Telling Stories: A Process of Identification for Six Neophyte Teacher Educators

Penelope Mary Amott

UCL – Institute of Education

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Declaration

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

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Abstract

This study engaged new teacher educator participants in narrative story telling which facilitated a process of 'identification' that was supportive of their identity transformation. The study considers the process of identity transformation as these experienced teachers move into their new roles as teacher educators. The narrative method was sensitive to a poststructuralist view of identity. Six neophyte teacher educators shared their Professional Life Histories for this study. This adapted life history method included the use of prospective as well as retrospective reflection. Follow up discussions provided an opportunity for reflection on the Professional Life History process. These narrative events were analysed using an interpretive approach based on grounded theory. Three viewing frames, consisting of explorations in relation to identity and identification, types of reflection and narrative storytelling, were applied. The narrative events revealed evidence of identity transformation for the participants but found that identity as a teacher educator was in process and only partially formed at the point of telling their stories suggesting that their identity was still in transition despite having spent some time in the role, and for some of them undergoing a yearlong preparation for the role. This study reveals how engaging in narrative story telling provided an opportunity for participants to activate a process of 'identification' which was supportive of identity transformation. Analysis of the forms of reflection evidenced in the narrative events suggested that critical self-reflection was involved in identification. Furthermore, the follow up discussions evidenced the emergence of 'premise reflection' (Mezirow, 1991) suggesting that 'reflecting on reflection' further enhanced self-knowing and identity transformation. A model of the interaction between two dimensions, that of subjective/objective and structure/agency, was developed proposing that within narrative story telling an individual might gain a more objective and agentive understanding of their professional identity and self.

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Reflective Statement – My journey as a neophyte researcher during my doctoral studies

This reflective statement considers my learning journey during the different stages of my doctoral studies. I adopt a metaphor that I consider to encapsulate my experience of the Doctorate in Education (Ed. D.) programme, engaged with over the last eight years, and the learning that I have gained through it. The metaphor is of a train on a track which I first used in discussions with my fellow doctoral students in the early stages of the International Ed. D. route. Here, I focus on five main aspects of this metaphor:

Firstly, the track is the Ed. D. programme which guides you through the doctoral process; providing clear stages or stations through which you can take on board new learning and development. These stations coincide with the taught modules and opportunities to submit assignments and receive feedback on my developing thinking, which formulate the programme. However, upon reaching the Institution Focused Study stage and then, to a greater extent, the thesis stage the track starts to diverge and the journey forward consists of greater choice and opportunity to follow a route of interest, not taken before.

Next is myself as the engine and engine driver of the train. I have to propel myself along the track with a sense of drive and purpose; perhaps tiring at uphill stretches or under the weight of work pressures but speeding along when I gain new skills and understanding. I also determine the route I follow as the tracks starts to diversify.

In addition, there are the carriages that I pull along with me. These carriages were formed and acquired as I engaged in my studies, readings and research. I consider there to be three carriages that were shaped through my doctoral studies which then formed the three viewing frames adopted in my thesis; identity and identification, reflection (including prospective reflection) and narrative and storytelling. These three carriages started to appear quite early on in the programme and as I progressed were furbished and peopled as new understanding and thinking developed.

Furthermore, there are the occupants or cargo accumulated into the carriages. These are the themes/ideas/'theories' developed through my doctoral studies. (Perhaps I can maternalistically refer to them as 'my children'!) These occupants are situated within one of the three carriages. As these areas of interest developed through my reading and research the weight of the carriages grew; however, this was matched by my increasing power and confidence as the engine of the train, supported by the fuel of advanced learning and developing skills in research.

Then, there is the landscape through which the train is travelling. This consists of the different domains of my work, the Communities of Practice to which I belong and the broader fields within education to which my work relates. In particular I would identify the two contexts of my work within the eight years of my doctoral studies, within my university: firstly, as a Reading Recovery National Trainer and Coordinator, working with Reading Recovery Teacher Leaders, particularly during their yearlong intensive professional development programme; secondly, as a lecturer in Initial Teacher Education, working on the PGCE and Teach First routes into teaching.

I use this metaphor to show the connectedness of my learning experience through my doctoral studies. I will focus on the main themes (or children) that have emerged in my thinking within my thesis and show how each has developed as I journeyed along the track of the Doctorate in Education. I will conclude with a consideration of myself as the engine and engine driver and how my engagement with the Ed. D. programme has supported my development in relation to my own professional learning as a teacher educator and a neophyte researcher, considering my own prospective reflection as I emerge into these new professional identities.

<u>Themes Contained Within the Carriages of my Doctoral Train</u>

Considering professional identity

This theme relates to my first carriage of identity and identification. It started to develop in the first taught module, Foundations of Professionalism (FOP), where I started to engage with the concept of identity and to consider whether it was

possible to separate professional identity from personal identity. I recognised that identity could not be considered as something fixed or innate in the person and was shaped by the contexts in which an individual was situated. I adopted primarily a social constructivist view of identity at that time, grounded in the work of Etienne Wenger (1998), where identity was seen as a trajectory within, across and between different communities of practice. Within this model identity is shaped by each community of practice (COP) and as such an individual might have multiple identities dependant on their multiple belongings. Communities of practice that related to professional contexts, such as schools, teacher networks or universities, would therefore challenge the formation of professional identities.

However, my concept of identity was further shaped by readings that were more poststructuralist in nature, particularly for my IFS, where identity is both an *effect of discourse* - shaped by the structures of the context and culture of the individual; and *performative* - agentively constructed within discourse. Thus within my thesis I focus on considerations of professional identities, which are identities related to professional roles that are distinct from other personal identities. In addition, I looked at the way in which identity is conceived and conveyed within a discursive act or narrative event.

Identity Transformation

This second theme also resides within this first carriage of identify and identification. It asks the question: Can identity be considered to be transformed as individuals move into new professional COPs and roles? The focus of my Specialist Assignment was a discussion of my emerging concept of identity transformation. This view was formed through consideration of Wenger's COP theory, where identity might change as an individual moves into a new COP, but superimposed upon this was Jack Mezirow's notion of transformative learning (1991). Transformative learning is learning that results in a change to an individual's meaning perspectives and is suggested to occur as assumptions are challenged, particularly through critical reflection. When considering identity this would be about the challenging of assumptions related to psychological meaning perspectives. The concept of identity transformation therefore assumes that previous identities can be shaped or changed as an individual moves into new

COPs but also as critical self-reflection is activated. I set about to explore this idea further in my Methods of Enquiry (MOE) pilot study of two individual Reading Recovery Teacher Leaders. However, in my thesis I was lead to consider whether my concept of identity transformation was in conflict with my purported poststructuralist epistemology. I concluded that it had utility, particularly as it related to my developing concept of identification.

Using Narrative Approaches

My interest in narrative approaches also developed at the start of my doctoral studies and formed the third carriage in my metaphor. I encountered Life History method in the work of Goodson and Sikes (1992) (a set reading for the FOP module) and saw the relationship between such narrative approaches and the evidencing and development of identity within such narrative events. In my MOE study I used an approach that I called a Professional Life History (PLH). This was developed out of my concern that participants in narrative practices might not feel comfortable in discussing their personal lives. It also was in accord with my concept of professional identity. My thesis adopted this PLH approach as well; but suggested that such narrative practices might not only be a 'method' by which research 'data' could be garnered but also could be a 'means' through which identification and identity transformation might be explored and owned.

The Role of Critical Self-reflection

The second carriage of my train (of thinking), that of reflection, started to develop as I prepared for my specialist assignment; in which I focused on the role of critical self-reflection (CSR) as individuals consider their professional identity. I examined the reflective practices within the different elements of the yearlong professional development programme for Reading Recovery Teacher Leaders; suggesting that CSR was linked to identity transformation. I developed this thinking further in my IFS where I analysed a particular piece of reflective writing using a framework of types of reflection. Again this supported my conclusions that CSR might be supportive of, or associated with, an individual's identity transformation.

Activating Prospective Reflection

Associated with the second carriage of reflection, prospective (or anticipatory) reflection became a focus of my research, based on my reading of research by Paul Conway (2001). I wondered if prospective reflection might be incorporated into life history method and whether its activation might support identity transformation. My adapted version of a PLH approach for my MOE pilot study incorporated prospective as well as retrospective reflection. The subject of prospective reflection was further developed in my IFS as I used it within a collaborative reflective activity, indicating that it might play a further role in supporting? identity transformation. Reverting back to the PLH approach for my thesis, prospective reflection became a strong theme in my work. I suggested that its activation might be a means by which current transitions can become sites for CSR.

Identification

This last theme emerged out of the analysis for my thesis and resides within the first carriage of my train - identity and identification. Identification was not a term I considered until I moved into my thesis stage, but it built from earlier thinking already discussed. Identification was a process I saw operating within the narrative events of this study. I was able to link identification to instances of CSR and also to Mezirow's notion of premise reflection. I suggested that, in the 'means' of narrative practices, identification operated within discourse and further supported identity transformation. This became one of the main findings of my thesis work.

These themes, my children, have emerged in my thinking and understanding as I have engaged in the reading, analyses, discussion and writing required within my doctoral studies. I believe that these themes are significant aspects of what I carried with me through my doctoral studies and relate to the understanding I have gained. What I would now like to consider are the skills I have developed in this process that form part of me, the engine of the train and engine driver, as I travel through the landscape of my professional context. I conceive of these skills

impacting two aspects of my professional life: my development as a Teacher Educator and as a Neophyte Researcher

<u>Negotiating the Landscape of My Professional Context</u>

Becoming a Teacher Educator

I recognise that my doctoral studies have supported me as a developing teacher educator. I have become much more aware of my own teacher educator identity and also attuned to the emerging identities of the students and colleagues within my field of work. As I considered identity transformation for the professionals in my doctoral research I had to reflect also on my changing identity(ies). I realise that I no longer consider myself to be a school teacher and when asked 'what do you do?' would say that 'I am a teacher of teachers'. I know that the process over the eight years of my doctoral studies has caused me to be critically self-aware and in all my analyses I have been able to consider my own experience of identity transformation also. I consider that I have developed a greater capacity to be analytical and reflective within different aspects of my role. I recognise that my wide reading in the field of teacher education, reflective practice and discourse has had a broader application into my work with trainee teachers and mentors. I am more aware of the challenges faced by newer colleagues and seek to support them through their transition.

Becoming a Researcher

Through my engagement with the Ed. D. programme, I have seen my emerging methodological identity as a researcher. I would now consider myself to be a qualitative researcher, feeling more at home within a poststructuralist paradigm. I have developed my skills in using narrative methods in my work. In addition, I am confident to use an Action Research approach, which I adopted for my IFS, and grounded theory methodology. I understand the richness gained by narrative approaches and would want to continue to develop this method within my work where appropriate. I feel more comfortable with the rigours of a disciplined approach to research, and consider that I have gained the skills required to engage in research that provides fascinating insight within my field.

Beyond the Train Track of the Doctorate in Education

I conclude by activating prospective reflection on the next stages in my professional journey. Where will my train lead, now that the train track of the Ed. D. programme has ended? Or as a child might say towards the end of a long journey: 'Are we there yet?'

I want to continue in Teacher Education as I know this is where my professional identity resides and this is what I am good at. I have developed a sound understanding of effective professional learning for neophyte teachers and particularly the value of talking and telling stories.

I also believe that I have a depth of understanding about development for new teacher educators and would like to expand the outcomes of my research into practices which will support such persons as they navigate their transition into this new field.

As I develop my confidence as a researcher I hope to engage in further work, individually or collaboratively, in the field of teacher education and professional learning for teacher educators. My identity as a researcher is definitely more secure.

Finally, I would want to broaden my skills and interests into different areas of my personal life, in particular my work in West Africa and my support of persons with mental health difficulties. I am intrigued by the value of narrative approaches that might provide rich evidence of an individual's journey, perhaps for children orphaned by Ebola. I also know the potential and effectiveness of narrative storytelling in supporting those encountering life transitions or coming to terms with past trauma, which might be supportive for those struggling with mental health issues.

Chapter One – Setting the Context for the Thesis

> Sue - I have no idea when I became a university person, teacher, no idea when it happened at all or was aware of it, no idea. It would have been some time but when?
>
> Penny - I reflect on that as well in terms of myself because I think that's important. I've made this transition but at what point did I become…? Where now I would see myself as a teacher educator and not see myself as a teacher.

This was a recent conversation held between my supervisor and myself. It illustrates that for many teacher educators there can be a particular problem in relation to professional identity. A transition is made from identity as a teacher to identity as a teacher educator but when does this take place, and why is this important? This thesis seeks to reveal, through the stories told by six new teacher educators, the evidence of, and processes involved in, identity transformation.

In this chapter I seek to provide a justification for the focus of this thesis. I start by outlining the rationales for this study; setting the context within relevant literature, whilst identifying a less researched niche within the field of teacher identity and professional transitions. I then argue for taking a poststructuralist approach to this research, drawing from the epistemology and methods of poststructural research and writing. In particular, I identify a metaphor of a 'cabinet of curiosities' through which I frame the approach and structure of this thesis. Next I set the context for this research, introducing the places, people and stories included. Finally, I outline the structure of the thesis, providing a framework to show this.

Rationales for a Study of Professional Transitions

'The 21st Century is going to be the century of identity'

This was a claim made by Etienne Wenger (2014) in a recent presentation at University College London. He suggests that in the 21st Century an individual is no longer identified with a single community of practice but negotiates their

identity as they navigate a complex trajectory through multiple communities of practice (*ibid*).

This is just as relevant for teaching as any other career or profession. From my experience working in education for many years, I suggest that teaching, for many, is not seen as a lifetime vocation but as a pathway to multiple opportunities within the field of education or beyond. Teachers may take a traditional pathway through classroom practice towards further roles of responsibility within a school setting. However, teachers have explored other contexts for developing or applying their skills, perhaps working within consultancy, advisory services, teacher education, publishing, and such like. Equally teachers have left the field altogether finding employment routes where experience as a teacher is valued outside of the education of children.

This study sets out to explore a particular transition; that of teachers who move into teacher education. This is one example of a professional transition within the field of education that might be used as an exemplar of other similar transitions. It recognises that transitions are not straightforward and might result in the re-negotiation of professional identity as an individual moves into a new role.

My own experience is an example of this. I started my career as a primary teacher and worked for nearly 20 years teaching across the 5-13 age range and in three different countries. I then moved into teacher education, working with both experienced teachers, as a Reading Recovery National Trainer and Coordinator, and in Initial Teacher Education, and have been working as a teacher educator for about 12 years. At the point of transition into my new role as a teacher educator I did not recognise the significance of this transition, with a focus on my expertise as a primary teacher providing the confidence to take on this new role. It was only after a few years that I began to see myself more as a teacher educator, although I do not recollect a particular turning point in this transition. However, as I started to work with Reading Recovery Teacher Leaders (RRTLs), who are experienced teachers moving into a new professional role as a teacher educator (see context section below), I realised that transitions can raise challenges for individuals, and the systems they work in, as they make adjustments in their professional role and identity.

The Research Context on Teacher Educators Professional Identity and Professional Learning

In setting the context for this study of neophyte teacher educators' professional identity I need to provide an overview of the literature that relates to Teacher Educators (TEs). This body of work largely divides into two main areas, both of which have strong relevance to my study: literature that relates to TE professional identity and that which relates to TEs professional learning. Of course there is overlap between the two, as will be discussed, where research identifies the ways in which professional learning supports TE identity formation. Murray and Male (2005) are often quoted as stating that teacher educators are 'an under-researched and poorly understood occupational group' (p. 125). However, since then a growing body of research in this field; although Griffiths, Thompson and Hryniewicz (2014) would argue that this is still small in comparison to the 'plethora of research on academics or teachers' (p. 74). Davey (2013), drawing on Zeichner (2007), suggests that much of this research is based on TE self-study and that there is a need for 'getting beyond the individual tales of teachers'. She calls for 'synthetic studies that might contribute to an emerging theory of the pedagogy of teacher education, and to the scholarly identity of teacher education more generally' (p.5). In Izandinia's (2014) review of literature in relation to TE identity she locates 52 suitable articles, over half of which had been published between 2010-2012, demonstrating this as a growing area or research. However, in identifying the niche within which my research resides Iargue that this is still an area that is not well represented within this field.

Professional Identity of Teacher Educators

Murray and Male (2005) in their seminal study consider the challenges to professional identity for new TEs as they move from first order practitioners (working as teachers in school) to second order practitioners (working as 'teachers of teachers', usually within Higher Education). To highlight this challenge, they coin the phrase for new TEs as 'expert become novice'. Similarly Boyd and Harris (2010) suggest that TEs retain their identity as teachers in their 'striving for credibility' with student teachers. This finding is supported by Field (2012) and also by Williams and Ritter (2010) as they engage in self-reflection on

their own identities as new TEs. Swennan, Jones and Volman (2010) suggest four sub-identities for TEs: as a teacher, teacher in Higher Education, teacher of teachers and as a researcher. This links with the study by Griffiths, Thompson and Hryniewicz (2014) of mid-career TEs; suggesting that TEs have multiple identities where individuals are either transitioning from one to another or holding several identities in balance. Davey (2013), in her comprehensive study of TEs in New Zealand identifies identifies four characteristics of professional identity for TEs:

> an organic comprehensiveness in its scope and required expertise, a broadly conceived but deeply held ethicality of purpose and practice, a commitment to an embodied pedagogy, and an enduring ambivalence and professional unease about their 'place in the world'.

Other studies have sought to identify stages of development for TEs as they transition into their new role, such as: becoming a teacher, becoming a teacher educator, and further development as a teacher educator (Swennan, Volman and Van Essen, 2008). Wilst Rodgers and Scott (2008) seek to criticise practices in ITE that seek to support the development of identity but fail to sufficiently appreciate that individuals may be at different developmental stages.

There are relatively few studies that seek to explore the ways in which such identity transformation from teacher to teacher educator might be supported. There is often an assumption that engaging in professional learning is the same as (or will automatically lead to) identity transformation, for example Swennan, Jones et. al. (2010). However, I would challenge this view and suggest that further research is required to identify the aspects of professional learning that are particularly supportive of identity transformation rather than those that support TEs to engage with their new role (acknowledging the possible conflation between taking on a role and identity – to be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three – Identity and Identification). Those studies that do consider the 'how' of identity transformation focus primarily on reflective practices. Which comprises the fifth aspect of the literature that relates to TE professional learning discussed below.

