of perhaps suggesting someone at the crossroads of their life ….. for the past two or three years at the college there has always been the threat of redundancies ……so I always feel vulnerable and at the moment I am because although I'm on a main grade lecturer's contract it is only for a year and it is renewed yearly and is due for renewal at the end of October ……. I am feeling a bit vulnerable in terms of what's going to happen at the end of October'

Jayne's narrative demonstrates how observation processes are used as a technology for the social control (Foucault 1977) of teachers' professional practice by placing individuals in a constant state of vulnerability through threats of redundancies and the casualization of teaching contracts.

Like the other participants in this study, Helen adopts an ambivalent stance to the utility of the observation process; in particular she is

critical of the grading of sessions: '*any teacher shouldn't need these grades to tell them whether they are a good teacher or not'.* However, Helen explains how some teachers will go as far as planning and rehearsing staged performances for the observation process with a view to achieving a good grade:

> '*I've also heard of tutors rehearsing the week before …. they prime the learners on what they can and can't say and what they can and can't ask and I just think I couldn't be bothered!'*

Helen evaluates that the '*process just doesn't seem to serve any useful purpose'* and overall, she seems to adopt a stance of silent dissent to observation process:

> '*I try not to engage with the process anyway, so I just agree with anything they say …. I just decided, if I agree with your feedback I'll take it on board but if I don't agree with your feedback, I ignore it completely ….. I mean I know we have to be judged if you like …… but whether it's the best way of doing it I don't know'.*

Helen concludes:

> '*sometimes I just feel that they think that as long as they get to tick all their boxes when they observe you, that it doesn't matter what you're doing the rest of the time as long as you get the results'.*

Whilst Helen maintains a detached position to the observation process in her narrative, it does appear that at a deeper more emotional level there are tensions between the judgements of others and her own identity as a teacher. These tensions seem to stem from getting '*told basically what is wrong'* with the observed session and Helen advocates the need for a more collaborative dialogue where:

'people might feel more in control ….. I think it would be useful more of a two way thing….. with that questioning or something along those lines rather than them just coming out and saying 'this was wrong and that was wrong'.

To a great extent Helen's narrative paints a picture of an observation process that is done to teachers, where teacher voice is negated and valuable opportunities for open-minded collaborative and non-defensive dialogue (Cockburn 2005) on teaching and learning are lost. Throughout Helen's narrative, she makes reference to the extensive amount of bureaucratic paperwork requirements that relate to quality control procedures within colleges; these requirements lead to powerful feelings of vulnerability as demonstrated in the visual metaphor in Figure 11.

Experience of Vulnerability as a Teacher

Well the vulnerability as a teacher is the Alsatians and the Cat because that's sometimes how I feel; you just feel like you're treading very carefully and you're about to get pounced on at any second ….. it's just that there aren't enough hours in the day ….. you just know they're biding their time until it's time so that they can pounce! …… So I do feel like that a little bit at times and then other times I just don't care and I can't be bothered; I'm too tired I don't care!'

Helen's narrative seems to demonstrate that the lived experiences of teachers have become dominated by the need to generate evidence which will "represent the institution favourably" (Smith 2007 p.44). This continual surveillance of a teachers' professional practice operates within a blame culture in calling teachers to account; this

"performance culture marked by an emphasis upon accountability is hardly one in which risk-taking or the development of creative problem solving will take place" (Avis 2003 p. 324). Furthermore, the present culture which is saturated with bureaucratic requirements seems to "deflect resources and energies from the central tasks of teaching and learning" (Coffield 2007 p.19).

John's narrative story clearly articulates the impact of current accountability systems on the quality of teaching and learning and he views the Ofsted inspection process as '*driving down the quality of teaching and learning'.* John justifies his perceptions of Ofsted inspection as being '*focused more and more on the systems'* and '*they really couldn't care less about the individual learner, it's all about the paper trail'.* In relation to the observation of teaching and learning, John clearly evaluates the '*uselessness*' of college systems of observation:

> '*it's a tick box exercise for the observation, because they want it for Ofsted ...... Lesson plans and portfolios are part of it, but it's meaningless quite frankly because most teachers can produce one good lesson a year, and if they can't ..... then they really shouldn't be doing the job'.*

John is equally critical of the management culture within the college based on encouraging internal competition through the measurement of performance targets:

> '*the senior management team want to make one area compete with another ...... they will compare schools, clusters, areas against each other, and say how come this school is getting more merits and this one getting better grades ..... it's an unhealthy place'.*

This organisational culture, with its focus on internal competition, portrays teachers as rational individuals who maximize their utility within market transactions (Allais 2012). This view of teachers as collections of self-interested individuals does however ignore the complex relationships between teachers who function within communities of professional practice as collective agents (Allais 2012). It is through the collaborative critique of teachers' lived experiences that "practitioners are more likely to find their authority and legitimacy" (Gleeson and Knight 2006 p. 291) to challenge these market discourses.

Overall, John remains critical of a management culture based performance measures and internal competition and appears to remain resistant to playing the *'numbers game'* as he explains:

> *'if I was achieving good results in terms of success and achievement, but I felt in order to do that I was having to let down students, I wouldn't feel particularly valued, because that can happen'.*

John acknowledges that whilst he does not feel vulnerable in the teaching role, he has found college administrative processes challenging in his first year of teaching as demonstrated in the visual metaphor in Figure 12.

Experience of Vulnerability as a Teacher

'*There's the traditional image of teaching being the Lions Den, but I don't feel particularly vulnerable ….. I am the Lion, I am not really aggressive, but I'm not vulnerable ….. the area that has been more challenging has been to understand the expectations of the college, the administrative process of the college …… And the form filling, you think well I have already put this here and they say you need to put it there as well and you have to repeat things and it's all about the expectations for Ofsted and whatever*'.

In the above discussion, all participants in this study highlighted how college quality control procedures are manifested through a requirement to complete extensive amounts of paperwork which often detracts attention away from their core purpose of facilitating student learning. This changing flow of bureaucratic demands, expectations and indicators which make teachers "continually accountable and constantly recorded" (Ball 2001 p. 211-212) has resulted in a heightened sense of vulnerability for participants in this study. However, whilst all participants were critical of a tick box observation process based on a blueprint view of a standardised lesson format, individuals adopted a position of strategic compliance (Gleeson and Shain 1999) to these requirements. A consequence of these fabricated performances could lead to a growing sense of ontological insecurity, a reduction in personal worth and loss of principled professional practice (Ball 2012). Narrative approaches to identity therefore help us to understand how the social and cultural

context shapes individual perceptions of the world. Social constructions of reality are embedded within the dominant and collectively held meanings of being a teacher within the organisational context, however "individuals do not always take up the types of narratives they are meant to" (Fraser 2004 p.180). Narrative constructions may be used to reinforce or contest cultural, political or organisational discourses (Riessman 1993), in short narrative may be used to legitimise or resist hegemonic political or organisational practices. The final section of this analysis will now consider the extent that participants experience individual agency within the organisational context.

4.4 Organisational Control and Individual Agency

Whilst the current reforms in education serve as a mediating system that affects teacher identity, teachers are active agents who can act passively or actively to the structural elements within their professional environment (Lasky 2005). McAdams (1996) refers to agency as a separation of the individual from the environment through mastery over the environment, whereby individuals protect themselves as autonomous active agents. In contrast, "communion refers to the union of the individual with the environment and the surrender of individuality to a larger whole" (McAdams 1996p. 308). Communion within the curriculum team context could however open up collaborative dialogical spaces which productively challenge

competitive performative cultures based on a technocratic approach to measuring the classroom practice of teachers. Technocratic notions of facilitating learning do little to acknowledge the complex nature of teaching as an interactive, relationship-based, subjectively experienced and perceived activity and it is at the personal level in teacher interactions with students and colleagues that the potential power lies (Sikes 2001). Teachers' life experiences will also position who and what they are in relation to teaching practice and the analysis will now consider the extent to which participants in this study experience a sense of agency within their own professional practice.

A recurring theme throughout Keith's narrative was that of challenging and providing counter discourses to the present performative measures that have colonised education. When discussing the present pre-occupation with student achievement data, Keith clarifies:

> *'it's all based on statistics and data, it's achievement driven and I think achievement is wider than just a pass or a fail, I think it is about the individual gaining something about the programme they're learning ……Passing the assessment is not a guarantee of success for that programme, it means somebody has ticked the boxes and achieved a qualification, which may or not be of value or relevance to them'.*

Keith further explains that for him achievement in education is concerned with giving students the *'tools to learn and that's what I see as success'.* Whilst Keith remains resistant to performative measures, he also believes that some teachers have become

institutionalised where success on programmes is viewed solely in terms of achievement data: '*I think certain members of staff are just interested in getting people through for statistical purposes'.* Keith further elaborates that the organisational culture over-rides individual moral codes by placing considerable pressure on teachers to manipulate achievement data:

> *'the data is manipulated, either through pressure being put on individual members of staff to put people through and not strictly meeting criteria, or by decisions being made just to force members of staff to fiddle the figures'.*

Furthermore, in cases where student success rates do not meet the required national benchmark percentages, programmes are under threat of closure; this is escalated further by a '*bums on seats'* approach which heightens teacher vulnerability:

> *'I think it's all about recruitment and getting the right people on the right programmes, initial assessment … but what happens in September is you're pressurised in terms of numbers to take people onto the programmes and hence members of staff in meeting that requirement for bums on seats … they take people that don't really meet the criteria'.*

Keith further articulates that teachers feel:

> *'frustrated, constrained and ignored … and almost feel as though they don't want to comply with the requirements because that's not what teaching is about, it's not about numbers, its about quality of output, so there's de-motivation'.*

Keith's narrative demonstrates very strong views with respect to experienced teachers losing their voice:

> *'if you look at the way that individual teachers have lost their voice over a period of time, the analogy of becoming a production worker is more relevant … nobody is really*

prepared to listen to experience and that's where it's going wrong'.

However, he feels that some teachers are able to manage these institutional constraints;

> *'if they find a way around it and get sufficient enjoyment out of the delivery process, the one can then outweigh the other and that's what's happened to me; I get most enjoyment out of the delivery side at this point…… which balances the rest of it, but there comes a point where one overtakes the other and it's time to move'*

It is Keith's belief that the teaching role has become de-professionalised and has taken away the ability *'to exercise professional judgement'*. These organisational discourses act as a means of control which may condition the discursive practice of individuals by suggesting or imposing preferred teacher narratives (Hostein and Gubrium 2000) which are defined in simplistic performative terms. Furthermore, Keith believes that teachers are no longer respected or valued within the organisational context:

> '*I think in many institutions you are just a number; you are just a production worker … and until that changes, it's chicken and egg'.*

He advocates raising the professional status of teachers: '*we've got to be given a scope to develop our professionalism'.* This fractured professionalism of teachers in PCE has been widely acknowledged in literature, for example (Gleeson, Davies and Wheeler 2005, Jephcote and Salisbury 2009, Stoten 2013). Whilst Keith's story demonstrates counter discourses to the present performative culture and the maintenance of a strong sense of his own identity as a

teacher, his agency is to some extent mediated by organisational constraints as demonstrated in his visual metaphor on individual agency in Figure 13.

Experience of Individual Agency as a Teacher

'I chose that picture because it looks to be two alternative routes coming into one and my view about that is often, we as tutors have got alternative approaches that we feel are appropriate, but then those approaches are constrained by the organisation in which you operate or work …... you may have an approach that if it doesn't match the organisation's view of what that approach is, even though that approach may work, you're unable to use it'.