Teacher Educator Professional Learning

Across much of the research on teacher educators is a call for TEs to be supported into their new role and that being a good teacher does not necessarily transfer into being a good teacher educator; as Van Velzen, Van der Klink and Swennan (2010) state '…although novice teacher educators are experienced teachers, the former skills and knowledge are not easily transferred to the context of teacher education (p. 67). The literature that explores ways in which TEs might be supported into their new role highlights the following as beneficial:

Firstly, there is a need for well-designed induction programmes for new TEs. Boyd, Harris and Murray (2011) provide guidance for Higher Education Institutions on how to provide effective induction for new TEs in 'Becoming a Teacher Educator: guidelines for induction'. However, Murray (2010) states that '[p]rovision for teacher educators' induction and further professional development in universities in England can be uneven and sometimes inadequate' (p.197). McKeon and Harrison (2010a) go on to identify four features of a TE induction period that were supportive of professional learning, these also align with the features identified in the overview below.

Secondly, there are a substantial number of research articles that highlight 'TEs engaging in research' as being supportive of their professional learning and developing identity as a TE (Cochran-Smith, 2003; McGregor *et al.*, 2010; Murray, 2010; Roberts, 2014; Tack and Vanderlinde, 2014; Vanassche and Kelchtermans, 2015). Cochran-Smith (2003) calls on TEs to develop 'inquiry as a stance' and Roberts (2014) outlines the benefits that having an academic identity can bring to the TE role. Linked to this is the growing body of research that utilises self-study both as a means for knowledge production and to support individual TEs into their professional role and identity (Bullock, 2009; Cochran-Smith, 2005).

Thirdly, there is literature that highlights the importance of new TEs being supported through engagement with communities of practice (or inquiry), particularly in relation to supporting them as beginning researchers (Cochran-Smith, 2003; Harrison and McKeon, 2008; Vanassche and Kelchtermans, 2015).

Others suggest that new TEs be supported by a mentor or more experienced colleague (McKeon and Harrison, 2010b). Davey and Ham (2010) provide 'the 6 M's of mentoring' as a useful framework to support mentors in this role.

Fourthly, some research questions whether there is a clear pedagogy for teacher education. For example Field (2012), in her study of six new TEs found that there was a lack of understanding or awareness of 'teaching about teaching' or 'meta-teaching' and that this 'may be the neglected area of concern' (p. 821). Likewise, Kosnik *et al.* (2013) challenge the lack of attention 'to what teacher educators do, should know and should be able to do' (p. 524). Thus there is a call for an explicit induction into the pedagogy of teacher education, which is addressed somewhat by the work of Boyd, Harris et al. (2011) and other successful induction programmes. Linked to this are studies that have investigated the core knowledge and pedagogy of ITE programmes. Goodwin (2010), in a comparison of ITE programmes in an international context, identifies five knowledge domains of teaching; Murray, Swennan and Shagrir (2009) also compare the pedagogy of teacher educators across three nations; and Vanassche and Kelchtermans (2014) identify three different groups of TEs based on their positioning towards the teachers they train.

Finally, there is the suggestion that successful professional learning can be supported through the application of reflective practices. Izadinia (2014) in her view of the literature on TE identity concludes that '[r]eflection, as such, facilitates learning and identity construction by examining teacher educators' practice and identity in a purposeful way' (p.436). This was foreshadowed by Mueller (2003) in her article as she engaged in self-study and recognised the way in which such self-reflection supported her as a novice teacher educator. However, I would suggest that this last approach to supporting teacher professional learning is the most under-researched aspect. For example the chapter by Harrison and Yaffe (2009) 'Teacher educators and reflective practice' does not report on reflective practices that had been used with TEs but describes two different practices used with new teachers and assumes that these might be applied effectively with new TEs, an assumption that my study would challenge. Clandinin, Downey and Huber (2009) call for the '[creation of] teacher education spaces for helping

teachers compose stories to live by that will allow them to shift who they are and are becoming…' (p. 146). I believe that these spaces are created through engaging in reflective practices. There are two particular studies that consider such practices: Vloet and Van Swet (2010) developed a biographical interview method to explore and construct teacher educator identity. Also Williams and Power (2010) used a 'core reflection' model with a sequence of prompts to support collaborative discussion and reflection between two new TEs.

A relatively new and poorly represented research area looks at teacher educators within contexts other than Initial Teacher Education (ITE). Primarily these are studies of TEs within the school context either working as mentors of neophyte teachers (Livingston, 2014; Swennan, 2014; White, 2013a; White, 2013b) or supporting professional learning for more experienced teacher within their school (Clemans, Berry and Loughran, 2010). These studies draw similar conclusions to those outlined above: the importance of developing professional learning communities, particularly for TEs working in isolated school-based contexts and the challenges for such TEs to develop their identity as second order practitioners when working in a first order context (Swennan, 2014). This provides another research area to which my study of two groups of teacher educators might inform, where one group works in ITE but the second group, as Reading Recovery Teacher Leaders, work in a unique context training experienced teachers within a regional or local education authority. Studies of identity transformation within this broader context might prove to be insightful.

This overview of the literature on teacher educators' professional identity and professional learning has identified areas that are still under-researched: the 'how' of identity transformation for teacher educators; the application of reflective practices to support such transformations, in particular the use of narrative and storytelling; and the comparison of TE identity transformation across different contexts. I consider that this study will provide significant insight into these neglected areas.

The rationales for this thesis highlighted so far are: Firstly, that there is a changing landscape within the field of education where class teaching is not so likely to be seen as a lifetime career. Research is starting to respond to this growing group

of education professionals moving between roles. Secondly, that the context of teachers moving into teacher education is a relatively newly-researched area (Murray and Male, 2005; Swennen and Bates, 2010), particularly when considering teacher educators working outside of ITE. Thirdly, there is a unique opportunity to consider transition for RRTLs into their teacher educator role, perhaps as a contrast to teacher educators within ITE. Fourthly, there is a need to consider professional identity for teacher educators as they transition between professional roles and to do so from a perspective where identity is seen as something that is not fixed, but that changes and is shaped by the professional contexts and roles of the individual. Finally, I have found little research that considers the way in which changes in identity might be supported. This study considers the role of narrative story telling as a potentially supportive reflective practice and, in particular, it considers the value of engaging prospective reflection within the narrative process.

Therefore, the goals of this thesis are:

- *to understand professional transitions for education professionals moving from being a teacher to a teacher educator;*

- *to understand how professional identity changes or transforms as such transitions are made;*

- *to consider ways in which education professionals might be supported during times of transition.*

Having identified the rationales and purpose for this thesis I now seek to justify the epistemological approach that I take which draws from a poststructuralist perspective.

Taking a Poststructuralist Approach

In search of an epistemology for this doctoral research I needed to find an approach which was in alignment with a particular view of identity, and with the related narrative methods that I intended to use, in order to address the above research goals. In my reading of relevant literature, I was drawn to

poststructuralist theories and researchers. I felt that this approach would be most appropriate to my research for the following reasons: Firstly, I considered that it provided a way of generating and viewing knowledge that was tentative and open to debate. When considering something as contested as identity I believed it was important to generate an argument that was open to scrutiny and held as one perspective, possibly in contrast to others. Secondly, I considered that taking a poststructuralist approach to my analysis of the narrative events in this study, and to the way in which it might been reported, would allow for multiple perspectives to be developed and to create and engage with any dissonance that might arise; thus supporting a study that engages with the challenges surrounding professional identity.

A Poststructuralist View of Knowledge

In my reading of research literature in relation to teacher identity, narrative methods and teacher educator transitions I was drawn particularly to poststructuralist writing, such as the work of Maggie MacLure (1993, 1996, 2003, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c), Elizabeth Atkinson (2000, 2001) and Elizabeth St. Pierre (1997). I found that their approach towards research in this field was particularly refreshing as they moved away from a positivist stance towards embracing the uncertainty and multiple meanings contained within narrative events.

> Poststructuralist theorists reject the idea of universal truth and objective knowledge, delivered through the proper use of reason, and assert, on the contrary, that truths are always partial and knowledge is always 'situated' - that is, produced by and for particular interests, in particular circumstances, at particular times. (MacLure, 2003, p. 174)

It is difficult to define poststructuralism within this discussion; as the rejection of truth and objectivity by many poststructuralist writers also means that attempts to define it are also rejected. Instead a more effective approach might be to distinguish it from other perspectives. Poststructuralism has a strong affinity to postmodernism and deconstructionism. Its roots can be derived from a broader sense of European philosophy, within the work of Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze and Butler (MacLure, 2003). My affinity to this would be in the challenge towards humanist, scientific, enlightenment perspectives that seek towards a notion of

realism; '[r]ealist writing aims to resolve contradictions, smooth over inconsistencies and achieve a sense of closure' (Stronach and MacLure, 1997, p. 53). In my engagement with professional life histories, during the course of my doctoral studies, I have been struck by their transience and in my Thesis Proposal I stated:

> I would consider that identity is only realised in the 'story told'. Firstly that identity is not an innate 'thingness' but is constructed in the narrative process, and secondly that identity is not fixed and thus is created and recreated in each new discursive episode. (Amott, 2011, p. 3)

Therefore I consider that I should counter a realist perspective on the narrative events in my research but seek to 'problematise' them, or as St Pierre suggests '...qualitative researchers in the social sciences who are fond of poststructural critiques search for strategies that might enable them to produce different knowledge and to produce knowledge differently' (St Pierre, 1997, p. 175). So if in my thesis I seek to produce 'knowledge differently' what might this look like and what would my approach to this be?

A Poststructuralist View of Identity

I consider that identity is not a stable entity that can be defined and described in an individual, or even in my research. Instead it is transient and known at a particular moment in time, or in a particular context, and is re-shaped through a process of self-knowing and subsequent experiences. This view would resonate with my readings of poststructuralist research; as MacLure would suggest '[i]dentity is always deferred and in the process of becoming - never really, never yet, never absolutely 'there'' (MacLure, 2003, p. 131). In Chapter Three - Identity and Identification, I argue for a reconceptualisation of the term 'identity' but also draw an alignment with MacLure's perspective that '[w]e should think in terms of identification rather than identity'(1996, p. 282).

I consider that a sense of identity and identification become powerful when used by the individual and the researcher as a reflexive tool to make sense of, and argue for, their personal life stories and careers:

> ...identity should not be seen as a stable entity - something that people *have* - but as something that they *use*, to justify, explain and make sense of themselves in relation to other people, and to the contexts in which they operate. in other words, identity is a form of argument." (MacLure, 1993, p. 312)

Poststructuralist Approaches to Analysis and Reporting

I will now highlight the approaches I have adopted within this stance towards my research, including the rationales for each approach.

Reflexive writing – Writing myself into the text as the author

I considered that in using life history method, whether from a poststructuralist position or not, it was imperative that my role as an actor in the production of the narrative event was actively acknowledged. I used this term 'actor' intentionally to imply the nature of narrative story telling as a construction for an intended audience. I wanted to recognise my role in the narrative event where the storyteller and myself, as the interviewer or recipient of the story, were active participants in this construction. In what ways might my presence within this story telling episode be evidenced? Firstly, in the context of the Professional Life History discussion, the participant had agreed to tell their story to me, for various reasons (see Chapter Two – Designing the Research, for consideration of these reasons). Secondly, in the telling of the story there was a sense of audience: myself, the reader of my thesis and potential wider audiences. This would impact on the way in which the story was told. Thirdly, I may have had shared understandings and affinities that might have draw out certain issues in a story and suppressed others. Fourthly, my analysis was subject to my own interpretation based on a number of factors including: my own professional life experiences, my reading of literature (which is inevitably incomplete or biased), human capacity (however rigorous the method used) and perceptions of 'the university' in what was acceptable research. Finally, any conclusions that were drawn from what I perceived to be valuable, acknowledged that there were other conclusions that had been left out. Throughout the writing of this thesis I sought to identify and acknowledge such influence in my active pursuance of strategies to find and report potential biases.

In order to adhere to the conventions of reflexive writing I needed to write in the first person for much of this thesis. The benefit of which is to convey the nature of this study as a 'story about story telling'. The life history approach also is better facilitated through a more personalised writing style.

Deconstruction – Being willing to critically examine my own analysis

The approach of deconstruction primarily draws from the work of Derrida (for example Derrida, 1978). Themes that are prominent in this perspective include: *the search for différance* (a term coined my Derrida) '…sometimes also referred to as spacing, différance is the irreducible gap that allows meaning, reality, identity, etc., to come to definition in contrast to their opposites (words, representation, otherness)' (Burman and MacLure, 2011, p. 288); *challenging 'othering'* which is 'an ethical stance of responsibility to the 'other'… to whatever remains silent, unthought or 'untruthed'' (ibid, p288); *putting 'under erasure'* notions such as truth, trustworthiness, generalizability, authenticity, justice, knowledge or ethical propriety and causing them to be questioned; or *forcing open binary oppositions*, which are so often implicit (*or explicit*) in qualitative research, with a challenge to 'confronting the binary oppositions that have traditionally promised the comforts of certainty to philosophical thinking' (Stronach and MacLure, 1997, p. 5).

I therefore considered deconstruction to be a stance towards my analysis of the narrative events which would call my assumptions and conclusions into question; or as Johnson refers to deconstruction 'opening up meaning as a question, as a non-given, as a *bafflement*' (1994, in Stronach and MacLure, 1997, p. 5). To achieve this in my thesis I have shied away from drawing conclusions but sought to ask questions or uncover assumptions (as in the work of Erica Burman, in Burman and MacLure, 2011) or to add a counter-argument to my discussion (exemplified by Stronach and MacLure, 1997). At different points in each chapter, where I have created an argument or analysis, I have sometimes sought to present the counterargument, identifying where my analysis or thinking breaks down. *Such instances of deconstruction are indicated by italics.*

Polyphonic text – Looking at the narrative events through different lenses

Atkinson (2000) refers to this notion of 'polyphonic text' as something she considers to be offered by postmodernism. This idea of a polyphonic text relates to MacLure's call for a baroque method (MacLure, 2006a; MacLure, 2006b). This baroque approach is modelled in MacLure (2003) and in Stronach and MacLure (1997) where chapters are discrete yet interconnected; where there is no sense of a linear argument drawn through the book but each chapter provides one element of a multi-faceted engagement with the whole.

One particular example of the baroque is the *wunderkammern* or 'cabinet of curiosities'. In my search for an approach that activated such polyphonic text I was particularly drawn to this metaphor of a 'cabinet of curiosities'. I wondered if this might become a way for me to construct the thesis from my purported poststructuralist perspective. (In the next section I provide an account of the way in which this metaphor has been developed for the purposes of this thesis.)

So what did I hope to achieve by taking a poststructuralist approach to my thesis? Firstly, I considered that I might 'produce knowledge differently'; by doing so I hoped to challenge what is considered acceptable or reasonable. Secondly, I intended to provide insights and novel perspectives on teacher educator's lives and identities; which might be in contrast to some current literature in this field. Finally, I hoped to be true to myself as a researcher; retaining my integrity with poststructuralist thinking and practice.

A Cabinet of Curiosities

Figure 1.1 shows my first encounter with a real cabinet of curiosities, at Lyme Regis museum. The purpose of the cabinet of curiosities was to engage the viewer (particularly children) in developing their understanding of palaeontology. The cabinet consisted of multiple viewing points (including lying under the table to look at the sea from a bottom dweller's perspective!). The cabinet included artefacts, textual, video and audio information, and interactive resources. Each viewing point potentially added to that person understanding.

Figure 1.1 - A Cabinet of Curiosities at Lyme Regis Museum

Having read some of the work of Maggie MacLure (MacLure, 2006a; Pearce and MacLure, 2009) in which she introduces the cabinet of curiosities as an example of the 'Baroque Method'. She suggests that within a poststructuralist paradigm the Baroque might:

> …resist clarity, mastery and the single point of view, be radically uncertain about scale, boundaries and coherence, favour 'the unconcluded moment' and 'interrupted movement' (Harbison, 2000) and honour the obligation to get entangled in the details and decorations, rather than rise above them. (MacLure, 2006a, p. 731)

Seeing a cabinet of curiosities for myself I felt more confident that this was a close description of the approach I sought to take to my research and might support the reader of this thesis to understand what I was trying to achieve. I considered that the six Professional Life Histories, along with the follow up discussions, formed the metaphorical set of narrative events for examination within the cabinet. However, in addition to that, the six participants themselves, as revealed in these events, inevitably also come under scrutiny. And, of course, I would not want to obscure myself from examination, as the 'cabinet maker' or curator. It is my role in this research to identify the items to include in the cabinet, to arrange them in a way that supports them to be viewed most effectively and to shape the cabinet to support the viewer to have best access to the artefacts.

The metaphor of a cabinet of curiosities implies that the narrative events are viewed or analysed from different perspectives or angles. I have identified two different terms to explain the ways in which this viewing has been shaped for the reader. The first is a 'viewing frame' - This might by similar to that used by an artist when looking at a scene that they wish to capture. They frame the scene setting the boundaries of this view but everything contained within the frame is open to observation, the clarity of which depends on the closeness to the object of scrutiny. The second is a 'research lens' – A lens of any sort has some sort of distorting effect on what is being viewed, either to magnify and enlarge or to bring greater accuracy of sight. This term might imply that the perspective is shaped for the viewer in some way, perhaps by theory or personal subjectivity. In bringing something to the fore, or in associating different items together, it is inevitable that some things might become obscured. I also acknowledge that another curator (or researcher) might approach the narrative events differently or apply alternative research lenses. Each of the three main chapters were conceived as a 'viewing frame' on the narrative events in the cabinet of curiosities. The narrative events were viewed afresh in each chapter from a new perspective. In addition, I also shaped particular 'research lenses' through which the narrative events were analysed. These might be informed by relevant theory or are a tool created to support more detailed analysis of certain aspects of the contents of the cabinet of curiosity.

In my approach to the narrative events and in my writing of this thesis I have chosen to take three different viewing frames in my research: identity and identification; reflection; and narrative and storytelling. I now explain and explore why I have selected these particular frames for viewing; recognising that in this selection process other views or approaches to the narrative events have inevitably been deselected or overlooked. These three viewing frames are closely linked to the journey I have been on in my doctoral studies on the Doctorate in Education (Ed. D.) programme.

Identity and Identification - From the start of my doctoral studies I have been interested in the ideas surrounding professional identity for teachers. Reading undertaken in the early stages of my doctorate (such as the work of Beijaard,

Meijer and Verloop, 2004; Goodson and Sikes, 2001) started my consideration of professional identity. I was introduced to the idea that identity was not static and considered that changes in role might have an associated impact on professional identity. This was reflected in assignments written as part of the Ed. D. programme. My pilot study (as part of the Methods of Enquiry Two [MOE2] module) sought to explore the changing professional identity of two teacher educators, within the Reading Recovery Teacher Leader professional development programme, as they transitioned into their new role. A life history method was adopted for this study. This study revealed indicators of professional identity for such individuals and the effectiveness of the method in providing rich data. The framing of my thesis research was therefore focused on an exploration of professional identity and identity transformation and thus this became my first viewing frame.

Reflection - The research conducted for my Institution Focused Study (IFS), prior to commencing my thesis stage, focused on the role of reflection in supporting self-awareness and understanding, particularly in relation to professional identity. This was based on my reading of Mezirow's transformative learning theory (1991) with my premise that if critical reflection was supportive of transformative learning then critical self-reflection might support identity transformation. Conclusions from this research suggested that activating critical self-reflection through the use of narrative approaches was supportive for developing self-understanding. In addition the incorporation of prospective as well as retrospective reflection into the narrative method (adapted from the work of Conway, 2001) was also found to assist such identity work. Thus my second viewing frame was constructed around an analysis of reflection and in particular critical self-reflection within the narrative events.

Narrative and storytelling – Having used narrative approaches in both MOE2 and IFS I was intrigued by the effectiveness of such approaches not only as a method for collecting rich qualitative data, but also in supporting forms of critical self-reflection. It therefore seemed appropriate for me to include an additional layer within the analysis of the narrative events for this thesis which directly explored the importance of narrative and storytelling in supporting identity transformation.

Would the adoption of the professional life history method developed for this research also prove to be of value in activating critical self-reflection and therefore support professional identity transformation?

I also consider there is an alignment between this metaphor of a cabinet of curiosities and the three commonplaces of narrative inquiry identified by Connelly and Clandinin (2006) which they consider to specify the dimensions of the inquiry space. These include: *temporality* – which is about the past, present and future; *sociality* concerns 'the dialect between the inner and outer, the personal and social'; and *place* relates to 'the concrete physicality of the place or places in which eperiences are lived out and told' (Clandinin *et al.*, 2010, p. 82). I consider that each of these three commonplaces are considered within the cabinet of curiosities and the three viewing frames. Temporality is strongly related to the theme of retrospective and prospective reflection used within the Professional Life History method and also in the discussions, particularly in Chapter Four – Reflection. Sociality is a dimension that is explored in the analysis of identity within the narrative events, and linked to the concept of identification as participants engage with a process of coming to know their personal and social selves. The concept of place is not directly a focus within the analyses, although the places and contexts are clearly described by the participants within their Professional Life Histories and is implicit within any discussion of transition and identity transformation (see also Chapter Three – Identity and Identification).

Returning to the metaphor of the cabinet of curiosities, I suggest that each viewing frame takes a different perspective towards the content of the 'cabinet of curiosities' but that there may be multiple points of linkage, dissonance or layering between each perspective. In addition, within this notion of a cabinet of curiosities, there is the assumption that another person may view the contents differently, from different perspectives, reaching different conclusions - as any viewing is always bound by the subjectivities of the viewer. In order to recognise and support this notion I have included all of the Professional Life History scripts in full in the appendices (Appendix 10 - PLH Discussions 1-6, pp. i-xlvi) along with transcripts of the follow up discussions (Appendix 14 - Discussions 7-12, pp. xlvii-lxxii), so that any reader is open to make their own interpretations.

Defining Terms Used in this Thesis

I shall now try to define some of the key terms used within this thesis as these concepts have been shaped for purpose, particularly within a poststructuralist paradigm. These terms link to three core chapters:

Professional Identity

In this thesis I have determined to adopt a working concept of 'professional identity' rather than a broader definition of identity. This is not a new notion but requires explanation. As my working definition of identity I have largely adopted that offered by Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop (2004):

> Identity is not a fixed attribute of a person, but a relational phenomenon. Identity development occurs in an intersubjective field and can be best characterized as an ongoing process, a process of interpreting oneself as a certain kind of person and being recognized as such in a given context. (p. 108)

I value this definition because it encapsulates what I argue are three important features: that identity is unstable and constantly changing; that it is constructed within a social context and is therefore shaped by that context and may vary between contexts; and it is a personal interpretation of self which is formulated and shaped for purpose (suggesting that they might not be a single 'true identity', but multiple identities constructed in different contexts for varying purposes). In addition, I have chosen to refer to 'professional' identity, as I see a distinction from that of 'personal' or 'private' identity; whereby the professional identity relates to the professional or work-related aspects of an individual's life, and acknowledges that there might be other multiple private identities. This does not mean that the professional and personal identities are distinct and separate; rather they merge and impinge on each other. However, for the purpose of this thesis the focus remains mainly on professional aspects of identity. Note that future uses of the term identity refer to 'professional identity', unless otherwise stated.

Identity transformation

The notion of identity transformation might be contested within a poststructuralist perspective. However, I have sought to re-capture this term for the purpose of this study. I would define identity transformation as follows: It is when an individual's dominant identity (or identification) with a particular role or profession has changed such that previous roles or identities are subsumed (or rejected) as the new discourse of self is expressed.

Reflection

Reflection is a term that is widely used within education but is a term that has become weakened and devalued. In this study the term reflection is used in a specific way in relation to the telling of a professional life history narrative.

> If we look in a mirror or shiny surface we see ourselves reflected. The clarity with which we discern ourselves depends on the accuracy and clarity of that surface. I consider that in telling your professional story you create a framework for viewing and reviewing your professional self and in doing so you might know yourself more clearly or more deeply.

As Kelchtermans (2007) would suggest '[o]ne's self-understanding only appears in the act of 'telling' (or in the act of explicit self-reflection and as such 'telling oneself')' (p. 100).

Narrative

In simple terms, narrative is 'telling a story'. Within this study narrative has two functions: as a means and a method. As the *means*, I believe that in telling their story participants might engage in a process of 'knowing oneself' and in so doing might reveal something of their sense of self or 'identity'. As Benwell and Stokoe (2006) suggest 'it is in narrative tellings that we construct identities: selves are made coherent and meaningful through the narrative or 'biographical' work that they do' (p. 42). Narrative is also the *method* that I adopted for this study, recognising the particular potential of narrative approaches to reveal (and obscure) identity. As the researcher, I consider that it is in the narrative text that I might gain some insight into participants' perceptions of their professional self.

However, within a poststructuralist paradigm it would always be considered that the self knowing or identity might be fleeting or shifting or obscured and that we might hold 'a variety of narrative identities' (Murray, 2003, p. 116); such considerations would be reflected in my approach to the narrative events.

Life history

I have sought to use and adapt life history method and develop it as a means for collecting evidence of identity within my study. I am therefore distinguishing the Professional Life History (PLH) method adopted in this study from the pre-existing genre of Life History Method (for example see Atkinson, 1998; Goodson, 1992, Goodson, 2005). In particular I have focused on using the preparation of a professional life timeline as a structure for 'telling the story' without the need for external prompting and on the incorporation of prospective reflection by asking participants to consider their possible future trajectories.

Setting the Context for this Study

The Context

There are two contexts that are important to this study, that of Reading Recovery and Initial Teacher Education (ITE).

Reading Recovery has been operating in England for over twenty years, based at the Institute of Education (IOE). It is a literacy intervention programme for children at risk of reading failure, developed by Marie Clay during the 1980s in New Zealand. Reading Recovery is a model that is predicated on the development of expert teachers who are able to provide daily intervention for children aged about six; this enables them to make improved progress in around 12-20 weeks in order to read at age-related expectations. The model has three tiers of professional learning: the professional development programme for Reading Recovery teachers who attend fortnightly sessions in their first year of training, which are led by Reading Recovery Teacher Leaders (RRTLs); the one year full time professional development programme for RRTLs led by Reading Recovery Trainers; and the one year full time professional development programme for Reading Recovery trainers who will work as leaders and

coordinators of Reading Recovery, employed by the IOE and currently part-funded by the government.

The context for ITE in England has been changing significantly over the last few years. There are primarily three routes to achieving Qualified Teacher Status (QTS): a three or four-year undergraduate degree in Education with QTS attached; a one year post graduate training (PGCE), both of which are based at a university or other Higher Education Institution (HEI); and a school-based one-year training route (either the Graduate Teaching Programme or latterly the Schools Direct programme and Teach First) which is based in school but supported by an HEI. The majority of these programmes are taught by lecturers who were experienced teachers and took up positions within a university. The routes into such roles are varied but might entail teachers working closely with a university, initially as school-based teacher mentors or through engaging with academic study at a university to obtain masters or doctoral degrees. Initial Teacher Educators rarely have any formal preparation for this new role apart from the normal induction processes.

The People

I will now introduce each of the six participants in this study in order that the reader may have some awareness of each participant, their professional role(s) up to the point of this study and the contexts in which they work. In Chapter Two –Designing the Research, I explain the rationales for the selection of these participants and the way in which they were recruited into the study.

The three Reading Recovery Teacher Leaders in this study all completed their RRTL training year while I was in role as a Reading Recovery Trainer and involved in teaching on their programme. In addition, I supported them through regular visits to their local authority context and observed them teaching children in Reading Recovery and delivering professional development with their Reading Recovery teacher groups.

Rebekah had been working as a RRTL for three years at the time of her Professional Life History (PLH) discussion. Prior to that, she worked as a primary

school teacher and as a specialist dyslexia teacher. She also had previous experience working with teachers.

Jane had been a RRTL for two years. She had worked in two different infant schools where she held some management responsibilities. She then trained as a Reading Recovery teacher before completing her training as a RRTL while on secondment from her school. At the time of the PLH discussion she was working part time as a RRTL and part time as an assistant head teacher.

Joanne was in her first year in role as a RRTL at the time of the PLH discussion. She had worked in a primary school as a class teacher and then had trained as a Reading Recovery teacher. She had been encouraged by her Teacher Leader to apply for the RRTL role in a neighbouring local authority (LA).

I met Elizabeth at a conference for ITE lecturers. We shared an interest in life history method and as Elizabeth had not long completed her Ph. D. she was interested to find out about, and get involved in, my research. Elizabeth had spent many years working in both secondary and primary schools. She then moved into ITE at the university where she studied for her doctorate. She had been in role for approximately two years, but had also taken on a management role within the university in the year leading up to her PLH discussion.

Annie was a colleague of mine. She had worked in ITE within her university for about three years at the time of the PLH discussion. Prior to that, she had some involvement with the university, including working as a supervision tutor. Annie had many years working in secondary and primary schools.

Emily started in ITE at the same time as I did and had been in role for less than a year at the point of the PLH discussion. Emily had a varied career in secondary and primary education and had worked within an LA as a Primary English specialist. She had taken on the lead for Primary English on the Primary PGCE programme.

The Participants' Stories

I now provide brief summaries of the participants' PLH stories in order to support the reader to access the narrative events that are central to this study. However, I recognise that I am at risk of engaging in a process of reification of the stories, counter to my epistemology wherein each story is considered as transient and shaped for a purpose. However, this is not a summary of 'who' they are in their story but of what I have come to know about this person in my analysis processes. I have tried to signpost to the reader the parts of the lives of each participant that they have allowed me to see. In pulling together the threads of the story the reader may find it supports their access to the discussions in the forthcoming chapters.

Rebekah

Rebekah always wanted to be a teacher. She described her struggle through grammar school and office work onto the BA in education where she finally trained as a teacher; 'it felt like I had come home'. She made links between her early experiences as a trainee teacher and her later training as a RRTL. Her teaching career weaved through work in primary schools in two local authorities (LAs), teaching overseas, Teaching English as a Foreign Language, moving into Special Education Needs (SEN) teaching and specialising in Specific Literacy Difficulties (SpLD). However, the RRTL job came up 'out of the blue' and proved to be 'quite a turning point' (Rebekah, 13-08-12, p.xliv). Rebekah noted the dissonance between the language of her SpLD training and that of the RRTL programme. She also described her feeling 'that you are never satisfied' and feeling 'quite self-critical' engendered by the learning process in the RRTL programme (*ibid,* p.xlv). She talked about aspects of her current work as a RRTL in her LA and the challenges faced by the lack of funding at that time. Rebekah then engaged in prospective reflection (discussed in Chapter Four – Reflection) but found this hard as her circumstances were shaped by the financial context within her LA. Rebekah was also careful when engaging in the informed consent process to remove sections from her PLH that might identify herself and others.

Jane

Jane started her story by recalling how she had always wanted to be a teacher but had been told by a teacher at high school that she was 'too shy and too quiet' to be one; however, she was 'determined to prove him wrong'. Jane threaded her story with the theme of 'fate' which led her to the right training college, schools and later job opportunities in Reading Recovery. She trained and worked local to her home and remained in the infant school sector. The transition to her current school was quite important as this school was in special measures with a newly appointed head teacher. She described this as a 'tough journey', 'horrendous at times', but that 'we did it as a team' (Jane, 27-11-12, p.xxviii). She started training as a Reading Recovery teacher and then the opportunity arose to be a RRTL. She described her lack of confidence to go for this new role but applied due to the encouragement of key people. She found the RRTL training experience 'a bit scary at the time' but sought to highlight the value of the 'learning community' that developed (*ibid,* p.xxix). After two years in role the changes in funding meant that she had to go part time as a RRTL but was able to work part time also for her school, from where she was seconded. Jane focused in her prospective reflection on the feeling of being 'torn' between these two roles.

Joanne

Joanne also 'always wanted to be a teacher', but thought that she 'wasn't clever enough to become a teacher' so settled on becoming a nursery nurse. However, at the end of schooling she decided to apply to university 'and see what happens'. She got onto a B.Ed. course and was able to 'fulfil that dream after having all these doubts' (Joanne, 19-07-12, pxxxvii). Her early teaching career was in two primary schools and she took on responsibility for ICT. The opportunity to train as a Reading Recovery teacher arose. Joanne identified a shift in her understanding of teaching and learning in RR, where she 'saw teaching in a completely different way'. It was suggested she applied for a RRTL position, she said 'I can't do that, I'm not good enough', but then 'I'm going to go for it' (*ibid,* p.xxxviii). Getting the job was a real 'boost for [her] confidence'. She found it a bit overwhelming ('can I do this?') but likened the training year to a treadmill where you 'just keep going'. Joanne focused on her feeling of 'finally being an expert in something' and the experience of being asked for advice by schools (*ibid,* p.xl).

This was also a theme that drove her prospective reflection, knowing the opportunities afforded by this sense of expertise.

Elizabeth

Elizabeth constructed her story from the start as being about the significance of 'somebody like me, a working class background, a girl, [where] nobody had been to university before' (Elizabeth, 24-05-12, pviii). She also threaded through her story the dilemma between wanting to study English at university but ending up studying foreign languages, having been advised by her family that 'English is a silly subject' (*ibid*). After completing her degree and PGCE, Elizabeth started teaching French and German at a boys' school. A few years into this role she decided she needed to 'make a significant change'. As she 'had always wanted to do English and to be a primary teacher', she took up an opportunity to work as a teaching assistant in her children's primary school (*ibid, p.ix*). This led to becoming a Year Five teacher and literacy coordinator. The next significant part in her story was when she studied a MA in English at her local university. She loved this course and her focus for her dissertation on reading groups led her to study for a PhD at the same university. When a post to teach on the BA in Education undergraduate programme arose she went for the job and got it. Elizabeth talked about the challenges of her current role, where she had taken on the programme director role temporarily in addition to her role as part of the English team. Her prospective reflection considered the future with these two different roles. She also noted the current uncertainties around funding in Initial Teacher Education. Finally, she revisited her lifetime desire to 'do something with English Literature' perhaps when she retired (*ibid, xvi*).

Annie

Annie's story started with her mother's values about the importance of education as a way out of poverty. Annie struggled in school where she was learning English as her second language. It was the significance of a teacher who supported Annie in learning English that started her thinking about a career in teaching. She completed a Certificate in Education and started teaching French in a secondary school; subsequently becoming the Spanish coordinator. Working part-time

Annie decided she needed to be 'proactive about [her] professional development' and enrolled on a part-time BA English Studies course (Annie, 16-07-12, pii). A move into primary education was not smooth, where Annie 'kept looking back' feeling that she had 'lost my status'. Again it was the influence of someone 'who was very important and influential in my life' that settled her into this change (*ibid,* p.iii). After a few years out of teaching, Annie took up a role as an English as an Additional Language (EAL) advisory teacher. She also studied for a master's degree in Applied Linguistics. Cut backs in the Advisory Service led her to take up a position managing EAL provision in one of the primary schools she was supporting. She also worked as a mentor of student teachers. It was through her work with these student teachers that she took on the management of the exchange programme on the PGCE programme. The following year she taught the Spanish specialism module and some supervision work; finally taking on a full time role as a lecturer within the same institution. For Annie, prospective reflection was not so challenging. She could see her career continuing at the university and linked this to her pursuance of lifelong learning, engendered by her mother.

Emily

Emily set the love of learning as a theme through her story. She linked her passion for English and the humanities to her desire to be a teacher. She completed a joint honours degree in education and geography and took up a post teaching geography in a secondary school. She had a period out of education while she raised her children, but because of her love of learning she decided to complete an MA with the Open University during that time. She returned into teaching at her daughter's primary school and commenced a ten-year period of part time and fixed term teaching jobs. She learned to be flexible during those years. A full time job came up as a literacy consultant with her Local Authority, and later she managed the English team there. She also completed her Doctorate in Education during that period. Due to cuts in funding her role was under threat and she moved into Teacher Education, taking up the English coordinator role. Emily talked in her story about having a 'rucksack' that she carried around, which represented the learning and experiences she drew from, enabling her to take on

differing roles. As she started to engage in prospective reflection, she was drawing from her rucksack of competencies as she considered new roles.

A Framework for this Thesis

In figure 1.2, I have provided an overview of the structure of this thesis. This model is drawing from the 'cabinet of curiosities' metaphor described previously. It is important that the reader understands that this thesis is not considered in a linear way and that the three chapters on identity and identification; reflection; and narrative and storytelling, whilst being included in that sequence for purposes of clarity, are conceived as separate viewing frames on the narrative events of this study and are thus represented in parallel in this overview below. The overview provides a brief summary of each chapter.

The thesis chapters are sequenced as follows: Chapter Two – Designing the Research, presents the methodology for this research. The chapter seeks to outline the research design and how it has been shaped by a poststructuralist approach. It critically examines issues related to such narrative research. It provides an overview of the research process in this study. Chapters Three, Four and Five each provide a theoretical framework for their particular research lens, an analysis of the narrative events through that viewing frame and a discussion of the possible questions and findings to draw from such an analysis. Although these chapters are conceived as parallel discussions, which can inform and infer from each other in an iterative manner, they are included in a particular sequence. Chapter Three - Identity and Identification, comes first as it defines the primary concepts around identity and identification, arguing for identification to be seen as a process by which 'identity work' is engaged in towards a greater sense of self-knowing. The analysis within this chapter considers the evidence of identity and identity transformation contained within the narrative events. The next two chapters build from these focii. Chapter Four –Reflection, then considers the role of reflection in supporting the process of identification. It develops an analytical framework of different types of reflection and applies this to the narrative events. This research lens supports expalanatory insights about the role of reflection in transformative learning and in identity transformation. Chapter Five - Narrative and Storytelling draws on the other two chapters to explore why biographical

approaches are important in supporting identification, identity transformation and reflection. Suggestions as to their effectiveness are explored, including the use of a model that considers the two dimensions of structure/agency and subjectivity/objectivity. There are interlinking themes between the chapters which are considered and developed in each, these are: identification as a process; the use of prospective refection and a consideration of identity transformation. Chapter Six – Retrospective and Prospective Reflection, uses prospective reflection to consider how the conclusions of this thesis might lead to further research or application in the field of teacher professional learning. It also uses prospective reflection to consider my ongoing development as a new researcher.