The above visual metaphor demonstrates that performative cultures have become embodied in regimes of truth which reject alternative conceptualizations of good teaching and learning practice, which have now become silenced and denied legitimacy within the organisational context (Avis 2009).

Whilst Jayne's narrative story demonstrates a sense of her own self-determination in her professional practice, she does appear to be reluctant to engage in curriculum team dialogue:

> *'they spend lots of time talking about exams and retention rates and I'm aware of them and I know them and I know how to access all the information ……but I just don't sit and talk about it. In fact what I tend to do is go quite quiet'.*

These reservations about engaging in team dialogue stem from Jayne's identified need to be *'more reticent or a bit more reserved'* due to what she perceives as her outspoken nature, together with a self-perception that she is not as academic as other team members:

> *'I do sometimes think it's because I'm not academic in the sense of I don't sit …. I don't sit and talk shop and I don't sit and discuss government educational policies, I don't sit and discuss funding and stuff like that'.*

Jayne does however provide counter discourses to curriculum team norms by positioning herself in opposition to team views related to workloads and thereby maintaining her work-life balance:

> *'when we go to school meetings everyone talks about how busy they are …… how hard they work in the holidays and I think, well I am as busy as you. But I don't talk about it and I don't work at weekends'.*

Jayne interactively and agentively resists group norms in her social interactions (Georgakopoulou 2013) with colleagues in her narrative dialogue:

> *'I do sometimes find if I say that at a meeting that I don't work weekends, then I am shocked at this 'look'….. you know I think that it's your choice, we make choices, I'm not saying I don't have the work to do, but I just do it at other times'* .

Her narrative demonstrates resistance to institutional discourses and expectations related to the intensification of the teaching role which clearly demonstrates her individual agency as summarised within the following resolution:

> *'I mean everyone's overworked and everyone has too much to do …… I think you can run the fear of running yourself down and becoming so absorbed in it that you have forgotten what it is like to have a good time …… the college would sack us*

> *tomorrow, it is as simple as that…… I don't want to look back and think 'god I worked every weekend'. So I just sort of chivvy on in my own way'.*

Jayne's narrative reflects a view of her personal responsibility and whilst she does acknowledge hierarchical control, she maintains a strong sense of her own agency. Overall, Jayne demonstrates high level of autonomy within the classroom setting as demonstrated in her visual metaphor on individual agency as a teacher in Figure 14.

Experience of Individual Agency as a Teacher

'I thought this was quite good because I saw that as my eye looking at different things that are around …… you've got different things going on in this picture…… it's just how multi-purposed and multi-functional you have to be ……. Because we are very autonomous in the classroom …… and that's what that picture said ….. So I'm responsible for me and that's why I thought that was like my eyes and looking through everything and thinking this is how I am going to do things'.

To a great extent Jayne isolates herself from organisation discourses that engender negative emotions and adopts what Fredrickson (2004) refers to as a "broaden-and-build" approach to experiencing positive emotions within her autonomous classroom practice. This broadening mindset carries long-term adaptive benefits where "personal resources accrued during states of positive emotions are durable" (Fredrickson 2004 p.1369). As such her individual agency and empowerment is situated within her isolated teaching practice at the expense of more collaborative collegial relationships with

colleagues. This adaptive function enables Jayne to become more resilient to the negative impact of organisational cultures and thereby improving "the odds of successful coping and survival" (Fredrickson 2004 p.1367).

In Helen's narrative story, a recurring theme was the negative impact that college pressures relating to student retention and achievement rates were having on her professional practice:

> '*when I started teaching I decided I wasn't going to get into this business of retention and achievement and I wasn't going to bother, but of course you can't, you have to. And I don't like the way you're almost punished as well…*'

These feelings of being '*punished'* were a recurring theme throughout all narrative occasions and the nature of institutional pressures to increase retention and achievement rates were explored further:

> `*Two things we have to do; we have to retain the students and they have to achieve and you get that at every meeting….. It is usually put in terms of the funding, if we don't so and so this year then you'll lose funding, and if there's no courses then there are no jobs, and it's usually along those lines really'.*

Helen's narrative would seem to indicate that the prevailing organisational culture is one of a threat to job security in cases where teachers do not maintain high levels of student retention and achievement on their courses. Whilst these pressures do not

seem to affect Helen in terms of future teaching contracts, a lack of student achievement did seem to have a considerable influence on Helen's self image as a teacher:

> *'that seems to be another prevailing attitude these days….. the fact that it is down to us and if they're not learning, it's not their fault …… Although a lot of the other stuff, I have a grumble about paperwork and things like that, most of it I can sort of push it to one side …… But if I have a bad session with my learners I come out completely de-motivated and think that was terrible and it's all on me ….. I didn't teach them properly'*

The above extract could perhaps indicate how Helen has internalised concepts of performativity which place teachers in a continuous field of comparison (Ball 2012) through disciplinary power which "compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenises, excludes" and therefore normalises behaviour (Foucault 1977 p.183).

Throughout Helen's narrative there appears to be a strong sense of her personal isolation within the organisational context. When Helen was asked if she worked closely with and was supported by the team, she responded:

> *'Not closely no ….. when I actually got a job I was really struggling and having some problems and I went to the Line Manager ….. and I didn't feel he was very supportive at all, it was more or less a case of 'well other tutors are managing so why aren't you'.*

Furthermore, team meetings with managers did not appear to be collegial, with little encouragement given to teacher voice and Helen relates her experiences at team meetings to the managerial style adopted by the curriculum manager:

> '*I mean my line manager …… hers was very much a name and shame. So if she asked for some information and she didn't get it all, she would send out an email to everybody saying 'these people haven't replied'…… which really used to annoy me ….. I think she is very much affected by the funding and what she has to achieve in terms of overall getting the numbers and everything'.*

This apparent culture that limits teacher voice was powerfully explored at the end of the narrative session:

> '*I don't want my working environment to be any more difficult than it has to be, and some people can make life quite difficult for you …… I am sort of at the bottom of the heap …… so basically I do what they say …… I am finding it stressful enough really…… I don't really feel that I can say very much for that reason, speak out and say what you really think, which I would love to at times….'*

Overall, Helen's narrative seems to demonstrate that she is located in a field of tension and conflict (Hermans and Hermans-Konopka 2010). The tension arises between her own positioning as a professional with a degree of autonomy over her professional practice (Day and Gu 2010) in contrast to being positioned within the organisation context in terms of technical competency (Goodson 2008) which aims to increase productivity (Ball 2003). This situation stimulates strong negative emotions related to feelings of powerlessness:

> '*I think that's probably what my powerlessness is ….. I know I haven't got any power to do anything about it ….. I'm not someone who is out to change the world or an original thinker …... because you get yourself all stressed and upset and at the end of the day you are in exactly the same position as you were before'.*

The above dialogue demonstrates how Helen negotiates, controls and regulates her own conduct (Kenen 1984) to avoid escalating her stress levels. However, as a consequence, her personal sense of agency is further constricted: *'you've got to juggle all these things and do the job that they want you to do…… I don't think any teacher has any individual agency'.* This lack of any real sense of individual agency is demonstrated in the visual metaphor in Figure 15.

Experience of Individual Agency as a Teacher	*'So the first one is somebody who looks like she has got lots of arms and that's the individual agency one …… we're controlled in so many ways, by so many things, because even what you do within the classroom is controlled because you've got to work to a particular syllabus and obviously you have got to retain your learners and they've got to get their qualifications …… the government seems to think that this sort of control makes better teachers ….. It just makes teachers who get good at completing lots and lots of paperwork …… when they might be better off spending more time on their teaching'*

In contrast, a recurring theme that arose in John's narrative story was that of being an instrument for change as a new teacher within the department. In particular, John discussed how he had developed the use of the virtual learning environment (VLE) Moodle to support student learning. However, it would seem that John's enthusiasm for

developing the use of the VLE met with some opposition from more established and long standing team members:

> '*when I started using Moodle, I would hear quite regularly from staff 'you'll never catch me using Moodle, students won't turn up if I use Moodle' and that was the excuse'.*

John remained resistant to group pressures and further explained how he was instrumental in changing the assignment briefs for the department:

> '*some of them may think I wish he had never turned up here ….. because I have just done things differently …… I would say that there are a few more innovative creative teachers who had been …… I wouldn't say bullied but forced into silence to do their own thing on their own, the overwhelming thing was that of complacent laziness; 'this is the way we've done it, we aren't going to change'.*

John's narrative clearly demonstrates his resistance to being socialised into the culture of the curriculum team:

> '*I think if I was twenty years younger, I would have felt more pressure to be accepted by the team ……. some people come in that can invariably mould in with the team, and I haven't done that to be honest …… I haven't been in any way obstreperous to anyone, I am just very enthusiastic and I'm like 'try it and see'.*

Overall, a thread that runs through many aspects of John's narrative is the ability to resist pressures within the course team through maintaining an active role in developing curriculum processes. These qualities of personal autonomy and self-determination may have been developed throughout his wide business career and John's self-esteem and confidence in his own ability; his strong

sense of individual agency is demonstrated in the visual metaphor in Figure 16.

| **Experience of Individual Agency as a Teacher** | *'I guess this person is hanging on a rope and that for me was more because, there is a certain amount of guidance …… there are set outcomes that you want to achieve and you want the learners to achieve. How I get there, we're given a huge amount of freedom ...... I mean I don't disagree with it but it surprises me with the amount of freedom the teachers have ..…. each teacher seems to be very much in their individual cocoon doing their own things ….. I would have expected there to be more opportunities for doing stuff together as a team'.* |

As with other participants in this study, the above visual metaphor seems to portray an organisational culture based on individualism which is characterised by the isolated professional practice of teachers. Individualistic cultures have the danger of encouraging reactionary professional practice and are in stark contrast to collaborative collegiality which underpins democratic discourses (Sachs 2003). Isolation and individualism may therefore reinforce an instrumental orientation towards a teachers' practice and limits opportunities for learning through collaborative dialogical spaces (Sachs 2003).

4.5 Educational Discourses and Concepts of the Self

The narratives constructed by participants in this study portray a monologue of political and organisational discourses which define the teaching role in narrow performative terms. As such these political narratives reflect hierarchical systems which provide individuals with information of their place within the organisational culture. The power differentials in current political discourses could therefore limit the need for individuals to seek their own self-definitions; as a consequence it is unlikely that "individual variations of experience will be valued or encouraged" (Nelson 2003 p.127).

The analysis in this study has provided evidence of strong feelings of vulnerability which relates to teachers "being 'forced' to act in ways that are inconsistent with their core beliefs and values" (Lasky 2005 p. 901). Power differences therefore have a pervasive influence on the dynamics of the self and "put serious limits on the bandwidth of dialogical relationships, both between participants in dialogue and within the dialogical self" (Hermans and Hermans-Konopka 2010 p.185). However, the agentic force of the self can create counter-forces to the established positions defined by performative cultures and give teachers a voice in transcending externally defined teaching roles (Hermans and Hermans-Konopka 2010). All participants engaged in self-presentations in conveying an image of their professional practice to meet performative requirements. However,

these presentations were entirely contradictory to individuals self positioning (Hermans and Hermans-Konopka 2010) as a teacher. There is therefore a need to open up dialogical spaces which provide freedom for teachers to express their experiences from their own point of view in the exploration of a diversity of subject positions (Hermans and Hermans-Konopka 2010). However, it must be acknowledged that power differences in current organisational cultures place constraints on the openness required for good dialogue (Hermans and Hermans-Konopka 2010) and have resulted in the loss of teacher voice.