Figure 1.2 - Thesis Overview

Thesis Overview

1. Introduction – Setting the Context for This Study
The introduction sets out the rationales for taking a poststructuralist perspective to this research. It outlines a metaphor of 'a cabinet of curiosities' which is used to frame the thesis. It also introduces the contexts and participants of the study.

2. Designing the Research
This chapter seeks to outline the research design and how this has been shaped by a poststructuralist approach. It critically examines issues related to use of narrative research. It provides an overview of the research process in this study.

These three chapters are parallel discussion papers that each take an iterative approach between the narrative events and relevant literature through three identified viewing frames. Links are made between these chapters with an emphasis on deconstruction and tentativeness throughout.

3. Identity and Identification
This chapter explores and defines some key concepts in the thesis: identity, identity transformation and identification. It then analyses the narrative events in relation to identity transformation, identity dissonance and identification. It considers ways in which such identity transformation might be supported.

4. Reflection
This chapter considers an alignment between identification and critical self-reflection. It explores how premise reflection is supportive of identity transformation. It seeks to show that the PLH discussions might generate critical thinking and support identity transformation.

5. Narrative and Story telling
This chapter argues that narrative storytelling, and particularly the PLH process using retrospective and prospective reflection, can support identification and identity transformation. The reasons why it can be effective are explored through the use of a model that considers the two dimensions of structure/agency and subjectivity/objectivity.

6. Retrospective and Prospective reflection
The thesis concludes with prospective reflection on how this research might develop further. It suggests ways in which aspects of this research might be applied within the field of teacher education and considerations of professional identity.

Chapter Two – Designing the Research

This chapter outlines the theoretical context from which I derived and developed my research design and methodology. My methodological identity is aligned with a grounded theory approach and narrative inquiry method. This chapter focuses on the methods of life history and narrative research and the ethics of insider research. After considering the issues related to designing research within this field I discuss the particular ethical issues that are relevant to the professional life history (PLH) approach developed for this study. I then provide a descriptive account of this research's design and method, including two worked examples showing the way in which a grounded theory approach was applied.

Towards a Research Design

This section traces the journey I took towards designing my research study in order to achieve its intended goals, as outlined in Chapter One – Setting the context for the thesis. First, I identify a series of propositional statements, drawn from my thesis goals, which shaped the research design. Next, I align my methodological identity with a grounded theory approach, and consider its alignment to a poststructuralist stance. Finally, I describe the journey I took in adopting life history method and developing it for the goals of this study.

Defining Propositional Statements for the Research

As stated in Chapter One, my research goals are as follows:

- to understand professional transitions for education professionals moving from being a teacher to a teacher educator;

- to understand how professional identity changes or transforms as such transitions are made;

- to consider ways in which education professionals might be supported during times of transition.

Bryman (2005), in his critique of the role of the research question in social theory, suggests that:

> The notion that research questions are central to social research and that considerations of data collection and analysis are subservient to them - is not as widely held as might be expected from its frequent use in textbooks. (p18)

Whilst recognising that any research should have clear purposes and goals, through which the research is seen to be worthwhile, I argue that from a poststructuralist perspective the use of research questions might close in the focus of the research and constrain thinking along linear or positivist perspectives. I was intrigued by the work of Atkinson (2004) who suggested the use of 'propositional statements' to construct the research design; would this be more effective in creating a reflective process in the analysis and discussion of the narrative events? I derived these propositional statements and have found them to be effective in driving my study forward:

Propositional Statements

1. That the transition between different professional roles might be associated with indicators of changing identity which are evident in the narrative events.

2. That the process of reflection engaged during the narrative events, and subsequently, is transformative in nature, with potential to support identity transformation.

3. That the engagement with narrative approaches, including the use of prospective reflection, is supportive for participants in terms of self-knowing.

4. That there will be many things that are obscured or silent within the narrative events, and that my role as researcher is to consider and uncover possibilities, alternatives and hindrances, and to be open to the ways in which my meaning perspectives shape and influence any conclusions reached.

Obviously the danger of such propositional statements is that: firstly, they might constrain the researcher by limiting thinking to these areas, where other conclusions that might be made within the research process are ignored or

overlooked; and secondly, that the emphasis might be on seeking to prove the statements from the evidence, again overlooking evidence that might be contrary to this. However, I consider that by taking an openly critical stance towards the narrative events in this study; by uncovering and confronting the potential bias I might have in my analysis; and by including the narrative events in their entirety alongside the report, I might offset this danger, as suggested by the fourth propositional statement.

Methodological Identity

Bryman (2005 citing Gorard et al, 2004) adopts a notion of methodological identity that drives the choice of research method. In this section I shall consider my methodological identity in this study, within a poststructuralist paradigm, and suggest that there is an alignment with grounded theory (particularly as described by Charmaz, 2006). However, I will also seek to deconstruct this position in the light of critiques of grounded theory (such as Thomas and James, 2006).

In the introduction I argued for a poststructuralist approach to my research. This was driven by my awareness of the subjectivities of analysing narrative life history events and the ethical duty towards the participants who shared their stories. I consider that poststructuralism is an epistemological position towards viewing knowledge that sees nothing as fixed or certain. Other poststructuralist researchers, on which I have modelled my practice (for example Atkinson, 2000; MacLure, 1996), have used similar narrative or biographical 'data' but have avoided using traditional qualitative methods. Likewise, I have explored a range of approaches in analysing the narrative events conducted in this study and have sought to take a critical stance towards the patterns emerging and to question both the approaches and the conclusions suggested from my analysis.

In the preparations for the thesis stage of my doctoral studies I explored grounded theory as a methodology for my research. There are strong areas of resonance between a grounded theory approach and a poststructuralist perspective, particularly in the work of Charmaz (2006), where grounded theory is regarded as 'a set of principles and practices, not as prescriptions and packages' (p9). And if, like Charmaz, an approach is taken that 'explicitly assumes that any theoretical

rendering offers an *interpretive* portrayal of the studied world, not an exact picture of it' (ibid, p10) then that aligns with my position. Grounded theory supports my research goals 'to understand'; where I consider that this understanding would be derived from, or grounded in, the narrative events in this study. Glaser and Strauss identify their underlying criteria for a completed grounded theory study as follows: 'a close fit with data, usefulness, conceptual density, durability over time, modifiability, and explanatory power' (1967, in Charmaz, 2006). This would also be my intention within the research process.

The main tenet of grounded theory is that the researcher 'construct[s] theories 'grounded' in the data themselves' (Charmaz, 2006, p. 2), and that 'grounded theorists start with data' (ibid p. 3). As the 'cabinet maker' or curator, within the metaphor of a cabinet of curiosities (see Chapter One – Setting the context for the thesis), I recognise that my role is significant in shaping the research and this is where I question the extent to which I can purport to adopt grounded theory as my methodology. Firstly, I know that in my analysis of the narrative events often my viewing frame for looking is shaped by the readings and 'theories' that I have started to develop. If I am looking for something particular within the narrative events, such as evidence of identity, can I consider myself to be doing grounded theory? Indeed, can analysis that is 'grounded *in* theory' be considered 'grounded theory'? Thomas and James (2006) pose this question: '[h]ow are grounded theorists to quarantine themselves, as social selves, from the data they are analysing and re-analysing to enable 'theory' to emerge? And how can they transcend this and move outside it to stand on neutral 'ground'?' (p. 781). In addition, I would be making false claims if I were to deny that the years of reading academic literature in the field as part of my doctoral studies, and the 'theories' developed as I worked through previous research studies, have not influenced the way in which I look at the narrative events. Moreover, the concept of the 'cabinet of curiosities' conveys the idea that my viewing frames have been shaped by my developing theory and that another person viewing these narrative events would have a different perspective and viewing frame fashioned by their own interests and philosophy. So how can I claim to adopt a grounded theory approach if I acknowledge that I approach the narrative events with some 'theories' in mind? However, I argue that in relation to my analysis of identity for

Chapter Three - Identity and Identification, I sought to start with the narrative events, but perhaps with a focus for looking, and that I utilised some of the methods of a grounded theory approach. I considered that the analytical processes of grounded theory (particularly those of coding and classifying) would enable me to identify 'indicators of identity transformation' which was the intention of my first propositional statement. In Chapter Four - Reflection and Chapter Five - Narrative and Storytelling, I used a more interpretive approach where I built a theoretical lens (referred to as a research lens in relation to this study) which I applied to the narrative events. This approach is best explained through the metaphor of a cabinet of curiosities, where the research lens becomes a viewing frame for the analysis of the narrative events, with any 'theories' derived through an inductive process. Later in this chapter I provide two worked examples to show these two contrasting approaches.

The particular value of grounded theory is that it seeks to recognise the subjectivity of the researcher within the study. Birks and Mills (2011) suggest that 'your methodological position dictates if you consider yourself an objective instrument of data collection *from* participants, or a subjective active participant in data generation *with* participants' (p52). Charmaz (2006) would align subjectivity with a constructivist view of grounded theory where the 'bottom-up approach gives grounded theory its strength. The subjectivity of the observer provides a way of viewing.' (p139) This view sees the socially constructed nature of not only the discussion but also the meaning making process in data analysis and theory generation. Clandinin *et al.* (2010) in their notion of 'relational inquiry' assert that 'inquirers are always in an inquiry relationship with participants' lives. We cannot subtract ourselves from the relationship' (Clandinin, Pushor and Orr, 2007, p. 23) Acknowledging the subjectivity of the research is in accord with interpretive definitions of theory (compared with positivist definitions) which 'allow for indeterminacy rather than seeking causality and give priority to showing patterns and connections rather than linear reasoning.' (Charmaz, 2006, p126) This perspective, that embraces indeterminacy, multiple realities and sees truth as provisional, I sought in this study. Thus I am comfortable to call my approach 'grounded'; in that I work from the narrative events, through a process of inductive

analysis to draw communicable insights and possibly 'theories' that are open to interpretation and critique.

One aspect of traditional research method that I felt uncomfortable with was the use of the term 'data'. This term has a scientific and positivist weight to it that does not really align with a poststructuralist methodological identity. If I were to refer to the collection of PLH discussions and follow up discussions as 'data' then there is an assumption of certainty and truthfulness that I cannot support. I have therefore determined not to use this term but instead have adopted a reference of 'narrative events' as the collective term for the range of evidence that I am drawing from in this research. Although this may appear more cumbersome at times, it more accurately expresses my attitude towards this collection of narrative evidence. Another term that I have avoided using is 'interview'. The derivation of this term would imply an equal exchange of views or perspectives; however, the adopted meaning implies an unequal, formal meeting which would be counter to my epistemology. I have therefore used the term 'discussion' instead of 'interview' when referring to the exchanges that form the basis of the narrative events in this study.

Adopting a Professional Life History Method

In order to achieve the research goal of understanding professional transitions and how identity changes during transitions, I needed to adopt an approach that would enable the collection of evidence that might reveal not only the details of professional transitions but also provide indicators of identity. Early on in my doctoral studies I encountered Life History Method through the work of Goodson and Sikes (2001) and recognised the usefulness of life history methods; as evidenced by Goodson's claim that 'in understanding something so intensely personal as teaching, it is critical we know about the person the teacher is' (Goodson, 1981, in Goodson and Sikes, 2001, p. 57). I consider that Life History provides the means for such 'knowing'. I read other works within the life history genre (Kelchtermans, 1993; Knowles, 1993; MacLure, 1993; Nias, 1989; Sikes, 1997) and became more convinced of its appropriateness for explorations of teacher identity; as Atkinson (1998) suggests '[t]he life story narrative may be the most effective means for gaining an understanding of how the self evolves over

time or at least in seeing the subjective perspective of that.' (p11) In seeking further understanding of life history method I found Robert Atkinson's book (1998) 'The Life Story Interview' to be particularly informative, alongside the work of Goodson and Sikes (*op cit*). Atkinson makes clear that 'there is very little difference between a life story and a life history. They are usually different terms for the same thing.' (p8) But he does suggest that a life story is of the whole life, whereas a life history might focus on a specific aspect of a person's life. The focus of the method he advocates is on creating stories that are as close as possible to the words used by the story teller and that are a stream of consciousness with very little editing by the interviewer. He also recognises that the story construction is a collaborative process between the participant and the 'interviewer'. This is what I aimed to achieve in the method that I adapted for this study. Life history narratives could evidence the first propositional statement: 'that the transition between different professional roles might be associated with indicators of changing identity which are evident in the narrative events'. However, I was aware of the distinction between what I considered the personal and professional life. Early on in my research I recognised that the sharing of personal lives might be more emotionally demanding for participants (and me within the discussion process) and that there were ethical implications in seeking such personal stories (to be discussed later in this chapter). I therefore sought to engage what I termed a 'Professional Life History' (PLH) where the sharing of personal information was very much at the discretion of the story teller.

I used life history method in my pilot study for Methods of Enquiry Two, a module on my taught doctorate. From that study of two teachers' professional life histories I could see that these narrative events were very effective for an exploration of professional identity. However, I also had some criticisms of the life history method that I sought to address in future research:

Firstly, I found that the telling of a PLH was strongly retrospective in nature and, where I was particularly interested in current professional transitions (see section on 'rationales for this research' in Chapter One – Setting the context for the thesis), the narrative events did not help in evidencing identity change within the present or most recent period of time. I needed to find ways to activate

prospective as well as retrospective reflection, by asking participants to project into their future professional life, making predictions about where they might be, and what they might be doing, in the short or longer term. My expectation was that the use of prospective reflection might provide indicators of identity and identity change at points of transition, as intended by my research goals. (See Chapter Four – Reflection, for a more detailed conceptualisation of prospective reflection.)

Secondly, I could see that as well as being a means by which we could gather stories relevant to teachers' lives and their identities, there also might be a benefit to the participant themselves in telling their story. This is not a new idea; Atkinson (1998) says that 'telling a life story the way one sees it can be one of the most emphatic answers to the question, "Who am I?"' (p 12) Benwell and Stokoe (2006) quote Cortazzi (2001) who suggests that 'through life stories individuals and groups make sense of themselves; they tell what they are or what they wish to be, as they tell so they become, they are their stories.' (p 138) However, the focus on life history method has been on the usefulness of narrative 'data'. The value of telling a story has not been the subject of the research. Thus my third propositional statement 'that the engagement with narrative approaches, including the use of prospective reflection, is supportive for participants in terms of self-knowing' seeks to explore such a relationship. Although I did not want this to be the main concern of my research, I do seek to provide evidence that shows how the participants in this study valued the PLH process (see chapter Five – Narrative and Storytelling).

Thirdly, the construction of a life history as utilised by life historians, such as Goodson and Sikes (2001), is quite a prescribed and lengthy process. There is an expectation that the interview is re-written/re-presented into a biographical (or autobiographical) account. This demands two stages: the interview transcription and the re-construction into a narrative account. This account may be verified and/or amended by the participant. As well as being a lengthy process such reifications of the narrative process may not be in alignment with a poststructuralist position, nor with my intention to capture the words of the participants as indicators of their professional identity in relation to the first

propositional statement. If identity is constantly changing and is only known in the story told at any particular point in time, then by re-writing the story into a biographical text does this reifying process actually deny the fluid nature of a changing identity? I sought to adapt and simplify the process, more in alignment with Atkinson's (2004) recommended approach, where the story would be transcribed as closely as possible to the original telling but with some editing to achieve Atkinson's guidelines of 'clarity, completeness and conciseness'. The participant would also have the opportunity to review the transcript and add to or amend to ensure that they were content with the final version. (See following ethics section for more detail on this.)

Finally, I needed to consider the role of myself within the construction of the narrative event. I recognised that in order to achieve my research goals the storytelling process needed to be as unhindered as possible. I wanted to develop a method that did not require extensive questioning or prompting by the researcher, as I felt that this might interrupt the flow of the story telling. I therefore developed an approach where the participant would prepare their 'professional life time-line' in advance of the discussion (see Appendix 1 for an example of a participant's timeline). This provides a framework for the participant to use to re-tell their story, thus avoiding the need for too much prompting. This was not a new idea as a similar strategy had been adopted by Paul Conway (2001) in his research, and also suggested by Atkinson (1998). However, I found that the use of the timeline engendered a perspective of the professional life as a linear career, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five – Narrative and Storytelling.

Others looking at the same narrative events will draw different conclusions as they are viewing from their own theoretical position. The viewing frames used in this study related to my interest in the three areas of identity, reflection and narrative; all of which I considered to be evidenced in the narrative events. However, as Atkinson (1998) suggests:

> Interpretations of life stories - the meaning-making process - are usually of
> two kinds: a) Those that are founded on some theoretical basis and b) Those

that emerge from a personal, subjective, or experiential frame of reference.
(p 66)

There are many ways to interpret life histories and these are derived from personal theories and subjectivities. It is my intention that readers of this thesis, whilst recognising the resonance and truthfulness or 'groundedness' of the conclusions I draw, will also be able to see other possibilities and interpretations.

In this section I have discussed the research design in relation to my intended research goals and propositional statements; to show how I have drawn from a poststructuralist epistemology; and to situate my methodological identity with life history approaches and under the influence of grounded theory. I now consider the ethical issues surrounding narrative research design.

Ethical Issues in this Study

The Ethics of Insider Research

The primary issue for myself as the researcher within this doctoral study relates to my role as an 'insider researcher'. The participants within this study were all known to me and were working within the same organisations as I was at that time (apart from Elizabeth). There are clear advantages to such insider research: our involvement as collaborators within the study, as Clandinin *et al.* (2010) emphasise that as 'narrative inquirers…we do not stand outside the lives of participants but see ourselves as part of the phenomenon under study' (p. 82); our knowledge of the contexts and circumstances involved, as Bourdieu (1988) suggests 'our insider knowledge [gives] a feel for the game and the hidden rules (in Drake and Heath, 2008, p. 131) and important information about what organisations are like from an 'insider' perspective (Smyth and Holian, 2008); and indeed that the 'messy nature of [insider] research… can be a great source of rich data' (ibid, p. 35). However, there are complex ethical issues that this insider positioning raises, particularly in consideration of the researcher's relationship to the participants in the study as someone who may have a more senior position or status within the organisation. Goodson and Sikes (2001) caution about doing research in 'your own back yard' (p. 25), both from a position of subjectivity and closeness to the 'data' and from ethical issues in relation to the participants in the

research or to the organisations involved. I would concur with Ravitch and Wirth (2007) in their call for 'collaborative integrity', and suggest that the strategies employed to miniumise ethical issues supported this (see below).