To conclude, this chapter has maintained a central focus on the analysis of participants' stories and their personal meaning-making processes set within the political and organisational context of their teaching role. The approach adopted in the current and the preceding chapter was centred on thematic content analysis (Gubrium and Holstein 2009) in the identification of super-ordinate themes which were shared across the participants. The concluding chapter of this study will now focus on wider theoretical implications related to the situated terrain of narrative construction, together with the implications for teachers' professional practice.

Chapter 5 - The Situated Terrain of Narrative Identity Construction

"*Constructionism does not itself seek to be the final word, but a form of discourse that will help us to avoid building worlds in which claims to Truth put an end to dialogue*" (Gergen 2009 p.166)

5.1 Introduction

In the previous discussion, consideration was given to the meaning-making process of narrative reality that attempts to establish how stories are internally structured within the research process from self-defining memories. In contrast, the intention of this final chapter of the study is to consider what stories operate within the wider environmental context (Gubrium and Holstein 2009). Given the social constructionist perspective of this study, the discussion acknowledges that stories do not emerge in a vacuum; they also reflect the cultural, political and organisational environment in which they are located. Within the social world, a person does however have room for manoeuvre (Burr 2002) and through self-reflection we can find reason to doubt any position we hold as true and find within ourselves a different voice (Gergen 2009). In this chapter I will now explore the interplay between teachers' narrative stories and the social and organisational environment in which these stories are situated; these components are viewed as mutually constitutive and

each reflexively depends upon and incorporates the other (Gubrium and Holstein 2009).

Initially, I will conduct a discussion of the key findings arising from the empirical evidence generated in this study. Attention will then focus on the crucial role emotions play in the dialogical construction of the self, followed by the limitations of the study and recommendations for further research. The concluding section will explore the possibilities for the dialogical renewal of the self within the PCE environment.

5.2. Discussion of Key Findings

This study centred on the exploration of the lived experiences of four teachers within PCE, with a focus on individuals' personal understandings as narrated within their life stories. As such, the life story model adopts an ideographic and subjective approach which provides an insider's perspective on how a person develops subjective meanings of their life experiences (Atkinson 2007). The purpose of this section is to provide a discussion on the key findings of the study with the aim of providing a fuller understanding of teachers' self-construction of their narrative identity. The discussion will focus on four key findings; firstly there will be consideration of biographically constructed conceptions of teachers' narrative identity (5.2.1). The discussion will then turn to teachers' self-construction within political and organisational cultures (5.2.2). Attention will then

focus on the moral purpose of teachers' professional practice (5.2.3) and finally the discussion will consider the transformational nature of narrative stories within this study (5.2.4)

5.2.1 Biographically Constructed Conceptions of Teachers' Narrative Identity

A key finding of this study is that early autobiographical memories are emotionally significant to an individual's interpretive understandings of experiences which shape their value commitments (Christman 2008). Without memories we are unable to engage in a project of interpretive self-understanding which is necessary to establish a sense of identity and autonomy (Christman 2008). Drawing on the empirical evidence discussed in section 3.2 relating to self-defining early memories, Keith, Jayne and Helen constructed stories of highly emotional negative early school experiences as the starting point in their journey to becoming a teacher in PCE. Each of these individuals portrayed their own self-image as an academic non-achiever which derived from positioning dialogues with teachers within their primary and secondary school years. Through the narration of these emotionally charged negative school experiences, the participants returned to self-critical feelings they encountered in their early years which had a profound influence on their self-construction of their academic ability. As powerfully expressed by

Keith; 'I found it an unpleasant process because I came to the view that I didn't achieve and couldn't achieve'.

The empirical evidence presented in Chapter 3 revealed how autobiographical memories are crucial in the construction of selfhood and in developing a sense of self-confidence; early educational experiences should therefore provide a safe environment which encourages experiential learning opportunities. Nevertheless, this study supports the view of Bruner (1996) that schools are often rough on children's self-esteem and have become preoccupied with academic performance in examinations to the detriment of the development of the whole person. Whilst Keith, Jayne and Helen all narrated events that have led to feelings of low self-esteem, their experiences seem to provide significant personal insights that form the cornerstone of their personal values within their current professional practice. These highly emotional negative early experiences therefore gained retrospective positive consequences as a communicative vehicle which serves as a directive for behaviour (Thomsen and Brinkmann 2009) within the professional practice of these participants. As poignantly expressed by Keith 'I would never teach the way I was taught, or be as undermining as others were of my skills and attributes'.

However, as discussed in section 3.4, both Keith and Helen identified personal event memories of positive teacher role models which proved to be self-defining (McAdams 2001) in having a substantial influence on their current pedagogical practice. Keith described a teacher in the sixth form as being distinctly human in comparison to previous teachers he had encountered. This teacher would always relate the subject matter to concepts that Keith understood. Helen also described a 'brilliant teacher' on her access course as being calm and always provided individual support when Helen experienced difficulties. These positive turning points in early learning experiences now influence Keith and Helen's professional practice by placing emphasis on developing a non-judgemental approach to students through building effective relationships and students' confidence in their own ability. The identification of teacher role models in early memories supports the view that early school experiences can lead to the internalisation of models of teaching as a recipient (Goodson 2008). Participants in this study engaged in narrative constructions of contrasting positive and negative school experiences in which Keith and Helen were clearly able to articulate their sensitivity to student learning needs. Overall, both positive and negative early autobiographical experiences proved to be crucial in defining the values participants place on providing transformative learning experience and maintaining a strong interest in students' characteristics and individual needs (Cranton 2006). These personal

values on effective learning now influence individuals' current professional practice in PCE settings.

The memories narrated by the PCE teachers in this study were all affectively charged and included recall of strong emotions. This capacity to draw meaning from evocative memories enables individuals to more clearly define their professional values, thus enhancing their individual agency and redemption possibilities (Singer et al 2012) within their own professional practice. The implications of these memories formed the basis of conceptualising the teaching role through stark memory recall in which participants contrasted highly emotional positive and negative learning experiences. Thus, the self-defining learning experiences of participants were transformed or redeemed through their expanded radius of care (McAdams 2009) in enhancing the future life opportunities of their students.

Narrative identity is therefore grounded in our own biographically constructed conceptions within our life stories where values and beliefs are an essential component. In viewing the work of teaching through a moral lens, it is essential to pay attention to teachers' moral reasoning within their life stories and support teachers in intentionally pursuing sources of moral meaning and value within their own professional practices (Sanger 2012). A significant aspect of the moral agency of teachers is embedded in teachers themselves

as moral persons where ethical principles are entrenched within their own professional practice (Campbell 2003). However, moral reasoning can often be negated in an organisational environment through undemocratic policies and procedures which undervalue the cultivation of teachers' professional values (Carr 2000). In providing a supportive dialogical space, PCE teachers in this study were able to achieve a level of self-awareness of the moral and ethical commitments which underpin their professional practice through the narration of their life stories. Teachers' professional practice could therefore be enhanced through collaborative exploration of life stories to achieve a stronger sense of individuals' moral agency as expressed within their teaching practice (Campbell 2003).

5.2.2 Teacher Self Construction within Political and Organisational Cultures

A key finding of this study is that political and organisational environments mediate the narrative identity of teachers based on a view that organisations set the conditions of possibility (Foucault 1977) for narrative production. Drawing on the narrative stories discussed in Chapter 4, I will now consider the extent to which political and organisational cultures have big stories to tell that set the agenda for smaller individual stories. In this respect, organisational cultures establish the foundations of legitimate

accounts (Gubrium and Holstein 2009) of the professional practice of teachers in PCE.

The narrative stories in this study powerfully reflect the continuation of prevailing organisational cultures of performance management which pervade PCE and control teachers' professional practice. In particular, the Ofsted inspection process, management by performance targets and college systems for observing classroom practice were evaluated within all participants' narrative constructions as having a detrimental impact on their teaching and learning practice. As discussed in section 4.3, all participants were highly critical of Ofsted and college processes for observing classroom practice based on judgmental systems that measure conformity to 'tick box' notions of teaching practice, together with the requirement to complete excessive amounts of bureaucratic paperwork. For example, John considers the observation process as being meaningless and focussed on a paper trail rather than learner needs; overall he views the inspection process as driving down the quality of teaching and learning. However, due to feelings of vulnerability, some participants in this study adapted their teaching practice to meet performative requirements. Keith justifies 'play the game' during observed sessions to maintain his professional standing within the organisational context, whilst Jayne feels the need to safeguard future teaching contracts in a time of organisational threats of redundancy. Whilst both Keith and Jayne adopted the strategy of

strategic compliance (Gleeson and Shain 1999) during observation sessions, they did however maintain their core professional values within their everyday teaching practice.

Policy mandates act as a mediating system for the ways in which teachers teach; vulnerability is therefore experienced as a defensive response to feeling pressured to act in ways that are inconsistent with a teacher's core professional values (Lasky 2005). All participants in this study experienced feelings of vulnerability which derived from performative cultures which view education and learning as easily quantifiable and that teacher motivation may be enhanced if given targets to achieve (Whitehead 2005). However, any process which reduces teaching practice to a set of technical skills fails to acknowledge the complexities of the learning process in which an immeasurable number of psychological variables are processed simultaneously (Cockburn 2005). The narrative stories in this study portray PCE organisations which further political imperatives through processes which involve the social domination of teachers.

The narrative stories discussed in section 4.4 indicate the current pre-occupation with student achievement data. In particular, John describes a management culture based on performance measures which encourage internal competition between curriculum areas based on achievement of performance targets; overall John describes the college environment as an unhealthy place. Participant

stories also reflect threats of redundancy based on the need to generate income which encourages an individualistic culture for self-survival. Within managerialist organisations, individualism is characterized by isolation and reactionary professional practice, in contrast to generative or change-embracing (Sachs 2003) dialogue. As such it encourages a practical and instrumental orientation to a teachers work (Sachs 2003) and limits learning through collaborative professional dialogue with colleagues. Drawing on dialogical self theory, organisational cultures need to stimulate a broad bandwidth of positions in teacher selves so that individuals have the opportunity to introduce a variety of new positions into their work (Hermans and Hermans-Konopka 2010). However, the analysis in this study has demonstrated that organisational cultures place constraints on the openness required for good dialogue (Hermans and Hermans-Konopka 2010).

The findings in this study indicate that teachers' feelings of vulnerability derive from the uncertainty and instability of being judged in different ways (Ball 2001). Adopting a technocratic approach to the complexities of teachers' professional practice does however undermine all human qualities that escape technical calculation. Accountability systems may also normalise behaviour by introducing the constraint of conformity that must be achieved (Foucault 1977). However, all narrative constructions in this study indicate that individuals were able to mediate performative drivers in

a field of tension between their personal positioning as facilitators of learning experiences that are life enhancing, in opposition to being socially positioned within a transmission based technocratic view of the teaching role. As such, all participants demonstrated psychological resilience to have their everyday teaching practice defined in performative terms and experienced positive emotions in their relationships with students. These positive emotions improve teachers' psychological wellbeing and perhaps most importantly, provide personal resources to cope with the negative emotions experienced within performative cultures in PCE (Fredrickson 2004). Experiencing positive emotions may therefore have an adaptive function in improving successful survival through becoming more creative, knowledgeable and resilient as integrated individuals (Fredrickson 2004).