When considering insider research Smyth and Holian (2008) identify three issues that require attention: role duality, pre-understanding and access. All of these are areas of possible subjectivity within the research but may also indicate areas where ethical issues have to be considered.

Firstly, I recognise my role duality within this research where there were potential tensions between my role as a researcher and my role within the organisation(s). I consider that there were power and authority issues for me, particularly in my relationship with the Reading Recovery Teacher Leaders (RRTLs) who agreed to be part of this study. (See Chapter One – Setting the context for the thesis.) As a former Reading Recovery trainer, who was involved in training these RRTLs, I recognised that these participants may have felt a particular pressure to agree to taking part in the research and, whilst I sought to make it clear to them that they were free to say no, they may well have felt some obligation to agree. However, there may also have been a similar sense of obligation from the three participants within the Initial Teacher Education (ITE) sector, two of whom were colleagues of mine.

Secondly, having worked with the three RRTLs for a full, intensive year during their training and for a further one or two year(s) on a less intensive basis, I had a very good understanding of their learning context and also of the particular challenges they faced. This pre-understanding provided me with an experience of the contexts they were describing in their PLH discussions. This subjectivity may have blinded me to some avenues for looking in my analysis of the narrative events or channelled me in certain ways of thinking. For the participants working in ITE I too had a strong affinity to their different working contexts and, to a lesser extent, a pre-understanding of their professional journeys and experiences.

Thirdly, I acknowledge that I had easier access to these participants. Such access was based on my insider relationship with them. In addition, I had access within the organisations for which I worked. As a former Reading Recovery trainer, I had

access to information about RRTLs, to their training progress and to their different regional contexts. My thesis supervisor, who is also a Reading Recovery trainer, had access to information about RRTLs in this study that could be considered confidential. As an employee of my university, to which two of my participants were also employed, I had access to information that might not have been afforded to an external researcher. Even for the participant who was not working so closely with me, I did have a significant understanding of the context within ITE and therefore empathy for some of the challenges she describes. This level of access, whilst providing a greater understanding of the issues being described in the narrative events, has ethical implications in relation to the nature of my knowledge about individuals and organisations. This also influenced my selection of participants for the study, where my work context enabled me to readily identify possible participants.

In her critical analysis of informed consent, Malone (2003) identified some ethical issues which I believe to be very pertinent to the matter of insider research and particularly relevant to this study: *Role and power issues* are obvious in this study. I recognised the potential power that I had over the RRTLs, possibly in affecting their compliance to engage with the study or equally in their decision not to share certain information. *Coercion and resistance* are strong terms and I prefer to think that they did not operate within this study, but I would be naïve in doing so and recognise that though less evident this could have been a factor that influenced the stories told. *Shifting loyalties, shifting roles* – as I moved from my role as a Reading Recovery trainer into ITE at the start of the thesis stage of my doctoral studies, I recognise the impact that this had on my relationship to some of the participants. For the RRTLs it may have helped me to reduce a potential power barrier (although I acknowledge evidence of this still being felt). For those participants in ITE, there were more complex issues around shifting loyalties and roles, partly due to length of time in role and partly due to my changing relationship with them in my workplace over time. *Balancing sensitivity with honest reporting* I acknowledge as a factor in my approach to the discussion and my use of prompts, in my analysis of the narrative events and in my writing of the report. Ethically I felt bound to kerb some of my lines of enquiry or reporting in order to respect the anonymity and personal sensitivities of the participants. I

recognise *the myth of anonymity and confidentiality* within this study. For those individuals working within either institution it might be easy to identify, or guess at, the identity of individual participants through the information shared. For those outside the organisations they might be able to identify the institutions themselves but not the individuals. The question is: to what extent would participants be uncomfortable with having certain information shared or comments made in the final reporting stage? It is in my member-checking process, described below, that I worked to reduce this impact; however, I cannot assure confidentiality or anonymity just through the use of pseudonyms. 'The inevitability of causing harm complicates the myth of informed consent' (Malone, 2003, p. 809). Malone identifies three points in the research process where obligation is likely to come into play:

> During the process of doing the research when we encounter personally subjects of our research; in writing and representing the lives of others; and in thinking about what purposes our research ought to serve in its dissemination. (*op cit*)

I felt an obligation to my participants to protect them from harm at these three points, which impacted my use of questions, my analysis of the narrative events and my choices around reporting. However, there is still a sense of obligation towards this research that may confront my ethical duty towards my participants. And in later stages of wider dissemination of the research, perhaps in future publications and conference presentations, I have an obligation to protect the participants' confidentiality and professionalism.

Strategies employed to minimise ethical issues identified

Ethical approval –

I engaged with the ethical approval process of my university which adheres to the British Educational Research Association guidance. I submitted copies of my informed consent forms and discussion protocols in compliance with this process. However, I recognised that this process has its limitations. Firstly, it is impossible within an open-ended study of this nature to foresee all potential ethical issues. Malone states that 'the inductive, emergent nature of qualitative design precludes

researchers being able to predict where their study might take them' (2003, p. 800). Therefore, the research required an ongoing sensitivity to potential problems for the participants and reactivity to needs as they arise. Secondly, it would appear that this University / BERA ethical process is driven by a more positivist philosophy and might not be as attuned to the possible issues identified within a poststructuralist paradigm.

Informed consent –

I sought informed consent in two ways from my participants: Firstly, I approached them with a face to face discussion of my intended research and the possibility of them becoming a participant in the study. I did this because I wanted to be able to gauge their reactions to this invitation, to be able to respond to any questions they might have and to aim to make it very clear that they had full opportunity to refuse and to withdraw from the study at any point. I sent them a written consent form (see appendix 2) which enabled them to review the details of what they would be asked to do and again they had the opportunity to opt out at that point. I collected a signed form from each participant showing that approval was given. However, I was challenged by Malone's writing where she engaged in deconstructing her consent form, identifying the ways in which the risks of qualitative inquiry might impact on the reality of informed consent. I have also deconstructed my consent form to identify my awareness of the limitations of this 'informed' consent (see appendix 3).

Anonymity and the use of pseudonyms –

Pseudonyms are often employed in qualitative research as a means by which anonymity is provided for participants. I adopted this approach within the study and all of the participants chose a name by which they would be referred. I started to use these new names from the first transcripts so that both the transcripts, analysis documents and later writing would keep them unidentifiable. However, I acknowledge that anonymity can never be assured, particularly if the thesis is read by persons within their institutions. I therefore consider that it is even more important to use the two processes of member checking and sensitive reporting that I outline next.

Member checking –

This is one way in which I feel more confident that I have sought to address the ethical issues of this study. I did this at two points: Initially, I asked the participants to read through the transcripts of their discussions and to make any changes to content that they felt uncomfortable with. Most of the participants made few changes, perhaps to wording or to add in some information that they felt they had omitted. One participant asked to remove a piece of personal information that she did not want included in the study, to which I complied. Later, once the full draft thesis was completed I asked the participants to read it through and identify any content that they felt uncomfortable with. As the thesis was very lengthy I suggested that they might use the 'find' tool to locate places where their pseudonym was mentioned and check information written about them at that point. Again I made changes according to their wishes. This point of member checking was at a greater risk to myself as the researcher, whereby some aspects of my analysis of the narrative events might have been sacrificed in my pursuance of what I perceived to be ethical imperatives towards the participants.

Sensitive reporting –

Sensitive reporting is something that I consciously sought to do in my writing. I considered that I could have an awareness of how the participants might perceive the way in which information from their discussions was analysed and portrayed. I based this on Malone's 'Golden Rule' - 'never to take actions upon others that we would not be satisfied to have taken upon us' (2003, p. 812). I believed that, even if I have something important to say, if it compromised the integrity of one of the participants I should leave it unsaid. This I consider has been partly affirmed in the member checking process.

A Description of the Research Process

I now provide a short account of the research process used in this study. I do this in the interests of openness and to convey a sense of trustworthiness in my research methods.

Selection of participants

One of the rationales of the research design (see Chapter One – Setting the context for the thesis) was to contrast teachers moving into teacher education across two different contexts, that of Initial Teacher Education (where teacher educators are engaged with training student teachers either on a one-year PGCE programme or three year degree in Education) and of Reading Recovery (where Teacher Leaders are involved in providing a yearlong professional course for Reading Recovery teachers, who are already experienced teachers). My selection of these two contexts was partly an issue of convenience, where I had access to both contexts through my current and previous roles. In addition, I selected these two contexts because I was interested in whether the difference in preparation of qualified teachers to enter these two comparable roles may have an impact on their development of identity in their new role. Reading Recovery Teacher Leaders (RRTLs) engage in a yearlong Masters level course of preparation and training contrasting with ITE's expectation that teacher educators can move straight into role. (See also context section of Chapter One – Setting the context for the thesis.)

In my thesis proposal (Amott, 2011) I decided to identify six to eight participants with three or four from each context. This number was intended to be manageable for a study of this size and was expected to provide sufficient range to begin to identify patterns and themes across the narrative events. (*This is of course an assumption that is possibly at odds with a poststructuralist perspective.*) I decided on a minimum of three participants in each context. A fourth participant might be invited in at a later stage if one participant dropped out or if it was felt that further evidence were required to support my developing theories (as suggested by a grounded theory approach). I also wanted to identify participants who had between one to three years of experience in their new role. This was because I expected the greatest evidence of professional identity transformation to be around that time.

Within the larger group of RRTLs who had been in role between one to three years, I decided to approach participants who I had worked with directly in my role as a Reading Recovery national trainer. I knew these participants well,

having worked with them closely during their year long professional development programme and had continued to have contact with them as they moved into role. I therefore knew that they may feel more comfortable to work with me in this study, but also recognise that there may have been an element of coercion based on my status within the organisation (see discussion in Ethics section above). All three of the RRTLs that I approached agreed to be included in the study: Rebekah, Jane and Joanne (who had been in role for three, two and one year respectively). In relation to the selection of participants within ITE, again within the parameters of having been between one to three years in role, I identified two participants who I knew well and worked alongside within my organisation. I considered that their knowledge of me as a colleague would support the trust relationship that needed to be established within PLH process. As my relationship to these participants was on a more equal basis the issues related to power might not be so concerning. However, the claim for anonymity within my research may be more likely compromised for these participants. For the final ITE participant selected, I had more of an 'outsider' positioning, having no knowledge of her organisation. This participant became known to me through a networking opportunity. We identified a joint interest with Life History method and as a result I saw the opportunity to invite her to become my third ITE participant. The participants in ITE, who consented to be in the study, were Annie (who had been in a full time role for about three years), Emily (who had started in role that year) and Elizabeth (who had been in role for about two years).

Once I had identified the participants for the study I first approached each participant in person to discuss with them my research proposal and invitation. I then emailed them a copy of the consent form and arranged a date for the PLH discussion between May and August 2012.

I recognise that all participants were female, Caucasian and drawn from a similar classed background. This is the nature of a large proportion of teacher educators and related to my use of a 'convenience sample'. Such a selection therefore eliminated any consideration of identity in relation to these differences.

Professional Life History Discussion

Prior to conducting the PLH discussions I sent the participants information about completing a professional life timeline in advance of the discussion. I also asked the participant to project into the future on their timeline, suggesting that they might consider different options open to them at that point. I sent them an example of my own timeline for reference (see appendix 4 for the example used). Although I realised this might constrain their ideas about what the timeline might look like I felt it would make them feel more comfortable to do this activity in advance of the discussion, particularly as in doing so they had access to information about my own professional life. (See appendix 1 for an example of a participant's timeline.) All participants did come to the discussion with their timeline prepared and felt able to use this as a structure to support the telling of their Professional Life History (PLH). I asked the participants to identify the venue for the discussion as I wanted this to be somewhere they felt they could be more at ease.

During the discussion I asked the participant to tell their PLH using the timeline. I kept interruptions to a minimum during this telling, apart from giving encouraging comments and verbal feedback. With a few participants there were points where I asked a question for clarification about something that had been said (these questions are included in the transcripts of the narrative events; see Appendix 14 - Discussions 1-6 p. i-xlvi). Often when the participant got to the present day in their narrative retelling they stopped before talking about their prospective reflection. At this point I asked questions to prompt them to add more details about their transition into Teacher Education. I then prompted them to talk about where they might see themselves in the future. After they had completed this narration of their professional life I asked them if there was anything else they wanted to add.

All discussions were taped using a digital recorder and lasted between 30-45 minutes. I also kept a few notes of key ideas and events as they spoke, but tried to keep this to a minimum to avoid distraction. Unfortunately, during Emily's PLH discussion the recording stopped prematurely so the prospective reflection section of the discussion was not recorded, apart from my notes.

I aimed to transcribe the discussions within a few weeks of the events. I used the Windows speech recognition tool. As I listened to the discussion phrase by phrase, I repeated it back using the software and this was translated into text. I made any changes to the text as I went along. I did not transcribe pauses, repetitions or non-verbal sounds. I would rewind sections of the recording and check the text to ensure that the coherence of meaning was retained, as far as possible. I then re-read the transcript a few times making some changes to enable the text to flow and to remove any identifiers. Once ready I sent a copy of the transcription to the participant for checking, inviting them to make any changes that they wished. I have included all transcriptions in the appendices in order that the reader may have full access to the body of narrative events used in this research.

Follow Up Discussion

I took time to construct my follow up discussion design and prompts carefully with the support of my supervisor. I recognised that this was going to be a very important aspect of the research process and I did not want to miss out on the opportunity this afforded. However, I also recognised a dissonance between the use of a semi-structured interview and my poststructuralist leanings. I sent the participant an email inviting them to engage in the follow up discussion and framed this around two sections as below (as shared with the participants):

1. Your experience of telling your professional life history. Can you explore the process including: constructing your timeline, telling your story in the interview, reading your transcript? Is there anything you would like to feedback to me about aspects of this process?

2. Some time has passed since your interview. Could you re-read your story and consider if there would be any aspects of it you might tell differently. (I attach a copy of your story for this purpose.)

(Please also see Appendix 5 for the prompts I had prepared to support the discussion process.)

In order to minimise the time and disruption of completing the discussion, for myself and the participant, I arranged in four out of the six cases to conduct the discussion over the phone. The discussions took place during March and April of 2013. I framed the conversation for the participant reminding them of the two sections to be discussed. I used some of the prompts I had prepared, but also used other questions where necessary to encourage the participant to share their thoughts in relation to each aspect. After the first discussion with Elizabeth I trialled with Rebekah changing the order of the sections but found that this was not so effective, so for the other four discussions I used the same pattern as above. I used the same process of note making and transcribing as before. I also included in these transcripts all of my questions as I felt these were an important part of the narrative event. (The transcripts of these follow up discussions are included in Appendix 14 – Discussions 7-12 p.xlvii-lxxii)

Analysis of the Narrative Events

Using the metaphor of a 'cabinet of curiosities' as a theoretical framework and the propositional statements listed earlier in this chapter, I sought to re-engage with the narrative events through different 'viewing frames': identity and identification; the role of reflection, including retrospective and prospective reflection; narrative and telling stories. In Section Three 'A Cabinet of Curiosities' of Chapter One – Setting the context for the thesis, I describe the development of these three viewing frames through the stages of my doctoral studies. I considered that each viewing frame would provide differing but interrelated insights in order to achieve my research goals: understanding professional transitions, how professional identity changes through such transitions and ways in which such transitions might be supported.

The draft chapters were constructed after each viewing frame was applied allowing successive analyses of the narrative events in an iterative process, similar to that of grounded theory, where ideas or 'theories' could be explored and expanded. This took place over an extended period, with initial analysis starting in the Spring of 2012, whilst the analyses reported in Chapter Four - Reflection, were not completed until the end of 2013.

Two Worked Examples

I now present two worked examples of my analysis process in relation to the narrative events. My purpose in doing so is to show trustworthiness in my research process. Although I recognise that judgement of trustworthiness is subjective to myself as the researcher and to the reader, I hope to demonstrate openness in revealing the analytical processes used and critiqued in a manner congruent with my fourth propositional statement: 'That there will be many things that are obscured or silent within the narrative events, and that my role as researcher is to consider and uncover possibilities, alternatives and hindrances, and to be open to the ways in which my meaning perspectives shape and influence any conclusions reached'.

I chose these two examples to present as they contrast in relation to the way that the narrative events were analysed through the application of the different viewing frames. The first example is my analysis, using a grounded theory approach, from which Chapter Three – Identity and Identification was derived. In this example I explored the narrative events through the viewing frame of identity. The second example is my analysis which formed the basis of Chapter Four - Reflection. This took a contrasting approach where I used an interpretive analytical process, applying *a priori* codes of two types of reflection, derived from theory, as a research lens on the narrative events.

Analysis of Identification

This was the first analysis of the narrative events conducted in this research and was intended to address my first propositional statement: 'that the transition between different professional roles might be associated with indicators of changing identity which are evident in the narrative events'. The analysis of identity took place in four stages which align with the stages advocated by grounded theory analysis (initial coding, focused coding, axial coding and theoretical coding, Charmaz, 2006). *Although this process was more intuitive in nature rather than seeking to follow a scripted grounded theory process.*

1. Initial analysis of hard copies of the narrative events –

In this initial stage margin notes were made as I read through the transcripts. I was looking for words or phrases that I considered to be of significance to this research focus of identity. These statements might be expressions of identity, references to significant events or people (if they were mentioned I considered them to be significant to the participant so therefore noted them) and expressions of feeling. I underlined such statements and then assigned a label to each either using the *in vivo* statement e.g. 'someone like me' if I felt this was important, or a word or phrase that I felt encapsulated the statement e.g. 'responsibility', 'primary teaching', 'had children'. At this stage I was immersing myself in the narrative text for each PLH and gaining a better understanding of the story, the person reflected in the story and the coherence within it.

2. Analysis of narrative events using NVivo 9 –

Having completed an initial analysis of the hard copies I then needed the analysis functions of a software package such as QRS NVivo 9© in order to sort and categorise my coding from which I could derive more focus coding. I started to code the PLH transcripts using this software. Having established my familiarity with the narrative events, and begun to see patterns emerging in an analysis of identity within these texts, I felt able to start to apply codes that were more 'directed, selective and conceptual' (Charmaz, 2006, p57). I worked through each transcript phrase by phrase establishing 'nodes' (in the language of this software package) for each word or phrase that I considered to be significant to my developing theories. Sometimes a section in the text might be labelled or coded in more than one way. As I worked with this software I started to generate a consistency in my coding, trying to use the same node labels, clustering and re-naming labels where appropriate. Sometimes I re-labelled a node to make it more cogent to the concept I was beginning to identify. At this stage certain key themes were emerging and certain nodes were used more extensively.