5.2.3 Moral Purpose of Teachers' Professional Practice

A key finding of this study is that early emotional memories are crucial in defining individuals' moral and ethical values within their teaching role. Drawing on the discussion in section 3.2, all participants in this study drew on their own early self-defining memories of educational experiences as a springboard for articulating the moral and ethical values they now embrace within their professional practice. Keith, Jayne and Helen engaged in active analysis of their early negative school experiences, and through

narrative processing, they openly acknowledged the negative psychological and emotional impact of these events on their self-perception of their academic ability. Through reinterpretation of the meanings of these experiences, individuals constructed a springboard effect for positive self transformation within their own professional practice (Pals 2006a).

Drawing on a dialogical approach to teacher identity, these stories demonstrate that the concept of the teacher 'self' is constructed through self-dialogues between different I-positions (Akkerman and Meijer 2011) within the context of the life story. As such, the values that teachers consider to be important and relevant within their professional relationships with students are part of the whole 'personal' self (Akkerman and Meijer 2011). Participants in the study engaged in exploratory narrative processing (Pals 2006b) by connecting the 'self' to negative emotions they experienced within their early school years. This was followed by coherent positive resolution (Pals 2006b) by rebuilding their own capacity to experience positive emotions within the teaching role through establishing nurturing relationships with students. Drawing on discussion in section 4.2, Keith views his role as engaging students in a self-development journey; Jayne places great emphasis on the affective characteristics of her role; Helen is sensitive to the psychological needs of adult learners and John adopts a passionate commitment to enhancing students' life prospects.

Highly emotional early memories therefore proved to be instrumental in providing moral values which now characterise individuals' professional teaching practice. These emotional experiences play a central role in motivating teachers to act in accordance with their moral judgements (Prinz and Nichols 2010). Through narrating memories of teachers who humiliated them, participants demonstrated heightened sense of awareness which now contributes to their consciousness of how they themselves treat students (Campbell 2003). Within the landscape of the dialogical self, participants in the study were therefore able to explore conflicting ideas about what constitutes good education and this process involved taking moral positions (Raggatt 2000). All participants in the study were critical of the current assessment driven and banking models of education (Freire 1972) within PCE and advocated the development of learning cultures that should be life enhancing for students. Participants viewed learning as a construction process where students should be encouraged to question their assumptions, values and beliefs (Cranton 2006). All participants were resistant to a view of learning where students are only measured by outputs related to the assessment process; in contrast they encouraged open dialogue and critical reflection (Adamson and Bailie 2012) and maintained a wider life enhancing view of education.

The guiding principles expressed by participants in this study have much in common with the development of a restorative culture which incorporates balances of authority whilst encouraging expressions of affect and emotion (Adamson and Bailie 2012). Thus restorative practices inform a transformative learning approach by developing strategies which are rooted in values of respect and encouraging students to question the relationships in which they find themselves (Vanndering 2014). Restorative practice therefore attempts to transform learning cultures in recognising that students are not objects to be manipulated; it is through relationships that we nurture human interaction and acknowledge individuals as worthy human beings (Vanndering 2014).

Engaging in life story narratives therefore enabled participants to excavate personal truths which facilitate the capacity of individuals to become more resistant to having their professional practice defined in instrumental terms. This internalized life story functions as an inherent drive for narrative coherence and experiential unity which develops over time through self-reflection (Smith and Sparkes 2008). Narrative coherence is therefore essential for development of identities and sense of self, in addition to the psychological well-being of teachers (Smith and Sparkes 2008). Identity is related to personal reality set within the social and historical context of the life story and is seen as a product of both past and current experiences. Given the diverse life histories and career trajectories of teachers in

the PCE sector (Jephcote and Salisbury 2009), it is critical that we know about the person the teacher is (Goodson 2008). Performative cultures in PCE are blunt instruments which encourage conformity; they take no account of the personal and emotional side of teaching, or the extent that teachers invest their 'self' in teaching through individual differences as narrated within their life stories (Goodson 2008).

5.2.4 The Transformational Nature of Narrative Stories

A key finding of this study is that narrating personal experiences provided a catalyst in which participants engaged in the reconstruction of their selves through transformational processing (Pals 2006b). The opportunity to narrate highly emotional experiences could be seen as a liberating and perhaps empowering experience by enabling individuals to connect with early negative emotional experiences and use them as a narrative catalyst for positive self-transformation (Pals 2006b) within their teaching role. The stories constructed helped the participants to find new meanings which played an important role in learning about their lives, in and through the narration (Goodson et al 2010). These findings are congruent with the Learning Lives Project in that telling one's life story enables imaginative distancing and communicative evaluation, and to some extent, individual control over the ways individuals respond and deal with issues they encounter (Biesta and Tedder

2007). This self-knowledge enabled individuals to remain resistant to the incursions of performative cultures by maintaining a transformational view of the learning process within their own professional practice.

Causal connections in the life story had a positive impact on individuals' self-development which formed the basis of life changing decisions through self-understanding (Pals 2006b). Drawing on the narrative stories discussed in section 3.3, Keith, Jayne and Helen narrated transformational stories of personal academic growth which clearly reflect redemption sequences (McAdams 2009) in becoming a teacher in PCE. The tendency to construct life stories in which bad events are ultimately redeemed into good outcomes is associated with greater psychological well-being. Participants in the study remained strongly connected to their negative emotional school experiences which were integrated into a story of self-development in becoming a teacher, offering the opportunity to reconstruct their narrative identity and create a second chance in life (Pals 2006b) within the teaching role. Narrative learning is therefore constituted through an internal dialogue of good and bad stories in a dialogical relationship (Raggatt 2000) where these participants were engaged in a process of repositioning themselves as academic achievers in becoming teachers in PCE.

Interestingly, for Keith, Jayne and Helen the progression into teaching was seen as an act of serendipity. This supports findings of the TLC project where some teachers slipped into the role through a range of unplanned and unforeseen events (James and Biesta 2007). Drawing on the narrative stories discussed in section 3.3, Keith, Jayne and Helen narrated fortuitous events which were linked to a belief in fate, destiny and preordained events in the narrative stories they constructed. This belief in fate is an example of the ways in which narratives rely on cultural stories of destiny and provide a resource by which these teachers maintained a sense of the coherence of their life story through periods of change and uncertainty (Hermans and Hermans-Konopka 2010).

If we consider the narrative understanding of lives as evolving over time, all participants narrated a life story of generativity in which the primary psychosocial task focusses on caring for and leaving a legacy which has benefits for the next generation (McAdams 2009). Narrating redemption stories therefore provides the foundations for being generative as it celebrates the possibilities of second chances in life (McAdams 2006). In this respect, all PCE teachers in this study viewed their role as providing a second chance for students in compensating for their previous educational disadvantages and experiences, together with a moral commitment in ameliorating the social disadvantage of many students through their ethic of care (Jephcote and Salisbury 2009).

Given that an internalised and evolving life story is one's narrative identity (Singer 2004), stories help to explain who we believe we are and how we believe we came to be. Overall, the teachers' life stories narrated in this study helped to explain their significant commitments and investments in their professional practice. All participants had clear images of the teaching and learning cultures they wanted to facilitate. These images were based on the learning environments that they had personally experienced and had a profound impact on the values they espoused to within their own professional practice (Bathmaker and Avis 2005). As such, these teachers seemed more resistant to having their teaching practice defined in performative terms and only engaged in self-presentations at times of observation of teaching and learning. At a deeper more emotional level however, these individuals maintained educational values which appear to be aligned to a relational restorative culture which nurtures students' wellbeing and worth through human interaction (Vanndering 2014).

The findings in this study indicate that emotions play a crucial role in the meaning-making process within life stories and the positioning repertoires of individuals. The following section will therefore explore the key role of the emotional landscape in the construction of the dialogical self, which weaves together internal meaning-making processes with external social processes (Hermans and Hermans-Konopka 2010).

5.3 Contribution to Knowledge - Emotions in the Dialogical Construction of Self

This study has highlighted the key role that emotions play in the complex, fluid and dynamic nature of the constructed self in providing teachers with a source of information about their own moral values and beliefs. When teachers engage in the narrative construction of their identity, a key challenge is to juxtapose personal voices with the socially constructed voices which reflect political and organisational discourses. The narratives stories in this study revealed that the self is a negotiated space which suggests that coherence resides in the attempt to synthesise contrasting voices (Akkerman and Meijer 2011) between teachers' personal values in contrast to managerial discourses. If we understand emotions as experiences of teachers' embeddedness and interactions within the political environment, reforms that question teachers' self-esteem and moral commitments will inevitably trigger intense emotions (Kelchtermans 2005).

The narratives in this study reveal the emotional struggles that these individuals face due to the power differences and dominance of political and organisational narratives of performativity. Organisational discourses were in stark contrast to participants' deeply held beliefs in providing a more liberating educational experience for students. However, some participants in this study felt

the need to engage with surveillance strategies through fabrication (Ball 2001) of the required teaching performance in classroom observation processes, together with the production of extensive teaching related documentary evidence required for accountability purposes. This study has therefore demonstrated how organisations maintain social control over teachers' professional practice through individualising techniques (Boler 1999) which included; the surveillance and policing of professional practice through observation of teaching and learning which encourages the need for conformity, together with internal competition between individuals and groups based on achievement of performance targets. This fabrication of the self to meet organisational requirements involves emotional labour that could challenge aspects of the self that are integral to our individuality.

Emotions are part of a highly dynamic social and societal process of positioning and are integral to the agentic process; it is through our emotions that we temporarily position ourselves in the emotion, but are also positioned by emotions (Hermans and Hermans-Konopka 2010). Compliance and self-subordination to current surveillance strategies of teachers' professional practice may stimulate strong negative emotions. However, within the present culture of accountability, the emotional task is to suppress feelings of frustration or even fear of job security in order to maintain an outwardly professional persona. Whist individuals in this study

maintained a strong allegiance to providing a transformative learning experience for their students, there was a sense of their personal isolation within the organisational context which encourages competitive individualism.

This study views emotions as the beacons of our true selves that provide an inner perspective for interpreting and responding to experience; it is through feelings that we learn the self-relevance of what we see (Hochschild 1983). Through narrative engagement with emotional feelings, participants engaged in self-reflective dialogues regarding the dilemmas they faced within the current political and organisational climate. These internal dialogues reflect conflicting voices that emerge as multiple 'I' positions within the self, which may be helpful in understanding narrative identity when teachers face dilemmas or tensions within their work (Akkerman and Meijer 2011).

As discussed in section 4.3, Keith's narrative clearly reflects the tensions he faces in reconciling the need to 'play the game' by conforming to college observation processes due to feelings of vulnerability. His story portrays the struggle between contradictory voices in the self which leads to inner conflict by acting in ways that are inconsistent with his ideological values on effective learning. These contradictions are resolved through self-dialogue with the aim of identifying self-agreements (Kenen1986) in an attempt to reconcile his ideological values within the context of performative

organisational requirements. As discussed in section 4.4, Keith justifies conforming to organisational requirements as being outweighed by the enjoyment he feels within the teaching role. However, Keith reaches the self-agreement that should this balance change; he would leave the teaching profession. This self-agreement reveals how the dialogical self can express itself in reflexive ways; self-agreements enable individuals to interact with the environment and negotiate order in the self, thereby increasing the capacity to control one's own conduct (Kenen 1986).

Also revealed in this study was the extent that individuals distanced themselves from the customs and conventions of their curriculum area teams by creating counter positions in the self. This resistance to social control through curriculum groups by adhering to the normative group conduct may act as protections for the 'I' positions which are in contrast to established group practices (Kenen 1986). As discussed in section 4.4, Jayne's narrative reflects the extent to which she engages in internal dialogue regarding the need to be more 'reticent and reserved' in her non-conformity with normative team views related to workloads, and thereby she was able to maintain her own work-life balance. Jayne makes a self-agreement to not engage in team discussions, thus avoiding any negative sanctions within the social group. Jayne's story demonstrates how social control operates internally as a way of negotiating order within the self (Kenen 1986) through the self-regulation of negative

emotions that can be experienced when expressing counter positions to established curriculum group norms. This self-regulation therefore leaves Jayne isolated within the team context and valuable opportunities to engage in transformative dialogue with her colleagues are lost.

The social control of teachers was also a dominant theme throughout Helen's narrative story, together with her overwhelming sense of vulnerability and personal isolation within the organisational context. As discussed in section 4.4, Helen was highly critical of performative organisational requirements that severely limit teacher voice and her narrative demonstrates strong feelings of powerlessness to effect any change. Her story portrays an organisational culture where managers can 'make life difficult for part-time tutors' through managerial styles based on a name and shame philosophy. Helen responds to this culture by suppressing feelings of being useless and being completely de-motivated when students do not achieve the qualification requirements. To avoid any additional stress, Helen makes the self-agreement not to speak out and say what she really feels within her organisational setting.

As discussed in section 4.3, John likewise creates a counter position to an unhealthy organisational culture which creates competition between curriculum teams based on student achievement results. John demonstrates a strong commitment to resisting the social

control of teachers by making the self-agreement to remain unwilling to playing the 'numbers game'. As evidenced in section 4.4, particularly powerful is John's resistance to course team pressures to conform to long established teaching and learning strategies. John makes the self-agreement to be an instrument for change as a new teacher within the department and he maintains an unwavering commitment to the development of more innovative and creative curriculum strategies despite course team opposition. However, this individualistic approach limits opportunities for learning through more collaborative curriculum developments strategies.

Within the context of this study, self-agreements are seen as an internal resource of resistance to social regulation within the organisational context. Whilst all participants' narrative stories demonstrate feelings of isolation and emotional self-control within the organisational context, these stories also reflect Foucault's (1977) view that where there is domination there is also resistance. Emotions are therefore at the centre of the agentic process in relation to both social and personal positioning; within this context individuals position themselves in relation to the environment in which they are embedded, and in relation to the self (Hermans and Hermans-Konopka 2010). The resistances in participant stories act as defences against vulnerability and are assertions of power in the face of impositions; emotions therefore provide a turbulent ground on

which to negotiate our personal ideologies which are a necessary foundation for self-transformation (Boler 1999).

The sense of empowerment in participant stories relates to gratifying emotional rewards individuals gained within their teaching practice by creating spaces for supportive emotional connections with students. In this respect, PCE teachers' ongoing emotional struggles and self-understandings may, to some extent, safeguard and restore their personal professional interests (Kelchermans 2005). It is through self-reflection and self-awareness that we reflect on our personal efficacy, thoughts and actions; therefore the meanings we construct are the core property of our individual agency (Bandura 2006). However, this sense of empowerment in individual participant stories does not seem to extend to having any real influence in changing the organisational environment in which these teachers are embedded. Overall, participant narratives in this study demonstrate that individuals retreat into their isolated professional practice to protect themselves from the incursions of performative cultures. The findings of this study are therefore congruent with the TLC project in FE which found that whilst some teachers found room to manoeuvre within the current performative culture of PCE, they were not in a position to challenge the orthodoxy of inspection processes (Gleeson and James 2007).

5.4 Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Further Research

This project has centred on an in-depth study of four teachers and has revealed the complexity and diversity of narrative constructions which provide valuable insights into how participants make meanings of their lived experiences. The narrative data in this study is however distinctive to each person and each individual's lived and inner experiences represent a unique interior configuration (Smith and Sparkes 2008). Within this context and in line with the narrative turn, this study rejects the idea that a small number of participants must be generalizable to a larger population of teachers. By adopting a psychosocial perspective, this study is therefore seen as having a 'thick individual' spotlight on selves and identities (Smith and Sparkes 2008) and does not therefore exhaust the possibilities of self-construction (Chase 2008) within the current context of PCE. In contrast, this study aimed to provide a perspective on narrative construction which is significant in that it embodies an in-depth insight into what is possible and intelligible (Chase 2008) within the context of the post compulsory sector.

There is a need to remain mindful that the participants in this study are, to some extent, a homogenous group in that they all have a high qualification profile, are all in their midlife years and have a wide range of life experiences prior to commencing the teaching role.

These factors will have significant implications in defining professional values and beliefs, in addition to perhaps an increased level of resilience to being defined in terms of dominant organisational discourses. Consequently, younger teachers, with less varied life experiences and/or a more limited qualification profile, could possibly be more susceptible to constructing stories which are more aligned with current political and organisational cultures.

In addition, an important factor in PCE will be the embedded nature of teacher narratives within their previous vocational culture, roles and experiences. This vocational habitus will define certain combinations of dispositions demanded by the vocational culture and may operate in disciplinary ways to influence the values, attitudes and beliefs that one should espouse to within aspects of curriculum pedagogy (Colley et al 2003). A teacher's professional practice may therefore be strongly embedded in a specific vocational culture and it may be hard for some individuals to perceive, let alone implement, opportunities for change based on the wider educational values of a transformative learning culture. Further research may therefore productively explore the enculturation of teachers' professional practice within the context of their vocational specialism.

Moreover, it is essential to remain mindful of the situational nature of narrative co-construction within the interview process as a joint meaning-making endeavour which draws on the subject positions of

all participants. Therefore, this study does not make claims for any single truth, but rather it aims to provide an authentic account that acknowledges my own positioning as an active participant in narrative construction. What is presented here is a collective story, grounded in my own political and ideological positionality, with a focus on activating the marginalized voices of PCE teachers. Consequently, researchers do not free themselves from theoretical commitments and data is not coded in an epistemological vacuum (Braun and Clarke 2006). The interpretive strategies adopted thereby reveal the mediating aspects of current political and organisational cultures which constrain human potential.

Furthermore, narrative constructions are only ever temporal in nature and are constructed in relation to participants' current concerns or emotional experiences; at best they are only ever a snapshot or a freeze-frame of individuals' constructions at any given point in time. Given that individuals revise and edit their narrative constructions throughout their life course, further research based on using a more longitudinal research design may provide more nuanced insights into how narratives are temporally situated and are revised throughout the specific career phases of the teaching role.

Finally, this research project generated a vast amount of narrative data which would be impossible to analyse in detail within the limited confines of this study. Narrative analysis, which involves an inductive

approach, is therefore orientated towards aspects of accounts which are relevant to our current research interests (Andrews 2009). Any reading of narrative data will be subject to multiple interpretations; narrative analysis is therefore only ever provisional and situated in the researcher's current perspective (Andrews 2008). Over time, as our perspectives change, we come to see that our conclusions are only ever provisional and will be subject to new readings (Andrews 2008). Any meanings we derive from narrative data is in the eyes of the beholder and there is no definitive interpretation (Andrews 2008).

Not only will we view our own data differently over time, narrator's constructions also change with new experiences; any re-interpretation narrative data could therefore be viewed as a picture taken from a different angle (Andrews 2008). Narrative interpretation therefore draws on the image of a crystal which combines "symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multi-dimensionalities, and angles of approach" (Richardson and Adams St. Pierre 2008 p.478)

5.5 Conclusion – Possibilities for the Dialogical Renewal of the Teacher Self

This study is centred on the exploration of four teachers' self-narratives based on the assumption that narrative stories of lived experiences are relevant in what they stand for and differentiate

people as unique individuals. The study has adopted a dialogical approach to conceptualising teacher identity as a dynamic process that is both continuous and discontinuous, both unitary and multiple, and both individual and social (Akkerman and Meijer 2011). The study has highlighted the following key findings:

A) Early formative experiences are crucial to teachers' self-construction of their narrative identity

The autobiographical memories narrated by individuals reveal the diachronic nature of the self which is based on early events which qualify as both formative and transformative in the emergence of their teacher identity. Early formative experiences were therefore crucial in defining who a person is and how they came to be. All participants considered their progression into the teaching profession as being generative (McAdams 2009) in enhancing the future life opportunities of their students. Engaging PCE teachers in narrative processing of their early formative experiences could therefore have positive consequences for defining the core values which underpin individuals' professional teaching practice.

B) Narrative stories are mediated by political and organisational discourses

The self-narratives in this study reveal the ongoing challenges that teachers face in maintaining a strong sense of their own narrative agency within an organisational environment that is determined by policy drivers. Consequently, individuals in this study were involved in the process of navigating between organisational conceptions of the teaching role which are valued in performative terms, in contrast to personal conceptions of the teaching as a moral endeavour.

C) Emotions are central to defining the moral and ethical values of teachers

The narrative stories in this study have revealed that emotions play a crucial role in defining individuals' moral and ethical values in relation to their professional practice. These moral values relate to educational experiences which are empowering and aim at improving the life chances available to students. It is therefore through individuals' ongoing emotional struggles that they engage in a process of self-reflection and self-awareness in maintaining the core values which underpin their professional practice.

D) Narration of life stories can prove to be a transformational process for teachers

This study has indicated the need for safe reflective spaces where individuals are able to explore their life experiences through a

process of critical reflective practice. This process has enabled individuals to more clearly articulate the future trajectories for their professional practice. Engaging teachers in dialogue may therefore provide individuals with the internal resources to challenge political discourses which define professional practice in instrumental terms.

The aforementioned key findings of this study reveal how the construction of stories are an important vehicle for learning from our experiences and articulating a sense of self in which narrative learning is a form of identity work (Biesta 2008). However, if we consider notions of individual agency, the action potential of narrative learning will be influenced by cultural practices which enable or constrain the dialogical process. Change in practice will therefore depend on engagement with contextual factors (Biesta and Tedder 2007). Whilst this study adopts an individualistic bias to narrative construction, facilitating dialogical learning spaces with colleagues could be helpful in the collective struggles for agency (Biesta and Tedder 2007) of PCE teachers. Furthermore, decreased agency may occur when people learn that things are too difficult and this could possibly have a negative impact on their sense of self (Biesta 2008). The self therefore needs to be re-centred on core personal commitments through a process of narrative learning; if this process is facilitated by encouraging dialogical engagement with colleagues, there are creative possibilities of challenging political and

organisational discourses which influence the personal identity of PCE teachers.

The personal narratives discussed in section 4.2 revealed individuals' ability to be proactive, self-regulating and self-reflecting within the situated nature of their own teaching practice. These teachers therefore contributed to the construction of their teacher identity and remained resistant to having their life professional practice defined in performative terms. In this sense, a teacher's inner life is part of their agentic process and these individuals remained true to their own moral values and beliefs in their professional practice. Overall, this study did show how the selfhood of teachers reflects a complex interplay between the personal construction of meanings preserved in memories, with the social and environmental culture in which we are embedded.