3. Categorising codes using NVivo functions -

This next stage in my analysis of identity could be considered to be axial coding; which is the process of relating categories to sub-categories or 'building a dense

texture of relationships around the 'axis' of a category' (Strauss, 1987, in Charmaz, 2006). Having completed the above analysis for all six PLH discussion texts, I then worked at seeking relationships between nodes. Where I found that I had two different nodes that were meaning similar things I linked them together as a parent node e.g. the parent node 'telling the story' included these other nodes: 'looking back', 'lost something', 'relevance to you', because these items all actually referred to a perception of communicating the story to me as the interviewer.

I then set up folders in which I could group certain nodes together. These folders were sites where I could collect several nodes that I felt related to the same theme. The themes were also indicative of the theoretical understanding that I was developing. (I also set up a folder for each participant, as I wanted somewhere to locate nodes that just related to an individual.) The main folders were: Circumstances that influence; people who influence; roles in education and training and qualifications. Thus I had these four main folders plus a list of nodes which were not categorised but that were also pertinent to my developing understanding of identity and identity transformation. See Appendix 6 for a table showing these categories and the list of nodes contained within each. Please note that not all of these nodes and categories related to identity but were used to inform other topics and chapters also.

4. Analysis of identity as a teacher educator and as an expert –

From this categorisation process I could see that although the evidence of 'identity as a teacher educator' was more tentative within the PLH discussions, there was another body of evidence of 'identity as an expert'. I wanted to analyse these two categories in more detail. Using the tools in NVivo I pulled together all references to these two nodes and printed off hard copies. I then started to apply what might be considered to be 'theoretical coding' as another layer of analysis using just these references and looking for what I considered to be the 'key indicators of identity' in each of these areas. I was then able to formulate a list of the key indicators of each type of identity that were noticeable across the PLH discussions (see appendix 7). I used this analysis as a basis for the discussion in Chapter Three – Identity and Identification.

Analysis of Reflection

In Chapter Four - Reflection, I explain in detail how the interpretive framework, consisting of two *a priori* codes of reflection (critical self-reflection and premise reflection), was established as a 'research lens' for the analysis of the narrative events in relation to the theme of reflection. In this worked example I describe the process I applied in order to demonstrate its trustworthiness and the way in which it supported my second propositional statement: 'that the process of reflection engaged in during the narrative events, and subsequently, is transformative in nature, with potential to support identity transformation'.

My focus in this analysis was firstly to identify instances of reflection and secondly to consider whether these instances were transformative in nature, particularly in relation to identity transformation. If the frame for viewing in relation to this analysis was that or reflection, then this analysis consisted of two 'research lenses' (see discussion of this in Chapter One – Setting the context for the thesis) that of critical self-reflection (CSR) and premise reflection. Both of these categories of reflection were derived from theory (Brookfield, 1995; Mezirow, 1991; Mezirow, 1994) and were selected as my premise was that they would be most likely to be associated with the processes of identification and identity transformation (introduced in Chapter Three – Identity and Identification). This worked example describes the analysis for CSR alone. The idea of using a research lens in this way precluded this being considered a grounded theory approach; however, I considered that the analysis was conducted in an iterative manner supporting conclusions that were induced from the findings.

1. Analysis in relation to critical self-reflection -

The first stage of the analysis was to re-read each of the narrative events (both the PLH and follow-up discussions) and to identify instances that could be considered to be CSR. Each instance was recorded in a table, either as an *in vivo* statement or a summary statement, which was a short précis of the instance.

The challenge was to identify instances of CSR as distinct from those that were purely descriptive or reflective without criticality. My focus was to not eliminate examples that might be CSR and therefore to include any instances that might

be interpreted as CSR (they could always be removed at a later time as concepts became more 'grounded'). There was much content within the narrative events which was just description of events and facts and thus this analysis helped me to pull together instances of CSR into one document which I could then analyse further. In relation to the cabinet of curiosities metaphor, this is like the curator identifying certain items of particular interest and bringing them to the fore.

2. Focused coding of the collection of instances of critical self-reflection -

I began to apply focused coding to the analysis of critical self-reflection by participant using NVivo 9©, which I started as a new 'project' entitled 'Reflection Analysis'. In the process of selecting instances of CSR I had already started to develop familiarity with the content of these items and had a working hypothesis of what I might be looking for. I worked through the document in a similar manner to that described in the first worked example above. I derived 26 nodes (using the language of NVivo) which related to: the purposes of each instance of reflection, the object of reflection, evidence of identity, or other points that intrigued me, such as fate, confidence, going back, job security, regret (some of these are discussed further in Chapter Four – Reflection).

3. Generating theoretical understanding from the analysis -

I then grouped the nodes into themes that appeared to be linked together. The themes identified each provided insight into the nature of critical self-reflection and the sort of issues reflected upon (see Figure 4.1). These themes formed the basis of the discussion in Chapter Four – Reflection.

Note that other analyses of the triggers of critical self-reflection and of premise reflection were also included in Chapter 4 – Reflection, but these are not described here.

Overview of the writing process

I now provide an overview of the process by which the discussion in this thesis was constructed. Again this is done in the interests of openness and with a view to securing the trustworthiness of this thesis.

The first chapter that I drafted was Chapter Five -Narrative and Story Telling. This was written in the summer of 2013. The purpose of this initial draft was to explore and present to my supervisor an approach to writing my thesis that I considered would situate it within a poststructuralist paradigm. My aim was to create a theoretical context for my research lens related to narrative and storytelling. I then explored the narrative events through the conceptual frame created. I also wanted to demonstrate how I might reflexively consider myself as the researcher within the research process; identifying my influence, bias and contribution to this piece of research (this links to the fourth propositional statement). Although I knew that this chapter might need re-working at a later date it did convince me (and my supervisor) of the effectiveness of the approach I was adopting and that I could proceed with my research along these lines.

I then commenced writing Chapter Three – Identity and Identification. Again I started by setting the theoretical context for this 'viewing frame'. Initially I explored my analyses in relation to indicators of identity. I was then intrigued by the concept of identity dissonance drawing from Warin's work (Warin and Dempster, 2007; Warin *et al.*, 2006; Warin and Muldoon, 2009). This required another approach in my analysis with a focus on identifying examples of what might be considered to be identity dissonance. In this chapter I also started to explore the concept of identity transformation and to seek to exemplify it from my analysis of the narrative events. Finally, I developed an emerging theory around 'identification' as the process engaged in during the telling of a PLH which supported 'self-knowing' and awareness of new or emerging identities, particularly as a teacher educator.

My assumption, as suggested by my second propositional statement, was that reflection was a process active in, and activated by, the telling of the professional life history. In my work for Chapter Four – Reflection, I was seeking to find out more about the nature of identification which was part of my emerging theory. My analysis of the narrative events through the viewing frame of reflection focused on one particular aspect of reflection, that of critical self-reflection (drawing from the work of Brookfield, 1995). I felt that this might be most strongly aligned with my concept of identification. Another layer of analysis that I engaged in related to

Jack Mezirow's (1991) concept of 'premise reflection'. I wanted to know if this type of reflection might be identifiable within the narrative events and whether this could be related to identity transformation; as suggested in the second propositional statement 'That the process of reflection engaged in during the PLH discussion, and subsequently, is transformative in nature, with potential to transform some relevant meaning perspectives'.

Now that all three chapters had been drafted and the three viewing frames applied I then sought to create coherence between these chapters. This involved re-visiting each chapter in turn but also drawing threads between chapters identifying instances of repetition and dissonance and re-working sections to ensure coherence amongst the ideas presented.

Draft thesis and member checking

Within this analytical process I had to consider the involvement of my supervisor. After each analytical stage I met with my supervisor to discuss my thinking in relation to the themes identified and conclusions I was drawing. This critical debate encouraged me to keep returning to my poststructuralist position in this research and to challenge me to question my findings and to maintain a tentative relationship with theory in my discussion. Further iterations of chapters were also discussed in this way.

Finally, once a full draft of the thesis had been prepared I sent this electronically to the participants. I suggested that they might use the 'find' tool to identify sections that made reference to their pseudonym, recognising that they might not have time or interest to read the full thesis.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to justify the use of the Professional Life History research method used in this study. It has critically examined this approach in relation to the ethics of insider research. Finally, it has provided a descriptive account of the processes used in this research in the pursuit of openness for the reader and to create a means by which this research could be judged as 'trustworthy'.

However, as suggested in the section above 'Adopting a Professional Life History Method', I would also ask the question: 'can a method also be a means?' This relates to my third propositional statement: 'that the engagement with narrative approaches, including the use of prospective reflection, is supportive for participants in terms of self-knowing' and is discussed in more detail in Chapter Five – Narrative and Storytelling. My focus in this chapter has been on the use of life history as a method for collecting narrative events that would be fruitful in providing understanding of individuals negotiating professional life transitions and of the possibility of identity transformation within that process. However, I also consider that the PLH process itself may be powerful in supporting self-knowing and, as I go on to argue in the next chapter, is a means by which an individual might engage in 'identification'.

Chapter Three - Identity and Identification

This chapter is shaped around the first viewing frame on the narrative events in this study, that of identity and identification. The focus in this chapter relates to the first propositional statement: 'That the transition between different professional roles might be associated with indicators of changing identity which are evident in the narrative events'. In order to consider this propositional statement, I firstly clarify what I consider to be identity, which is a term with a multiplicity of interpretations. I then analyse the narrative events for indicators of changing identity; highlighting evidence of identity as a teacher educator and also as an 'expert teacher'. In this chapter I discuss and critique the concept of identity transformation, defining it for the purpose of this study. I show how this concept is evidenced by the participants in the study as they talk through their professional life histories. In seeking to explore the ways in which identity transformation might occur I adopt a concept of 'identity dissonance' highlighted in the work of Warin *et al.* (2006) and Warin and Muldoon (2009). Identity dissonance is evidenced in the narrative events as operating on the formation and transformation of professional identity. Finally, in this chapter I introduce the concept of identification as the process by which an individual engages in self-knowing or identity work. I consider the process of identification to be a unique insight gained from this study which shows the way narrative practices such as the Professional Life History (PLH) discussion can be supportive of individuals, particularly at times of transition.

Re-conceptualising Identity

In this section I argue for an ongoing engagement with the concept of identity in which I might eschew popular essentialist definitions of identity and seek to re-define identity as a working concept that is in alignment with my views of self and life history method. I consider this to be an essential concept for my research and one that is still valid within a study of this nature.

Theoretical perspectives on identity

Within a poststructuralist paradigm there might be two key perspectives that shed light onto my view of identity. Firstly, Foucault's writing emphasises identity as an 'effect' of discourse (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006), with a focus on the way in which discourse (or discourses) shapes or 'structures' the individual and their identity; 'stressing the constructed and oppressive dimension of identity' (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006, p. 29). Secondly, in contrast, Judith Butler's view of the performative nature of identity, challenging an essentialist notion of self (*ibid*), might focus on the individual viewed as 'agentively' constructing themselves within the discourse; '[r]ather than being reflected in discourse, identity is actively, ongoingly, dynamically constituted in discourse'. (ibid, p. 4). This tension between 'structure' versus 'agency' is one that I consider to be fundamental to my view of identity, where I might consider both to be operating within discursive practices, and both active in forming and performing identity.

Social perspectives on identity might emphasise a process of identification with a particular group or community of practice (COP) (Wenger, 1998). Identification could relate to 'structure', how the culture of the COP might shape the formation of identity, or 'agency', where the individual seeks to identify themselves with a particular COP. This might be thought of as 'identity work'. Within these perspectives there is a question raised over whether identification with a group, 'I am a this or I am a that' is actually reflective of a person's 'true' identity (*if we could ever consider there is such a thing*) or an 'authentic identity', 'being true to oneself' (Warin and Dempster, 2007). Balls (1972, in Nias, 1989) makes the distinction between the substantial and situational selves; where 'situational selves are developed from interaction with others whilst the substantial self is a core of self-defining beliefs, relatively impervious to change' (Murray and Male, 2005, p. 126). I question whether we could ever really know a substantial self, either as an individual or as a researcher. However, in relation to the stories we tell about ourselves, the notion of a 'substantial self' might be in alignment with Sfard and Prusak's (2010) notions of *actual identity* 'consisting of stories about the actual state of affairs' and the 'situational self' might be aligned with the *designated identity* 'consisting of narratives presenting a state of affairs which,

for one reason or another, is expected to be the case' (p18). These notions imply that an individual might experience an 'identity dissonance' between competing discourses of self (Warin *et al.*, 2006). This is a concept that I draw on in greater depth later in this chapter.

Identity, identification and self

The three terms of identity, identification and self may be used by different theorists to describe the same or similar concepts. The challenge with the term 'identity' is that is often considered to be an entity that a person has, linked to an essentialist notion of 'who I am' from the Romantic period. The post-modern stance would question this perspective and see identity as something fluid, but also emphasise the individual's agency in 'self-improvement' (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006). However, poststructuralist thinkers such as Maggie MacLure (1993) might not reject the term identity but seek to re-define it for their own purposes:

> …identity should not be seen as a stable entity – something that people *have* – but something that they *use*, to justify, explain and make sense of themselves in relation to other people, and to the contexts in which they operate. In other words identity is a form of argument. (MacLure, 1993, p. 312)

Sfard and Prusak (2010) go on to consider that identities are actually the stories that people tell.

> People tell others who they are, but even more importantly, they tell themselves and they try to act as though they are who they say they are. These self-understandings, especially those with strong emotional resonance for the teller, are what we refer to as identities (*ibid* p. 16).

In Chapter One – Setting the context for the thesis, I used the definition of identity coined by Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop (2004) as I felt this most closely represented my own view of identity:

> Identity is not a fixed attribute of a person, but a relational phenomenon. Identity development occurs in an intersubjective field and can be best

characterized as an ongoing process, a process of interpreting oneself as a certain kind of person and being recognized as such in a given context. (p.108)

Identification is a term adopted by Stuart Hall (2000) to emphasise the process of identity formation within discourse. 'The discursive approach sees identification as a construction, a process never completed – always 'in process'' (*ibid*, p16). I have a strong affinity to this concept, as I explore the notion of identity transformation, because if we can consider identity as something that can be 'transformed' then the process by which this might happen might best be described as 'identification'. Atkinson (2001) in her analysis of her own identity in relation to 'boundary dilemmas' also adopts this definition; 'It becomes a representation of identification rather than identity' (Atkinson, 2001, p. 310). This notion of identification is important to this thesis in relation to the 'how' of identity transformation, and will be discussed and exemplified in the latter part of this chapter.

Self is a term that might be used interchangeably with identity; that is having a 'sense of self' or self-awareness. Warin and Muldoon (2009) suggest that 'self-awareness is perhaps best defined as the availability of, or ability to, maintain and expand a rich, differentiated story of self' (p293). Once again note the strong links between story and identity, highlighting the advantage of being able to tell one's story in the process of making sense of our lives. Other writers also show a preference to use the term 'self' particularly in contrast to the notion of 'others'; '[t]he interaction with other people is precisely what defines our subjectivity, because without this moment of otherness we could not talk of recognition and mutuality, but only of re-duplication of the self' (Zembylas, 2003, pp. 223-4). Self implies a reflexive awareness on the part of the individual of their existence, their relationship with others, their environment, their culture and their history. Self is often added as a prefix to other terms: self-awareness, self-knowing, self-understanding, self-image for example. These terms carry a constructivist appeal that a person can know or understand or see themselves more completely or clearly. However, I would always see self as an expression of process rather than product; that perhaps an individual might, through the act of narration, gain further insight about the person that they think they are or are perceived to be. Thus

discovery of self (including self-knowing, self-understanding, self-awareness) is a journey towards, rather than an end point.

In my effort to re-conceptualise identity for the purposes of this study, I am therefore seeking to emphasise a notion of identity that is fluid in nature, constrained or framed by the 'structures' of context and culture as well as 'agentively' shaped and formed, particularly in the act of discourse through a process of identification.

Why is identity important?

Why is identity important to me? I was recently asked in a meeting to consider what I valued most in my work life. After some consideration I realised that I got most satisfaction from my sense of 'being' as a teacher. I had always wanted to be a teacher from a young age and moved straight from school into my education degree, to teaching and then into my current role as a teacher educator. In this career path I was driven by my identity as a teacher, whether as a teacher of children or a 'teacher or teachers'. This was who I was and wanted to be. I felt privileged that I could enact this role which formed such a fundamental part of what gave me value in life. I would call this 'my identity'. This does not mean that I do not have other identities as a mother, a Christian, a home-owner etc., all of which add to my sense of self. But the point I am making is that the concept of identity is important and meaningful to me.

In addition, and linked to the above point, I argue for a focus on 'professional identity' which might value other 'identities' that a person may evidence or espouse, but keeps the focus on the professional role and sense of self formed within that role. This too highlights the professional nature of a career in a field such as education, where the cultural expectations of 'professionalism' exert a greater force towards role identity than perhaps other (non-professional) careers may exert.

However, identity is particularly important at times of transition. Each transition in the professional life of an education professional is significant as it impacts on their professional identity. Transitions might be relatively minor, such as adopting a new curricular framework, or major, such as promotion or changing jobs, or

even career. Each transition, I believe, will re-shape the professional identity in some way. Although, such shifts in identity might not be realised or known by the individual (either at that point in time or in the future).

I can extrapolate the importance of identity to the participants in my study. In telling their professional life histories, and re-constructing their professional careers, my expectation was that they too would either express, or gain, a sense of identity in the process. Indeed, I argue, like Matthew Clarke (2008), for an 'ethical imperative' in transformative identity work; '… if identity is a hard-won effect that has to be claimed, rather than being a pre-given reality, then the creation and recreation of our identities is neither an impossibility nor an indulgence but an ethical imperative' (ibid, p189).

However, this extrapolation is based on an assumption that I have no right to make. I cannot assume that my valuing of my own teacher identity is true for others and this was not something I explicitly discussed in my participant discussions. In addition, although I like the idea of an ethical imperative for individuals to engage in 'identity work' of this nature it is still not something that can be forced upon an individual and I cannot expect them to value it in the same way that I do.

The focus of this viewing frame is to consider: whether identities change or transform through points of transition; the processes by which such transformations occur; and whether there is benefit to the individual in coming to know their changing identity as a result of these processes. The next sections provide evidence from the narrative events, and from relevant literature, in relation to these areas.

Does Identity Change?

This study was designed around the assumption that identity would change as education professionals move from being a teacher to teacher educator. The six participants in this study were selected as they had all recently undergone such a transition. Before analysing the narrative events for evidence of identity change or transformation, I briefly outline what current research says about this transition

because this is an active and relatively new area of research from which relevancies can be derived.

Transitions from teacher to teacher educator – does identity change?

There is a growing body of research that studies the transition from teacher to teacher educator and considers the challenges faced by individuals in this process. Murray and Male (2005) describe this as a transition from being a first-order practitioner (as a school teacher) to a second-order practitioner (as someone who 'teaches teachers'). In this transition there is a unique position of 'being an expert become novice', particularly within the academic culture of 'the university'. As a second-order practitioner the challenge is to re-analyse pedagogy in the light of practices as a teacher educator. The research of Boyd and Harris (2010) claims that new lecturers seek to retain their teacher identity in their striving for credibility with their students; '[o]verall the new lecturers are seeking credibility through knowing and reconstructing their pedagogy, but they pursue this within a complex and confusing context that involves considerable amounts of boundary-crossing and uncertainty' (*ibid*. p21). However, the researchers identify this strategy as problematic, and possibly a barrier, in taking a more critical stance towards their emerging professional identity. McKeon and Harrison (2010b), like Boyd and Harris, draw on the work of Etienne Wenger and his 'community of practice theory' in describing the influence of the social and cultural context in which novice teacher educators find themselves. They describe how identity is shaped by participants in these communities of practice. They also emphasise the tensions of boundary crossing from the 'school' to the 'academy' that may lead to identity dissonance. This concept I will discuss in the next section.

Is there evidence of identity transformation in the Professional Life Histories?

My first propositional statement is 'that the transition between different professional roles might be associated with indicators of changing identity which are evident in the narrative events'. Therefore, using a grounded theory approach, I sought to explore the narrative events for evidence of transition from

teacher to teacher educator through indicators of changing identities or identity transformation. I have explained this process in detail in the first 'worked example' in Chapter Two – Designing the research.

Firstly, I need to point out that there were no clear statements in the professional life histories, or in the follow up discussions, of identity as a teacher educator, by which I mean a participant calling themselves as such. However, in analysing the professional life histories in detail (initially using QSR NVivo 9© software) I was able to identify certain key indicators of their identification with their new role (see also Appendix 7):

Skills (and/or knowledge) –

There were clear statements of the skills they had to be a teacher educator, gained through experience or training and qualifications, e.g. mentoring or Reading Recovery Teacher Leader (RRTL) training. In addition, there were statements where individuals recognised these skills within themselves. Annie recognised that she had gained the skills of coaching and of being a mentor for student teachers, and that this would equip her in her new role. Joanne stated that she had the 'knowledge of working alongside adults and being a leader of adults' (Joanne, 19-07-12, p.xli) as she considered other roles if her current RRTL role were to end. Emily expressed this as her 'rucksack' that she carried around with her, a metaphor she used for her developing skill set that equipped her to take this role (and others).

'Doing it' –

There are expressions in the PLHs of the participants' confidence gained from doing the role, and their ability to engage with different aspects of their role, even if some parts are not so enjoyable. Elizabeth talked about different aspects of her role 'I teach mostly on the BA Ed. undergraduate programme' and 'I found myself as acting programme director' (Elizabeth, 24-05-12, p.xii).

Self belief –

Self-belief is also linked to 'doing it'. It is evidenced in the following ways: a growing confidence, 'feeling natural', enjoying the role, experiencing success in outcomes (for students or pupils), knowing that 'I am good at it', an awareness of aspects of the role that you are good at or not so good at, and a love for the job. Annie commented that 'it felt very natural really' (Annie, 16-07-12, p.v). Rebekah noted her '86% discontinuation rate' demonstrating her feeling of success in the role (Rebekah, 13-08-12, p.xlv).

Future aspirations –

Expressions of future aspirations were also indicators of identity, although often expressed in times of transition where identity became disrupted. Some of the participants made statements expressing their desire to make a difference or bring impact. Jane talked about 'the difference we make in their (the children's) lives… I couldn't ever let that go.' (Jane, 27-11-12, p.xxxvi) For some these aspirations were evident as they discussed applying to jobs in related roles and the skills they were drawing from (see quote from Joanne above). For others this might be expressed in having a sense of choice or an awareness of their own limitations.

Support and independence –

Another area indicating teacher educator identity was evidenced by expressions of the support gained from being part of a team or mutual support provided by colleagues. Elizabeth acknowledged the importance of being part of a team, particularly in the early stages in her new role and how valuable that was. For Joanne, whilst valuing the support of working alongside colleagues in her Reading Recovery training groups, she also expressed a desire of wanting her own training group in the coming year, which I also see as an indicator of her growing identity in this new role.

As I explored the professional life histories looking for indicators of identity as teacher educators, I saw a perhaps stronger identity emerging for the participants; that of 'an expert'. Seeing themselves as an expert in their field

seemed to be quite crucial for these novice teacher educators. Perhaps, whilst the identity as a teacher educator was less well developed, a sense of expertise, as a teacher, subject specialist or Reading Recovery teacher, was supportive for them in their new role and provided sufficient strength of identity to enable them to transition more effectively. This idea might resonate with Boyd and Harris' (2010) notion of novice teacher educators seeking to gain 'credibility' as they move into their new role. Joanne was particularly noticeable as she came to acknowledge her expertise and the satisfaction that she was 'finally an expert in something' (Joanne, 19-07-12, p.xl). This was endorsed for her as she was asked for advice and could support schools. Some of the indicators of 'identity as an expert' were similar to those of Teacher Educators, as described above: evidence of skills and knowledge, self-belief and future aspirations. In addition to these were indicators that supported their credibility as an expert; such as their qualifications, areas of responsibility, and leadership and management roles from their previous contexts. For Rebekah her expertise and qualifications as a Special Educational Needs (SEN) advisory teacher and her role within the SEN Support Services (SENSS) team within her local authority gave her credibility and confidence to manage very uncertain times in her work as a RRTL.

In the discussion above I have a growing uncertainty developing around the conflation of what might be considered identity and what is just related to taking on a new role. Doing a new job and working in that new role is obviously something that is important, as an individual transitions between roles, and that there is a sense in which identification with that new role comes over time. However, I recognise that some of what I perceive as evidence of teacher educator identity might actually be more related to a person moving into a new role; although perhaps this is acknowledged by the 'doing it' category. Or does this reflect the subtle difference between 'identity' and 'identification'?

The above discussion shows that there is evidence in the narrative events of identity as a 'teacher educator' and as 'an expert' for the participants in this study. It is my assumption, partly supported by the PLHs, that this is different to previous identities as a 'teacher'. However, I would note that identity as a teacher may be

subsumed into identity as a teacher educator whereby the individual will still consider themselves to be teachers, but also 'teachers of teachers'.

In this thesis I argue for a notion of identity transformation, and in the next section I consider whether the evidence would support this concept and if so what makes it transformative in nature?

Identity Transformation

I must admit that during the thesis stage of my doctoral studies I have vacillated in my belief that there could be such a thing as 'identity transformation'. In my thesis proposal (Amott, 2011) I adopted this concept uncritically, believing that for the teacher educators in my study there would be a clear sense of identity transformation from teacher to teacher educator. I based this concept on the work of Jack Mezirow (1990; Mezirow, 1991; Mezirow, 1994) and his 'transformative learning theory'. I premised that through critical self-reflection a person's identity might be transformed, often triggered by 'disorientating dilemmas' (1990) or identity dissonance.

Subsequently, I have wondered whether the notion of identity transformation could be justified within a poststructuralist paradigm as transformation suggests an irreversible change from one thing to another. In addition, as you will see from my earlier discussion of the narrative events, it is hard to demonstrate that these novice teacher educators have a new identity as such. It is also difficult to identify clear statements of identity in the professional life histories; although this could be more due to the nature of the narrative process. So why have I sought to argue for identity in this chapter, and why do I now want to justify the notion of identity transformation? I consider that by re-defining identity transformation for the purposes of this study it might be a useful concept that encapsulates some of the ideas I present in a way that other terms would fail to do.

Identity transformation as a concept has been adopted by other writers. Dall'Alba (2009) talks about the transformation of the self and suggests that there is a process of self-transformation in becoming a professional through 'embodying the routines and traditions of the profession in question' (p44). She would also draw the links between this concept and that of Mezirow's work (*op. cit.*) and the

role of 'challenging assumptions'. If there is a clear transformation of self into becoming a professional as a teacher, then does that identity change as we move into a new role such as teacher educator? Is this new role sufficiently distinct and defined in order to require a transformation of identity? This is probably more the line of enquiry I am taking in my definition of identity transformation. Zembylas (2003) also adopts this concept and argues that '[i]dentity transformation occurs when the emotional salience or power of one's experiences changes.' (p229) The power of the emotions in identity work is, I believe, paramount. This emotional capital, which is evidenced throughout these professional life histories, is something that I can also use to justify the notion of identity transformation, rather than just a transition from one role to another. I suggest that this emotional investment is far more evident for the Reading Recovery Teacher Leaders in their passion for Reading Recovery, and for the children whose lives are changed because of it, and is actually where the strongest evidence of identity transformation resides. Etienne Wenger's (1998) concept of trajectory, as an individual moves between communities of practice (COP) and engages in boundary crossing, might also be in alignment with identity transformation. He would emphasise that identity is formed and reformed through the processes of participation and reification.

> Identity exists - not as an object in and of itself - but in the constant work of negotiating the self. It is in the cascading interplay of participation and reification that our experience of life becomes one of identity, and indeed human existence and consciousness. (*ibid,* p151)

His concept of trajectory also emphasises the development of identity within and through engagement with multiple communities of practice, either chronologically or through multiple belongings at any one time. 'As trajectories, our identities incorporate the past and the future in the very process of negotiating the present.' (*ibid,* p155) Wenger further emphasises this point in a recent keynote lecture (Wenger, 2014) with his concept of 'landscapes of practice' where he suggests that there is 'a shift in the burden of identity - from a simple COP towards a complex trajectory through many COP' and recognises this is a result of the 'changing world'. So perhaps identity transformation occurs within this process of participation and reification within a new community. It does not mean that old

identities are lost but they are incorporated into a new identity in that new role. Please see Chapter One – Setting the context for the thesis, in the section 'defining terms used in this thesis', for my definition of Identity Transformation.

Once again I can argue firstly for identity transformation from my own personal experience. I have been working in teacher education for about ten years. Now, if asked about my work, I always refer to myself as a 'teacher educator'. I can readily express an understanding and empathy for school teachers but no longer see myself as such. I can also identify within myself a strong resonance with Reading Recovery and as someone who is passionate about the effective teaching of reading, and in particular supporting children who have reading difficulties. This is evidenced in many aspects of my work, my engagement with student teachers and in other areas of my personal life and activities. So for me I can confidently say that my identity has been transformed from that of a teacher to a teacher educator. I do believe that this has been a long process and one that has probably been embedded and strengthened through critical self-reflection as I have engaged with my doctoral studies. Perhaps for the novice teacher educators in this study, with between one and three years' experience working in their field, there is also an issue of the length of time it takes to experience identity transformation, particularly when the individual experiences much ongoing job insecurity.

I think that for the RRTLs in this study the particular catalyst for identity transformation was their training year to become a Reading Recovery Teacher Leader. Although, as I have said, they might not have fully identified themselves as a RRTL by this point, the intensive and collegiate nature of this training year seemed to be particularly potent in propelling them forward into their new roles and identities. For Joanne she entered the programme feeling 'totally overwhelmed' but with a sense of wanting to challenge herself. Her particular anxiety related to engaging with Masters level studies. It was after receiving positive feedback on her first practice essay that she 'started to feel more in control'. She could see the importance of having an end goal, and indeed of not having an option to quit as she was already employed in this new role, which motivated her through the programme. She likened the year to a 'treadmill' where

'you just keep going and keep going' and highlighted the support of her training group in this process. By the end of the year she felt she had a sense of 'let's get going then', indicating her preparedness to adopt the new professional role (Joanne, 19-07-12, p.xxxix). Jane was conscious of her anxieties around working with adults; 'I felt confident in working with children but actually I didn't feel I had the confidence to lead adults'. She highlighted the importance of the mixture of people in her training group with different strengths and the confidence she gained from this. She also emphasised a particular 'turning point' when she had to plan and lead a session for her group and the feeling of 'I can do it' that her success in this engendered (Jane, 27-11-12, p.xxxii). Perhaps by the end of the year Jane was confident to engage with the processes of adult education, and may, in turn, come to see herself as a teacher educator. Rebekah talked in less detail about her RRTL training. She mentioned the dissonance between her training in dyslexia and the apparent devaluing of that during the RRTL training year. She did however highlight the quality of the detailed training and the skilling that provided. She also noted the emphasis on being self-critical and how that lead to a feeling 'you can't ever feel satisfied', implying this feeling carried over into her future career; 'you don't ever get job satisfaction!' (Rebekah, 13-08-12, p.xlv) These extracts show how the RRTL training impacted a transformation from previously held identities to that of becoming a RRTL, including the associated understandings of adult education and commitment to the cause of supporting children struggling with reading difficulties.

In contrast, the other three participants in this study, as teacher educators working in ITE, did not have the equivalent experience. Their initial transition into the new role seemed to be most impacted by the support of new colleagues. Annie talked about working closely with a particular colleague who 'actually made me believe I could do this'. She was also supported by a gradual transition into the role as she started at the university part-time managing the exchange experience for Modern Foreign Language student teachers. She gradually built her work on the PGCE programme through supervision of students in school, leading a subject specialism and then teaching the Professional Studies sessions. She regretted that she did not get the opportunity to observe other colleagues in those early stages of transition and that this might have been

beneficial (Annie, 16-07-12, p.vi). Elizabeth expressed that her initial time at the university 'felt very lonely' and her feeling of lack of confidence in comparison to other 'eminent academics', perhaps perceiving a lack of credibility with students and colleagues. She highlighted the value of the support of the English team and how this had developed socially over time (Elizabeth, 24-05-12, p.xiv). For Emily, coming into her role in ITE seemed a little less problematic. She had a clear sense of her skill set and the competencies she would bring to the role. She readily undertook an additional English co-ordinator role stating 'I don't mind, it's something that I've done, I can manage things'. She did highlight the value of sharing an office with another new teacher educator and how 'between us we got through our beginnings' (Emily, 06-07-12, p.xxiv). Thus the evidence points towards a preparation for their role in ITE and a resulting sense of identity as a teacher educator.

These themes align with the work of McKeon and Harrison (2010a) in their study of early career teacher educators, where they emphasise the value of career networks and communities in supporting and empowering these individuals. Other conclusions from the literature about what is lacking in support for new teacher educators might highlight: the need for support to develop a more critical stance to their emerging identity (Boyd and Harris, 2010); to be competent users of research (Cochran-Smith, 2005); to develop the teacher researcher role (McGregor *et al.*, 2010); and that '…practicing as a teacher educator demands an engagement in teaching about teaching through the medium of personal pedagogy' (Murray and Male, 2005, p. 137).The RRTL training year through the Masters level programme and the supportive community of practice could be considered to have provided enhanced benefit in all of these identified aspects. Does this therefore imply that identity transformation was stronger for RRTLs as a result of this supportive training year? Does the passion for Reading Recovery, and the ethical imperative of meeting the needs of the most vulnerable children, expressed by the three RRTLs, indicate an identity transformation that goes deeper than just a role, affecting the emotional and ethical drivers at the core of their identity? I would suggest that for these RRTLs their experience of the yearlong training programme might have been particularly supportive of identity transformation as they moved into role as teacher educators. This is in contrast

to the three teacher educators in this study working in ITE. For them the transition had been less well supported, both through a lack of direct preparation for the role and as the particular COP to which they entered was less cohesive and organised. In addition, there is a question about the length of time taken to secure identity transformation from teacher to teacher educator. I noted that this might be a reason for the lack of clear statements of identity as a teacher educator with the participants in this study, who had all worked for three or less years in this new role. I suggest that identity transformation might take longer than this. However, I contrast the strength of identity for the RRTLs and the values and practices derived from Reading Recovery, even after their first year in training, with that of other education professionals. Perhaps experience of this intensive year of preparation for the role, and the induction into the vision and values of Reading Recovery, supported a faster and more secure identity transformation?

The Role of Identity Dissonance in Identity Transformation

Having identified the key indicators of identity as a teacher educator and expert, and then argued from the narrative events for an adoption of the concept of identity transformation, I would now like to move onto a consideration of how identity transformation might occur. I have already highlighted the role of the community of practice (Wenger, 1998) in supporting transitions and acknowledge that this is a significant aspect of support during transitions. However, an additional factor which appears to occur in the narrative events, drawing from the work of Warin *et al* (2006) and later Warin and Muldoon (2009), is that of identity dissonance. I firstly define this concept and then use this as a research lens in analysing the narrative events for evidence of this process in operation and the resulting outcomes.

Warin *et al* (2009) adopt three key premises to their work that resonate with my own perspective:

> Firstly - 'Identity is a sense-making devise, which provides the illusion of consistency ... and performs a vital function in governing our choices and decision-making.' p235

Secondly - 'our narration of self gives us a way of integrating and organizing disparate self-experiences... the challenge of integrating their personal and professional selves.' p236

Thirdly - '... that identity is activated when dissonance occurs.' p236

It is this final point that intrigues me; can the experience of identity dissonance help to activate a 'richer narrative of self'? And for my own work, does the narrative process in this study, of recounting the professional life history, afford a context for engaging identity dissonance? Would participants attest to this?

I also see alignment between this concept of identity dissonance and that of 'praxis shock' developed in the work of Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002). They use this term to refer to the confrontation between the values and ideals a teacher may hold and the reality of the challenges faced in the classroom or from policy directives. For a novice teacher educator, the praxis shock may be derived from several sources: the challenge to practice in working with adults; the challenge to engage with research as part of 'the academy'; or the challenge of being 'an expert become novice' (Murray and Male, 2005). This identity dissonance might also be aligned with Sfard and Prusak's (2010) notions of the actual versus the designated identity. In relation to this transition from teacher to teacher educator, the actual identity as a teacher of children might be retained several years into the new role as teacher educator (or teacher of teachers), with this new designated identity failing to be realised fully. I remember hearing a university lecturer speak to us in one of our doctoral seminars and explicitly identify himself as a teacher (perhaps with a sense of greater credibility in this identity), despite having engaged with research and academic life for a number of years.

I now address these questions in relation to my analysis of the narrative events:

Is there evidence of identity dissonance?

I revisited the transcripts to look for evidence of identity dissonance; where the participant identified tensions between two or more different roles or identities. I collected these examples into one document. I then analysed these examples, identifying key themes within them which I collected under three headings:

causes of dissonance, effects of dissonance and overcoming dissonance / outcomes of dissonance. I used this analysis to construct the discussion below.