Conversely however, there are many psychosocial manoeuvres by which moral values can be selectively disengaged by portraying harmful conduct as being socially acceptable and worthy (Bandura 2001). Under the gaze of a continuous audit culture, obedience and compliance may become a strong driving force. This in turn leads to competition for scarce resources and the development of an individualist culture that is embodied in entrepreneurial individuals (Groundwater-Smith and Sachs 2002). As discussed in section 4.4, Keith highlights an organisational culture which overrides teachers'

moral codes by placing pressure on teachers to pass students who do not meet the required assessment criteria. In these instances, there is a danger that entrepreneurial individuals will meet the needs of the audit culture in which moral judgements are negated, leading to what could be seen as unethical practice.

Also evidenced in section 4.4, all participants in this study seemed to work in isolation within the organisational context. Keith believes that teachers have 'lost their voice' and feel 'frustrated, constrained and ignored'; Jayne remains reluctant to engage in team dialogue; Helen feels she is unable to 'speak out' as her working environment may become even more difficult and John describes teachers as working 'in their individual cocoon doing their own things'. Furthermore, Jayne's narrative discussed in section 4.3 demonstrates how organisational restructures and accompanying redundancy measures often encourage individualism for self-survival and the continuation of future teaching contracts. The narratives in the study indicate that these individuals often seek solace through retreating into the autonomous nature of their classroom practice, thus opportunities for collaborative learning and collegial support are reduced.

A culture of individualism is in stark contrast to collaboration and cooperation as the cornerstone for democratic discourses on the moral purpose of education (Sachs 2001). Whilst the organisational environment is unreceptive to the collegial interaction between

teachers, there are limited possibilities for creative dialogue in which teachers cross boundaries in developing new meanings (Gergen 2009). Self-narratives, when shared with colleagues, could provide the glue for a collective professional identity (Sachs 2001) through the exploration of the conflicting realities embedded within teachers' own professional experiences. There is a need therefore to support both individual and collective needs by strengthening learning conditions that support teacher learning and development (Day and Gu 2010).

As discussed in section 4.2, all teachers in this study expressed a level of personal efficacy in defining the learning strategies they adopted within their classroom practice; however there was limited evidence of their direct control or ability to influence organisational performative cultures. This suggests that it will only be through teachers' shared beliefs in their collective power to influence the environment by means of their collective efficacy (Bandura 2000) that they will be able to sustain their educational values and sense of vocation. Through dialogue, individuals may reflexively consider shared difficulties and explore resolutions to the contradictions they encounter (Avis, Bathmaker and Parsons 2002) related to the extent to which performative cultures create outcomes that denigrate the professional values of teachers.

Day and Gu (2010) have coined the term 'relational resilience' to reflect the role of supportive collaborative relationships which increase teachers' capacity to perform their best in the face of adversity. The higher a group's sense of collective efficacy and motivational investment in their professional practice, the greater their accomplishments will be (Bandura 2000). Thus, the building and sustaining of teachers' narrative identity may provide the initial impetus required for negotiating the meanings of experiences in which a fuller range of creative possibilities may emerge (Gergen 2009). Building on the social constructionist perspective, the establishment of dialogues within a wider community mobilises collective meanings, values and sustains motivation (Gergen 2009). The self is therefore reflexive to existing organisational practices; these can be reflected upon and thereby acted upon by the self in accordance with socially constructed interests and concerns (Quicke 2000).

Within the organisational context of PCE, narrative stories could prove to be a valuable asset for envisioning a new future and providing the intellectual and emotional resources necessary for teacher development (Day and Gu 2010). These relationships are essential in building collaborative learning through a series of networks in which individuals share common values with others. Thus, as people work together they can achieve more than by themselves. Hence, there is a need to enhance professional

participation by creating spaces for collective reflection which value diverse forms of professional practice (Colley, James and Diment 2007). Collective reflection may also provide counter-discourses to an environment that encourages divisive competition within and between curriculum teams within PCE. However, organisational cultures based on internal competition diminish the opportunities by which teachers can engage in dialogue discourses of their lived experiences.

There is a need to open up spaces where teachers can debate and negotiate policy as intended and as experienced (Bathmaker and Avis 2007) in order to identify the moral rightness of teachers' endeavours. Emotional realities are often sanitised by policy discourses which deny teachers true recognition; the result is a form of social and personal isolation which is damaging to a teacher's capacity for social progress (Cooper 2009). Emotionally grounded psychosocial analysis can therefore capture complex identities and relationships between individuals and groups, and reconnect policy processes within social relationships (Cooper 2009). This will require authentic collaboration through a negotiated participatory model of social relations; emotional experiences can provide a vital resource that can inform teachers' understanding of the organisational and policy 'life world' (Cooper 2009). Psychosocial studies therefore acknowledge that the individual is a creative constructor of society

and an agent of social and psychological change in their own right (Quicke 2000).

The narrative stories presented in Chapter 4 indicate that teachers' narrative identity reflects competing interests between their personal positioning which is located within a moral framework, in contrast to being socially positioned within the performative policy context. As such, their meaning system is constructed in a field of tension between personal and social discourses of their role (Hermans 2001). Enhancement of professional practice will be facilitated by teachers collaborating in the creation of critical dialogical spaces which broaden the bandwidth of available identity discourses in moving beyond technical notions of their role. PCE teachers need to develop their professional knowledge within democratic moral communities; however without more autonomy, their own capacities for creativity and moral choice would be restricted (Quicke 2000). Drawing on the conceptual framework of transformative professionalism, there is a need to open up spaces whereby shared values, principles and strategies are debated and negotiated dialogically (Sachs 2003); collaborative cultures therefore acknowledge that teachers have values and commitments of their own.

My study suggests that organisations need to foster environments in which dialogical processes encourage curriculum teams to engage in discourses which incorporate both personal and professional

contradictory values. Collaborative dialogue, based on conscious thought and actions, can therefore explore the conditions of possibility for self-construction. Engagement in open democratic communities can foster individual autonomy through the construction of shared understandings and moral discourses which heighten individuals' awareness of common values expressed in similar life stories (Quicke 2000). Through dialogue, individuals can engage technologies of self as active processes of self-formation (Tamboukou 2008). Sharing stories with colleagues can therefore enhance a sense of self-worth in knowing you are not alone; thus learning how someone else has dealt with the situation can be extremely empowering (Goodson and Sikes 2001).

Collaborative dialogue enables individuals to evaluate their professional values through a different lens, thereby uncovering what is being sacrificed in an educational system which views teachers and students as objects of intervention (Avis, Bathmaker and Parsons 2002). Thus collaborative dialogue can unlock the stifled potential of PCE teachers and may prove to be transformative as it involves;

> *"a release of creative energy which is directed in a positive, democratic - enhancing way at existing forms and structures, and helps to establish the social conditions for the realization of human potentialities, the flowering of new communities and the enrichment of life for all" (Quicke 2000 p.330)*

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Keith
Visual Metaphors Related to Emotional, Moral and Ethical Investments of Being a Teacher

How you experience individual agency as a teacher

'I chose that picture because it looks to be two alternative routes coming into one and my view about that is often we as tutors have got alternative approaches that we feel are appropriate, but then those approaches are constrained by the organisation in which you operate or work. So there are several ways to get to the same end, but the organisational constraints limit the use of some of those alternatives. So what you're effectively doing is that you may have an approach that if it doesn't match the organisations view of what that approach is, even though that approach may work, you're unable to use it ……I think it is time, I think you've got a shorter space of time in which to deliver the programmes, you've still got the same amount of information to get across, so what it does is it constraints the methods you use and removes originality. Equally bigger size groups make it more difficult to be more individual in your delivery ……so they are two roads coming into one and that almost that one road is dictated, so the ability to be free is limited to what you do in the classroom and you do tend to take risks in order to give them as much opportunity as you can to see real life'.

How you experience vulnerability as a teacher

'I found a difficulty with this one because the vulnerability I chose the first one which was the desk ….. well it's the amount of bureaucracy and paperwork systems; that has now become an increasingly large percentage of the job and it's not being able to cope with that that makes you feel vulnerable as a tutor. Not because you're not doing a good job in the classroom but you're not doing or you're not managing to cope with the data, the bureaucracy that's required by the organisation because it's a profit making organisation and you almost feel at times you can't cope with that level of bureaucracy, so much so that the time spent on planning your lessons is almost minimal, it is overshadowed ……The other picture is the line on the little one and the line is the management ….. if you're not meeting the targets that they set the vulnerability comes from the fact the courses you're delivering will be cut, so there is pressure there to push students through, even though the students may not really achieve in the appropriate way, it's about fear of not meeting targets …… It's compromising standards and it's compromising professionalism, because you've got tutors there that are put in an awkward position as to whether to push someone through to the next level …… when you know as a tutor that person is unsuitable, which has got to pay off in the longer term, and the payoff is lack of self-esteem for the individual because they won't be able to cope with the next level or employment, or whether you risk the wroth of management in terms of not achieving the percentages you're supposed to'.

Your self-image as a teacher

' I think self-image is a difficult one because I, in a previous interview with you, talked about my low self- esteem that came from my own school experience …… my view of self-image is all about how am I viewed not necessarily by the staff, but by the students I'm teaching …… That's important to me because really the student is the customer and the student is the one who is coming here for the learning process and what I want to do is give them the opportunity to self-develop. So choosing a bulb coming up through the snow is, I want to be seen as somebody who gives them the opportunity to blossom and come out of their shell, come out of the corm if you like, and develop new skills which opens the world up to them …… that's what my job I see is about; opening an opportunity for somebody else to move on and that's why I chose that one, and I think people view me in that way in the majority'.

How you are motivated as a teacher

'I found this one difficult in one way …… but I am motivated I would say by trying something new, in certain areas of my life, and I suppose as a teacher getting other people to take a risk, and what more of a risk is there from stepping from one small pillar to another pillar. So it comes back about what motivates me is getting people to take that step, which

may for them be a risky step, but me being the catalyst in getting them to do that ……It's all about building up their own self confidence to be able to say well this is what I am like, but this is what the opportunities are out in front of me and those opportunities; getting them to take that step of faith is almost part of our role as a tutor. And teaching teacher training, getting them for example to take a risk in the classroom, try something that they've never tried before and not be worried if it goes wrong …… what you're trying to do is get people to push the boundaries. There are boundaries within a realistic calculated way, not stupidly trying something that is ridiculous, but doing it in a way that they've thought about it and calculated the risk really'.

How you experience self-esteem

'I think that comes from the previous one because taking risks with learners, you've got to take the risks yourself, and I won't ask anyone to do something I wouldn't do. So if it means climbing the Eiffel Tower or the Blackpool tower or whatever it is …… If I am going to ask other people then I have to do it myself. And therefore I know that's me achieving something, and the esteem of having achieved it, means that I will now pass it on to somebody else. I have achieved, I identify what I have achieved and say to them this is what I have done and you can do this as well'.

Your feelings on the moral dimension of teaching

'That one; feelings on moral dimensions of teaching. I think it's what teaching is always about isn't it? A little puppy is behind trying to force the little boy to stand up, and the teacher is the person that is giving them the opportunity to hold on and pull themselves up; they're not being pulled I don't think, but they are being given the opportunity to pull themselves up, and I think that's why I like that one, because that's what teaching is about; it's not what's forcing them through the qualification, it's us giving them the ability, the tools …… the power to learn for themselves …… we've got that in-built ability to learn, it's just tackling it ……I think it was a realisation …… that the process of learning is not about remembering, which I was not very good at, it's about the ability of saying there's and answer to this and I can solve it …… It's an attitude of mind more than anything else, and that's what I try to do with the students…… So it gives them the tools to be able to solve the problem because that child is not going to have someone in front of them all the while holding onto them; they've got to be independent and that independence comes from the ability to solve problems. I suppose the puppies at the back are fellow students'.

How you aspire to be teacher in the future

'Well this was the funny one because what do I, or how do I inspire to be a teacher in the future, I think it's me; the big dog, allowing them in on my experience, to move up and achieve …… Allowing the students to move up and achieve by learning from what I've experienced; so you've got the big dog who can easily access the sink himself, but the small ones can't, but I can be the means in them being able to do it …… I mean that dog must feel a little bit vulnerable being stood on by another dog…… But in reality it's not, it's support isn't it, it's all about support …… and that's what I try to do …… that little dog may not have ever been up to the sink before, but with my help, he has got himself into a position where he can have a look to see what's up there and whether he likes It…… so once he gets up there he'll think goodness there's only a kitchen sink up there, I'm not interested in it, he's is free to walk away. But that freedom is part of the success of the programmes we deliver or should be, and that's why statistics aren't the full story'.

Jayne
Visual Metaphors Related to Emotional, Moral and Ethical Investments of Being a Teacher

### How you experience individual agency as a teacher

'I thought this was quite good because I saw that as my eye looking at different things that are around, I know it's based on a nature scene but you've got different things going on in this picture; you've got the weather and you've got time and the birds and the trees and the grass and it's just how multi-purposed and multi-functional you have to be, you have to look and you have to think 'actually I've got to wear that hat today, that hat next, that hat tomorrow. You've got to be diverse and be able to change and I think because we are very autonomous in the classrooms and I think you have to be able to look and assess and think 'right I've got to do it this way' and that's what that picture said, because that's my eye …… Looking at the world around me and the different things and the clock I thought was good because you can't turn back the clock and if you make a mess of it once you can't go back and it ticks by really quickly and so you need to be able to assess, look and work it out and get it as best as you can first time because if you mess it up you can't go back to yesterday and redo it …… I am a great believer in having a go at anything and if you don't like it you say thanks a lot, but no thanks and walk away. There is very little I won't give a go. So I'm responsible for me and that's why I thought that was like my eyes and looking through everything and thinking this is how I am going to do things'.

How you experience vulnerability as a teacher

'It's a very sort of typical kind of picture of perhaps suggesting someone at the crossroads of their life sort of thing, and I'm not at a crossroad. But for the past two or three years at the college there has always been the threat of redundancies, always and I've been sitting in a boardroom with other people, and one of you has got to go. And with the merger and the cuts etc and I thought here we go again, so I always feel vulnerable and at the moment I am because although I'm on a main grade lecturers contract it is only for a year and it is renewed yearly and is due for renewal at the end of October …… I was supposed to go and get lots of business from lots of different schools and workforce agencies around the Midlands. But they won't supply the staff to go and teach these people and then the workforce agencies haven't got any money …… so I'm on a hiding to nothing. But to tell the people who are in control of my contract that …… I can't produce business out of the air and anyway I'm not a sales person I am a teacher and I shouldn't be out on the road trying to sell ……The fact I was graded as an outstanding teacher and I am the lead IV for several courses and I've had Grade 1 reports doesn't seem to matter. So, you know, I am feeling a bit vulnerable in terms of what's going to happen at the end of October; the sensible side of me says its going to be renewed because what are they going to do with the teaching I've got …… what are they going to do? But it's horrible to think, that again, which path am I going to go down? So that's why I chose that one'.

Your self-image as a teacher
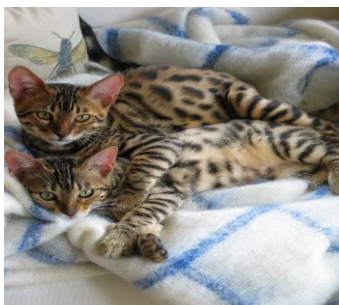
'I quite like that picture because it was very caring and it is one looking after the other and I do look after my students and that's the picture I felt identified that, although it's a very soft picture and although my bark is much worse than my bite and I am, I am quite kind hearted...... The arm around the cat is I am very, very protective over students. And if someone else has upset them in the college I will find out the story and make sure that they're alright and make sure they weren't unfairly spoken to or treated ...... Well I'm not a walkover ...... If I know someone is pulling the wool, then I am very clear with them and say well, you've got to get yourself sorted out. But at the same time, you know, when they come to me and say I can't do this, I will say well have you tried this ...... if I think they can't fight their own battles and they're a bit lost as to where to go and what to do...... It's them wanting to enjoy the course and it's a wanting for them to be able to do things and if I can help them to do something and to enjoy the course to qualify; then I think that's part of my role. But with recognition sometimes I go a bit beyond, but that's a thing I've got to curb in myself; definitely'.

How you are motivated as a teacher

'I don't know how I'm going to explain this ..… to me that's a picture of a Wave coming back in the sort of the grip of the tide and then coming crashing over. And I think sometimes you can get caught up in all the politics and all the woe is me and all the misery and be sitting moaning about you haven't got enough time and resources etc. etc. And that's the sea there all sort of flat. And then suddenly when you get in the classroom it's really fantastic and you're having a good lesson and it all explodes and it's lovely, and that's what I thought that was because that motivates me. Because when I come out of a class and I'm buzzing because we've had a really, really good time…… And to try to stay out of all the moaning and groaning…… but that's what motivates me, it's when I am in the classroom and it's so good and we have such a good lesson and I know the students have enjoyed it, because they tell me, and that's that real motivator, so it's all that splashing and whirling and niceness'.

How you experience self-esteem

'The experience of esteem, yeah, again the sea and the waves, I think Because it indicates that the self-esteem comes and goes like those waves, they come in and they go, just because …… I don't really know why…… I know sometimes I think yes everything can be absolutely fine, then it might ebb a little bit then come back up again, so maybe that's sort of…… I suppose I am feeling a bit fragile at the moment …… I can say I feel responsible for myself but you still recognise your little peaks and troughs don't you', my low self-esteem is after I had had this comeuppance with this girl and taken her to the programme manager, the programme manager and the Head of School were sitting talking and I entered the room to say 'look, what do you want me to do, should I do

a note of concern?' I felt that they were angry with me and it doesn't take me very much to think oh my god what have I done, have I handled this wrong? But then I actually realised I shouldn't have taken it personally; the programme manager was cheesed off because she's busy and she's got to deal with this student and then the other manager, Head of School is that busy with a 100 meetings, he doesn't need it'.

Your feelings on the moral dimension of teaching

'There is an example of one thing that's happened today, linking with moral dimension, is that one of the 16 year olds in the class is horrendous …… she sits with her back to you and she is the only one that won't, doesn't pay attention to you and I remember going up to her, and just leaning on the desk and saying let me make it very clear to you; you either come into my class and you listen to me and you learn and I get you through and you qualify or you go, there is a choice for you. So she missed the next two weeks…… But my moral dilemma on that is, I feel like that's a picture of a mouse on top of a cat but I see that as the enemy; the mouse, and I see myself as the enemy to [name] *…… I've done this note of concern, and I'm not the only teacher…… but she is going to be kicked off the course'…... I see that as the villain on something that's soft, so you do have to be quite hard with the students and it might not be what you want to do. But however, as I said, there are procedures and a protocol to be followed and you have to stick to it otherwise you'd have everyone running around willy nilly doing what they like when they like and how they like'.*

How you aspire to be teacher in the future

'I looked at that one and I just thought it was peaceful, I want to be a peaceful teacher on a nice sort of journey teaching, all ending in a happy place, and that to me looked happy and nice and with the students having enjoyed their nice trip, a nice journey and they've got their qualifications and good experience and enjoyed college or learning life…… I would like to think that really I am effective in the classroom and getting there now anyway…… When I am in the classroom and doing my own thing and their results come through and they have passed, then I do think I am on that, not too many rocks in the way. So again that's why I thought it was quite nice because it's not peppered with obstacles …… a nice smooth happy peaceful journey, lots of lovely learning to get to a nice place, with a qualification that they can get a job, and be happy doing what they've worked hard to get …… I am the happiest in the classroom; I love it and really enjoy being in the classroom'.

Helen
Visual Metaphors Related to Emotional, Moral and Ethical Investments of Being a Teacher

How you experience individual agency as a teacher

'So the first one is somebody who looks like she has got lots of arms and that's the individual agency one; actually I don't think I do have really any individual agency as a teacher, I don't know whether any teacher really does to be honest because we're controlled in so many ways, by so many things, because even what you do within the classroom is controlled because you've got to work to a particular syllabus and obviously you have got to retain your learners and they've got to get their qualifications …… So I just like this one because she has got lots of different things in her hands and it's a bit like you're juggling all these balls and trying to keep everything in the air and keep everything going because you've got the demands of the course and the demands of the learners and the demands of the institution that you work for and you've got to juggle all these things and do the job that they want you to do. So I think really I don't think any teacher has any individual agency...… there's even more control over us now and the government seems to think that this sort of control makes better teachers and I don't necessarily think that it does. It just makes teachers who get good at completing lots and lots of paperwork and doing those sorts of things when they might be better off spending more time on their teaching'.

How you experience vulnerability as a teacher

'Well the vulnerability as a teacher is the Alsatians and the cat because that's sometimes how I feel; you just feel like you're treading very carefully and you're about to get pounced on at any second …... there's just so much stuff that you know you ought to be doing because at the moment I have got so much to do and so tired that I'm not doing any lesson plans and one of the colleges I work for now are doing checks …...its just that there aren't enough hours in the day and when I'm up until midnight doing something I am just so tired that I just want to go to bed. So they're going to be asking for them again so I will quickly produce a few so that fulfils that …… So I am sort of waiting to be pounced on because I'm not actually doing the lesson plans I am supposed to be doing …... I mean we were asked for three lesson plans for each lesson we actually taught for quality control…… They basically go through them and tell you what's wrong with them, you should be doing more of whatever, to be honest I can't remember what my comments were; I was given them, I briefly read them and I have ignored them completely because I can't deal with that now, I've got too much to do, and I will look at it when I have got some time to do it …... But the thing is it's getting ridiculous because they want you to write everything down; well it's impossible to start off with anyway and you don't have that much control and it's only a plan isn't it of what you might actually achieve in that lesson …... you know you're not doing something as well as they want it done or not at all, and you just know they're biding their time until it's time, so that they can pounce! You are not doing this, why not! So I do feel like that a little bit at times and then other times I just don't care and I can't be bothered; I'm too tired I don't care!'

Your self-image as a teacher

'I mean there's the woman with the books and things ….. I do feel a lot of the time that it is just what I do but I think that's because of probably all the studying I'm doing ….. So I just feel at the moment all I ever do is sit in front of a computer or reading a book or doing some research or something like that, so that's really tied into my self-image at the moment; it would probably be different if I wasn't doing the studying I am doing …... If I know I should be doing something I like to be doing it, so that's starting to weigh on me a bit now because when I'm doing the Maths I think really I should be doing some university work, but when I'm doing the university work I think I should be preparing this session for next week …… I think sometimes I don't know what my self-image is as a teacher to be honest because …… teaching is such a small part of actually what I do with all the other stuff that's going on and what I'm trying to achieve and juggle, so the teaching part is almost like a minus side thing which isn't what I went into it for'.

How you are motivated as a teacher

'With the learners that I'm getting now, that's this picture I have chosen where he is trying to drag this lad into the back of a car and I often feel like that with my learners now, that even though most of them have come on the course as they want to, it's almost like even then, you're still sort of dragging them, kicking and screaming to that place ….. .

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someone said something along the lines of as a teacher you're not in the business of knowledge, you're actually in the business of teaching people how to think, and I think that is a huge part of it …... But with people now, there's no age limit on it …… most of them don't seem to want to and I find that really de-motivating as a teacher….. Because I work hard for my students actually and I do try to differentiate and if somebody does say I've got a problem, then I try and spend some time with them or bring in a little extra work and say have a go at this, come in early next week and we will have a chat about it and sometimes I just feel why am I bothering? Because I put in all this work, sometimes I just feel I am doing the work for them especially when they say I don't understand and I can't do it …... In the end I end up explaining it …… I just think it's easier just to tell them, but that's not helping them at all'.

How you experience self-esteem

'I have chosen the rollercoaster for self-esteem but you have probably picked up on that already. It can be very high and actually I think in general I am a good teacher I think and a lot of the time I just don't have the time to be a good teacher, but I think I am……   I just feel with the observation in teaching and learning, that I think you shouldn't need, any teacher shouldn't need these grades to tell them whether they are a good teacher or not …… and I think I am, I might be wrong, I just feel I am…… And my teaching is up and down and I think everyone's is, it depends on how you are feeling as well …… and sometimes you think oh I'll just give them worksheets because you are feeling that bad …… I have thought to myself that was really bad because all they have done is sat and done the worksheets with no stimulation all because I wasn't feeling well and I think every teacher has that, then other moments whereas they are really into that and all talking to each other and you

think that lesson went really, really well and there's a buzz in the room and you think you have had an outstanding lesson but what they see just depends on that particular moment in time'.

Your feelings on the moral dimension of teaching

'I have chosen the rainbow, but I'm not really sure whether that was a good choice actually because it's very temporary isn't it, something that will disappear …… I think there are two things on the morals for me; the first thing comes back to what I was talking about with the learners, you know, they come in and have really high aspirations …… I want a GCSE or I want a degree, and in some ways it's a moral thing because I'm thinking well with some people, I don't ever think you are going to get or to achieve that high… And I think should I actually tell them that, do I have really a moral duty to tell them that or just let them think they can go on and do whatever it is they want to achieve. And then I think if you tell them they can't, and there're completely demoralised by that, then they probably won't ever because of what you have said to somebody…. so it could become a self-fulfilling prophesy, so that is a difficult aspect to it …… But then again the other thing that comes to me, it's all funding and basically it comes from the tax payers and I just feel we have the duty to use the tax payers money wisely and that we're having a lot of people come onto courses, and they are doing two, three and four courses …. like this one lady I was talking about earlier, this is her second year with me and her fourth course. And even if she does manage to achieve on this course, it has taken her two years to just to get the Entry 3…... And then I think from a funding point of view should I be really saying to her 'well I'm sorry but there comes a point when we say you can't continue …... And then of course its my retention and achievement figures again, so if I do say anything and she walks away that will affect my figures again …… obviously these things are looked at

and with jobs the way they are at the moment, I don't even know if I am going to be offered any teaching work in September'.

How you aspire to be teacher in the future

'Well at this point in time I don't even know if I do aspire to be a teacher in the future, hence the person stood with the two paths. Because one might be a teaching path and one might be something entirely different and it depends on how it goes…... I think when it gets to the point when I'm just feeling all the other stuff has taken on a greater importance than the teaching, then it's probably time to go, just give up and go, even though it's a job I love so much and I finally feel after all these years of jobs I didn't like, that I have found the thing that I really feel passionate about, and it's what I should be doing….. I'll just go as much as I love the teaching, the rest of it is just too much, I can't cope with it anymore …… it's amazing how much the other stuff does change you as a teacher and changes the way you see yourself and see other things; …… I think if I went back now to teach people I taught when I first started, they'd probably think they were getting a completely different tutor because I think I have changed that much in my teaching, in my attitude to teaching and not for the better either …… because of the short courses and I feel I have to teach the test, because I have to retain learners, because they have to achieve, because I am having so many other things to think about …… I still try and do a good job, but just sometimes I just think if I had got a bit more time to teach this area or this subject I know I could do it better. And perhaps that's just me; perhaps I just need to do it in a better way'.

John
Visual Metaphors Related to Emotional, Moral and Ethical Investments of Being a Teacher

1. How you experience individual agency as a teacher

'How you experience individual agency as a teacher. I take that to mean the freedom to get on with doing your own thing, with regards to maybe control etc. within, that's the way I perceive that anyway. So the picture there I put as, I guess this person is hanging on a rope and that for me was more because, there is a certain amount of guidance in terms of as there is a rope there, although you basically have to follow an intended path in terms of there is an outcome, there are set outcomes that you want to achieve and you want the learners to achieve. How I get there, we're given a huge amount of freedom really in how we achieve that as a teacher, it's one of the things which does surprise me really, I mean I don't disagree with it but it surprises me with the amount of freedom the teachers have….. there is a huge amount of individual license to teachers give here; that's your unit sort of thing, teach it …… each teacher seems to be very much in their individual cocoon doing their own things …… there is a guiding rope shall we say, a guideline that you follow …… but I just think there would be, I would have expected there to be more opportunities for doing stuff together as a team'.

2. How you experience vulnerability as a teacher

'There's the traditional image of teaching being the Lion's Den, but I

didn't feel particularly vulnerable …… I am the Lion I am not really aggressive, but I'm not vulnerable …… but if it is a lion's den I feel comfortable in the Lion's den! ......I suppose you can talk about vulnerability in terms of workloads, in terms of ability to get everything done, I don't really understand when they talk about a workload. I mean it's my first year, so all of my materials I have had to prepare from scratch, it has been easier than I have had it for years, I don't want to sound complacent but it has, it's been a lot easier…… I think the only, well I say vulnerable, the area that has been more challenging has been to understand the expectations of the college, the administrative process of the college, it's all like the acronyms …… And the form filling, you think well I have already put this here and they say you need to put it there as well and you have to repeat things and it's all about the expectations for Ofsted and whatever'.

3. Your self-image as a teacher

'Self-image as a teacher; I think for that one, well the volcano erupting has been sort of a little bit of my effect on the department…….some of them may think I wish he had never turned up here …… because I have just done things differently and just got on with it and there is a certain amount of pressure, I would say that there are a few more innovative creative teachers who had been…… I wouldn't say bullied but forced into silence to do their own thing on their own, the overwhelming thing was that of complacent laziness; this is the way we've done it, we aren't going to change ……me coming in and re-writing the assignments, and that again has taken people away from their comfort zone, I mean they have been using the same assignments for years. And there was enough pressure on others to comply; and there was some sort of

pressure on me in the beginning of just a few comments of oh you're better off doing it this way, trust me, and I have just said oh okay, interesting thanks for letting me know but I have still done my own sort of thing, because that's the way I am, I want to find out for myself ...... And this is the flower in spring that has come through there, which again I think that's a sort of reflection of me from when I was starting to teach, the first year of teaching and it's sort of coming out and hopefully I don't think I am in flower yet!'

4. How you are motivated as a teacher

'*Now, how are you motivated as a teacher? Well I mean okay this is a gateway in a field effectively and for me I would have liked that gate to be open, but it does not really matter it's a gateway. I see myself and my motivation is to really, is the future of the students, I'm not bothered about how other staff perceive me; that doesn't motivate me, I am motivated by my students achieving, and my students moving on to higher education, to jobs and what they get out of it, what the rest of the staff think of me or not doesn't bother me greatly. I would like to be in an environment where ...... but I get some pleasantries from time to time so I can't complain! ...... But my focus, my motivation is the students, particularly the ones that come in with difficult backgrounds and a lack of ambition and they don't really know how to construct an answer correctly and they struggle at the beginning to get through the pass criteria, and you see that even by the end of the first academic year you compare what they've written and what they've done, and sometimes you think is it the same person'...... If some of the students, if I can help them to really move on to careers, point them if certain directions, then that's my motivation; the gateway to the future and the big wide world really and give them a sense of direction and orientation because, a lot of students*

come in and think they're going to be nobody's; they don't believe they can really achieve and they're told by schools that they're failures basically and not high achievers. And just over a two year period or three year period in some cases, you can really make a difference and they will mature and change and I will be very interested to see if in ten years' time some of them will be doing what they want to be doing; that's my motivation, most definitely'.

5. How you experience self-esteem

'I would say that I guess I view that as my own confidence in my ability and what I'm doing etc., self-esteem my ability to do the job and succeed at it. So in this one here, I took this one of the car that's driving through the tree trunk that has been hacked out, in that I see that as basically any obstacles, I see, like the tree trunk as an obstacle, I just hack the path out, hack my way through and just go with it, in that respect. Ok if someone says that's the wrong thing to do, but in general, I am confident in my ability in what I do. You question yourself all the time but it doesn't mean to say you doubt what you do, you might reflect on what you're doing and think of how you can improve things or do things better, but it doesn't say you've got doubts about your ability, and I don't doubt my ability to do the job, but I will be reflecting on how I can improve. My understanding, my interpretation of self-esteem there is whether I feel confident and feel I'm up to doing the job'.

6. Your feelings on the moral dimension of teaching

'I would advocate that you lead a life that is considerate of other people and the environment rather than self-centred, but not everybody would agree …… but I don't quite know why I picked up that picture, but I felt to some extent, but certainly the puppies were the students and that perhaps putting them in a different framework in terms of the moral obligations …… I would hope that most teachers would agree that there is a moral dimension to teaching; that we do have …… if we call it an obligation, but it's within our remit to give and help provide a moral framework for young people. And particularly young people who are …… well whether you class cannabis as a drug or not, but legally it is, but they do drugs and alcohol, it's pretty savage out there for them, and they sometimes do lose track of the moral dimension of things; it is very much dog eat dog world for them. I think there's the cliché of children can be crueller than adults, and they can, young people particularly. But again, if you make them think and create a slightly different atmosphere, I find that they pretty much buy into it; but maybe that's because I'm the eternal optimist!'

7. How you aspire to be teacher in the future

'Right, how do you aspire to be a teacher in the future? I mean I looked at it and thought about its …… like taking an impossible load. But actually looking at the picture it isn't an impossible load; it's a heavy load, but he's just getting on with it and doing it sort of thing. That's

almost a bit negative compared to how I feel, I mean as a teacher, it perhaps builds on a lot of these things, and I would like to make a difference over time to as many students as possible. I wouldn't say I would necessarily change peoples' moral values, but I would say we have a problem with society with the way we are, the way we run is all about the individual, and the blame culture, something as to who is to blame …… For me, here it's all still about the individual, you know, for me it's all about the advert that came out a few years ago; I want it, and I want it now. I find that horrendous as a message to be getting across, that's what our society is, I mean we are dictated to by big businesses as all they want is profit ……. it's all about money and that is the reflection of the society we're in. It's not about what's the best for society or what's the best for the team and people working together; it's all about the individual, it's all about money and it's all about that now; I think it's sad'.