I was able to identify examples of identity dissonance from the PLHs of all participants and in their follow up discussions. One such example of this would be for Jane as she repeatedly used the word 'torn' in expressing the challenge she faced as she had to work across two very different work contexts in order to be able to continue in her preferred RRTL role on a part-time basis (Jane, 27-11-12, p.xxxiv). Joanne, in her follow up discussion, acknowledges that the PLH process was valuable for her in realising the change in her self-understanding as someone who for a large part of her career felt 'that she wasn't capable' to realising that 'I can do it' (Joanne, 28-03-13, p.xli). Elizabeth also uses the PLH process to express the dissonance between 'someone like me, a working class background, a girl' who ends up as a lecturer in a university with a PhD (Elizabeth, 24-05-12, p.xv).

The main areas of dissonance that I could identify were between: being a teacher/teacher educator and being a mum; being a secondary teacher and primary teacher; being a specialist in English versus another subject area; working in a school or local authority and working in teacher education. But most impactful, particularly for the RRTLs within this study, was the issue around role uncertainty and continuation of funding which created a significant dissonance as individuals valued their current role but faced uncertain futures.

What are the causes, effects, and outcomes of identity dissonance?

In my analysis of what seemed to be examples of identity dissonance I sought to identify some of the causes of this. These included: lack of funding, job insecurity, lack of choice or ambition, health issues, feeling constrained and feeling near the end of a particular role. Lack of funding impacted significantly for all three RRTLs who faced great job insecurity as a result, not knowing if their role would continue beyond the next year. It also resulted in Jane and Rebekah having to take on combined roles where they worked across two different contexts; significantly increasing their experience of identity dissonance. Elizabeth also recognised a series of endings in her career that propelled her forward into new opportunities,

such as loss of job satisfaction or completing her PhD. On the positive side there were some participants who expressed dissonance as a beneficial thing with a feeling of choice and having new options. Most notable for this was Emily who valued her 'rucksack' of skills and her feeling of having a 'portfolio career'; where being flexible and valuing change was something that she clearly expressed (Emily, 12-03-13, p.lvi).

The effects of identity dissonance identified from the narrative events are both negative and positive. Some negative aspects are: feeling torn (as expressed by Jane, 27-11-12, p.xxxiv), feeling overwhelmed and being lead by circumstances. Joanne talked about feeling overwhelmed as she moved into the RRTL training year (Joanne, 19-07-12, p.xxxviii). Rebekah, reflecting on her career, said that 'when I looked back I thought nothing had really been planned… I'm not sure I had much control over that'. (Rebekah, 02-04-13, p.lxxi) I could also identify positive effects from identity dissonance including: recognising transferable skills and expertise, a new level of confidence or growth, new job satisfaction and a feeling of being proactive. Annie acknowledged 'I got to the point where I had to be proactive about my professional development' (Annie, 16-07-12, p.ii). Joanne noted the boost in confidence she gained from applying for the RRTL role and being appointed. Joanne was also able to see that she had transferable skills that she could apply to other contexts if her RRTL job came to an end (Joanne, 19-07-12, p.xxxvii & p.xli).

The outcome of identity dissonance is primarily in a sense of moving forward, or in the activation to make a proactive change and take choices. The use of prospective reflection in the professional life history method brought the prospect of future choices into focus. For most participants they were able to identify two or three possible career paths that they might take. It was only Annie who seemed to be content to stay where she was and to seek further possibilities within her work context. But for Jane and Rebekah they expressed a lack of choice as they saw their future as constrained by factors outside of their control: 'I haven't really got any choices at the moment to make' (Rebekah, 13-08-12, p.lxxii). This contrasts with Elizabeth who suggests that within the university 'I wouldn't have to stand still and little opportunities would come my way that would give me fresh

things to do and interesting things, and that was so exciting' (Elizabeth, 24-05-12, p.xv). Another approach to managing identity dissonance seems to be a 'let fate decide' attitude about the future and career choices where participants allowed fate to determine outcomes and choices. Joanne used this approach at various points in her career thinking 'I'll just apply and see what happens' (Joanne, 19-07-12, p.xxxvii).

Does identity dissonance play a role in supporting identity transformation?

Warin and Maddock (2006) suggest that the role of identity dissonance is in activating identity as a sense-making device, supported by narration. In the professional life histories this is evidenced as individuals, in the process of narrating their professional life stories, are grappling with their actual and designated identities (Sfard and Prusak, 2010). Warin and Maddock (ibid) suggest '[t]he experience of identity dissonance can activate a richer narrative of self which then functions to accommodate competing feelings about past, present and future as well as mismatches between existing and preferred selves.' (p237) This was particularly significant for the RRTLs who were facing uncertain futures. They clearly expressed their identity as a Reading Recovery Teacher Leader, and their desire to remain in that role; despite not knowing if they would have another year or more doing what they passionately believed in. For Jane she was torn between her two roles as RRTL and as assistant head teacher in her base primary school. 'I realise they are two very different roles and two very challenging roles and I think I've come to understand that I can't ever give it full time, kind of throw myself in completely to either role, because I just haven't got the capacity to do that.' (Jane, 08-0-13, p.lxii) She acknowledged that if she had the choice between doing either role full time it would be the teacher leader role that she would choose. For me this would be a clear statement of her actual identity as a RRTL, although she could easily adopt and adapt to a designated role as senior management in a Primary school. Joanne said that she 'wants to try and hang on to this role (*as a RRTL*) that I am doing currently as long as is possible' (Joanne, 28-03-13, p.lxvii). This statement implied that the role could be lost but that this is what she most enjoyed and was most important to her. So for these RRTLs it appeared that in the dissonance created by job insecurity there was an increase

in their determination and commitment to being a RRTL and seeing their identity as such. In contrast, Rebekah, in her follow up discussion, had moved more fully into her advisory role within the SENSS team of her local authority. She recognised that she had a good position because it was a permanent job. She continued to do some aspects of the RRTL role but that was going to stop at the end of the year. However, Rebekah stated that 'Reading Recovery is still at the core of my being' and illustrated this by talking about an older struggling reader who she knew that 'if he had had Reading Recovery early on he wouldn't be where he is now' (Rebekah, 02-04-13, p.lxii). There seemed to be an underlying identification with Reading Recovery, but the designated identity was clearly with her advisory role. Her identity seemed to be caught somewhere in between as she 'felt that I sort of lurched a bit from one thing to another, mainly because of circumstances' (*ibid*).

Identity dissonance is a phenomenon, the occurrence of which is common place in the lives of professionals. It is usually not pre-determined in any strategic way but is triggered through encounters with other people, contexts or cultures and how they impinge on the individual in unpredictable or unsettling ways. Within the narrative events there is evidence of identity dissonance but this is only reported on after the fact. The consideration of such episodes during the re-telling of a professional life is what I believe to be the process of 'identification'. I now go on to expand my argument for identification as a means by which individuals move towards greater self-awareness or self-knowing, supporting identity transformation.

The Process of Identification in Supporting Identity Transformation

In this chapter I adopt a concept of identification as the process by which a person comes to know or to identify themselves. Stuart Hall (2000) suggests that 'identification is constructed on the back of a recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group or with an ideal' (p16). I would want to broaden my concept of identification to include *the process involved* in 'recognition' which might be realised in the discursive act. In my research design I incorporated follow up discussions in order to gain feedback from participants about their experience of the PLH process. My analysis of these

narrative events helped me to discover whether the PLH process had supported 'identification' or self-knowing.

Is there evidence of identification in the process of telling the professional life history?

Joanne in her follow up discussion noted that the PLH process 'made me more aware of my lack of confidence and now thinking maybe just go for it.' (Joanne, 28-03-13, p.lxvi) She appeared to have identified herself as someone who lacked confidence in the past and noted that this had changed to someone who was more confident. Jane commented that 'it just helped me understand myself a bit more' and gave her a 'clearer understanding of where I wanted to go'. Both are examples of what can be considered as identification. Jane also talked about her feelings doing the PLH; that it made her feel 'emotional in some ways', and that it was 'quite emotional doing that'. She recognised that at the time of the PLH discussion she was 'in quite an emotional state' but that at the point of the follow up discussion 'I'm more stable in myself' (Jane, 08-04-13, p.lxi). I suggest that identifying with emotions at different points in the professional life is also part of the identification process, which also links to the work of Zembylas (2003) referenced above. Rebekah noted, in relation to her PLH, that 'it was hypothesising really' and suggested that 'it was only surmising so it wasn't really telling a story, because I don't know whether it was factual in that sense' (Rebekah, 02-04-13, p.lxix). This is an interesting distinction she makes where the tentativeness of hypothesising is different from the factual state of storytelling. I suggest that this might be an example of the contrast between identification and identity, where the process of identification is tentative and is about forming hypotheses about self prior to building something that is more permanent or 'factual' about the identity (although still open to subsequent change). Rebekah also included a clear statement of identity 'Reading Recovery is still at the core of my being' (*ibid,* p.lxxi), perhaps exemplifying the 'fact' of identity with Reading Recovery. Annie noted that the PLH process enabled her to identify the 'very important landmarks of how I became an effective practitioner' (Annie, 15-05-13, p.xlvii). She clearly identified herself as an 'effective practitioner' but the process of identification is in remembering and imparting significance to those 'landmarks'

along the journey towards that identity. Emily adopted a similar concept which she termed 'pivotal points' and noted that in the PLH she was 'able to reflect on some of those pivotal points and the reasoning behind them' (Emily, 12-03-13, p.lvii). She noted that building the timeline before the discussion made her more aware of 'trying to pick pivotal points'. This implied that the process of identification is not only supported by the narrative event of the PLH itself, but the preparation of thinking and construction that went into this in advance, particularly through the use of the timeline. She also noted that the PLH process involved 'making those links as you go through' (*ibid,* p.lviii), again this could be a part of the process of identification. Elizabeth identified a broader context in which identification might take place, particularly when triggered by decisions around changing jobs or roles. She noted that when…

> you have to make the decision are you going to move or not, you find yourself talking to various people about what you've done in the past and what you think you might be going to do in the future, and what's brought you to where you are now.

She commented that she had done this 'privately in my head' and 'with family and friends' (Elizabeth, 09-04-14, p.li). It would be complacent for me to think that identification might only occur in the context of telling a professional life history. Of course identification might occur in many other contexts, but usually with a trigger such as role uncertainty. For some of the participants in the study, however, they did acknowledge that they had not engaged in such before; notably Annie, who exclaims 'why hadn't I done this process before?' (Annie, 15-05-13, p.xlix)

I consider that the reflections made by participants in their follow up discussion show that most of them did engage in a process of identification during the telling of their PLH. I also consider that this further evidences my claim that identification should be seen as a 'process' which is active and un-concluded, this aligns with Hall's assertion that 'identifications are never fully and finally made' (2002, p. 29).

<u>Conclusion</u>

This chapter sought to reconceptualise identity for the purposes of this study. This was acheived by providing an overview of the literature relating to identity, particularly those more aligned to a poststructuralist perspective which might suggest the tensions between identity as effect (structure) and identity as performative (agency). Next was presented an analysis, grounded from the narrative events, to highlighted the changing identities of the education professionals in this study. The following indicators of identity that were drawn from the Professional Life Histories of the participants were outlined: skills (and/or knowledge), 'doing it', self belief, future aspirations, support and independence. A consideration of identity as an expert was aligned with Boyd and Harris' (2010) notion of gaining credibility as a teacher educator.

The chapter then proceeded to argue for a notion of identity transformation for individuals transitioning into new professional roles and considered identity dissonance (Warin and Muldoon, 2006, 2009) as one means by which such transformations might be activated. Analysis of the narrative events revealed the presence of identity dissonance and identified possible causes and outcomes of this. Identity dissonance was presented as a trigger for supporting identity transformation. The link between identity dissonance and a notion of identification as a process in narrative storytelling was presented.

The chapter concluded by presenting the claim that identification is the process through which an individual might come to know their professional identity, particularly during times of flux. From an analysis of the follow up discussions it was inferred that the participants considered the Professional Life History process to be supportive in relation to them better understanding their professional coined as 'identification'. This concept is central to this thesis and is therefore revisited in relation to critical self-reflection, in Chapter Four – Reflection, and in Chapter Five – Narrative and Story Telling, in the discussion of how the Professional Life History process activates identification.

Chapter Four - Reflection

This chapter comprises the second viewing frame through which the narrative events in this study are considered. The previous chapter concluded that analysis of the Professional Life History discussions provided what could be considered as evidence of professional identity and identity transformation but also revealed a process of identification, in which the participants engaged in identity work to support self-knowing. This chapter considers identification as a reflective process within the context of the professional life history discussion and whether an analysis under theorised categories of reflection might provide further insights into a process of identification.

Firstly, the concept of reflection is explored and re-conceptualised for the purposes of this study. Three categories of reflection: critical self-reflection, premise reflection and prospective reflection, are identified as having particular pertinence to an exploration of identification and transformative learning. The categories of critical self-reflection and premise reflection are applied as a research lens through which the narrative events can be iteratively analysed; prospective reflection is subsumed within the other two analyses. The conclusions drawn are that: critical self-reflection seems to be aligned with identification; that premise reflection is evidenced in the narrative events and appears to be associated with transformative learning, possibly leading to identity transformation; and that the professional life history discussion, particularly with the inclusion of prospective reflection, is an effective context for activating reflection and identification. Finally, the follow up discussions are seen to be instances of 'reflecting on reflection' and as such have particular value in activating premise reflection.

Defining reflection in the context of Professional Life History method

Reflection is a concept that is widely used within education and broader professional contexts and is the basis for a plethora of reflective practices supporting professional learning. However, the term has become devalued and criticised as it is used as an umbrella for a spectrum of meanings and practices and has thus lost clarity and purpose. I seek to re-conceptualise four aspects of

reflection to support this analysis; that of reflection, critical self-reflection, premise reflection and prospective reflection.

Reflection

Boud (2001) summarises reflection as 'a process of turning experience into learning, that is, a way of exploring experience in order to learn new things from it' (p10); which builds the link between reflection and reflective practices that support learning. However, Boud and Walker (1998) '…believe that there are now many examples of poor educational practice being implemented under the guise and rhetoric of reflection.' (p192) They go on to identify five reasons for the problems with reflection (as translated into reflective practice):

> misinterpretations of the literature; equating reflection as thinking; teachers pursuing their own personal agendas at the expense of the learner; ideas about experience and reflection [that]... question the conventional role of teacher as authority; exceed the bounds of ethical practice and expose learners (*ibid*).

They also challenge the assumption that reflective practices will inevitably support learning. To counter this critique of reflection and reflective practices I seek to re-conceptualise reflection and suggest that the Professional Life History (PLH) process is effective as a context that can support reflection.

The forerunner for the role of reflection and reflective practice is Dewey (1933) who defined reflection as 'active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends' (Cranton, 1996, p. 70). This description implies an enlightenment perspective, common to that period with a focus on an empirical approach; or as Mezirow would point out, is about 'validity testing' (1991, p. 101). Rogers (2002) identifies four criteria that characterise Dewey's concept of reflection: reflection as a meaning-making process; reflection as a rigorous way of thinking; reflection in community; reflection as a set of attitudes (p. 843). Schon (1983) is another major thinker in this field who 'sees reflection as largely unarticulated and intuitive' (Cranton, 1996, p. 78). He identifies two types of reflection: reflection-in-action (or tacit reflection during the event) and

reflection-on-action (considered reflection after the event). This reveals the relationship of reflection to time and links to Boud's (2001) description of the occasions of reflection: reflection in anticipation of events; reflection in the midst of action; and reflection after events. In my use of prospective reflection within the construction of the PLH I consider this temporal aspect of reflection to be very significant, as does Paul Conway (2001). He draws from the ancient thinker Augustine who 'put forward a three-part view of the present in his model of time... He spoke of the past in the present of our memories, the immediate present through attention and the future through expectation.' (*ibid* p92) Likewise Van Manen (1991, pp. 512-13) identifies and further defines these three forms of reflection, but also adds a fourth form of mindfulness:

1. Anticipatory reflection - helps us to approach situations and other people in an organized, decision-making, prepared way.

2. Active or interactive reflection - reflection-in-action, stop-and-think type of reflection

3. Recollective reflection - making sense of past experiences and thus gain new and deeper insights.

4. Mindfulness - the interactive pedagogical moment. Distinguishes the interaction of the tactful pedagogues.

I consider that the construction of Professional Life Histories (as part of this study) is a reflective practice. However, I want to focus on theories of reflection that relate to reflection on the self and those that consider the social context of reflection, as these aspects are the most pertinent to this study. One such author is Kelchtermans (2007) who highlights the use of narrative and biography as a means for supporting reflection, seeking reflection that is 'broad and deep' and argues 'in favour of reflective dialogues that are critical, biographical and narrative' (*ibid*, p100). Boyd and Fales (1983, in Knowles, 1993, p. 85) provide a definition of reflection that encompasses this self-referential aspect that I am advocating; '[reflection is] the process of creating and clarifying the meaning of experience in terms of self (self in relation to self and self in relation to the world) where the outcome is a changed conceptual perspective'. Knowles, referring to

Beynon (1985), makes the connection of reflective practice to life history method, identifying the subjective function (the individual's subjective reality, assumptions and beliefs), contextual function (locating the individual's life within a greater sphere) and evaluative function (reasserting the complexities of lived experience) of telling your story. It is from Knowle's image of 'Life History Accounts as Mirrors' (*ibid)* that I have drawn my own definition of reflection, which is the basis on which I consider the PLH method to be a reflective practice (see Chapter One – Setting the context for the thesis, 'Defining terms used in this thesis').

I would also like to refer back to the metaphor of 'a cabinet of curiosities' (also discussed in Chapter One – Setting the context for the thesis) as I think this provides a similar perspective on reflection. Perhaps, for the individual story teller, the narrative event becomes an artefact in their own cabinet of curiosities. The telling of their story, or the re-reading of a transcript of it within the context of this study, forms a site for reflection and self-knowing.

My second propositional statement says: 'that the process of reflection engaged in during the narrative events, and subsequently, is transformative in nature, with potential to support identity transformation'. I am therefore looking for reflection that appears to be transformative in nature and that particularly is supportive of identification and identity transformation. In my analysis of reflection for this chapter I have therefore made some assumptions: firstly, that there are different categories of reflection with critical self-reflection and premise reflection being most likely to support identity transformation; secondly, that the use of prospective reflection may help to activate transformative reflection; and thirdly that the follow up discussions have value as the participants engage 'reflection on reflection' (discussed later in the chapter).

Critical Self-Reflection

In the previous chapter (Chapter Three – Identity and Identification) I suggested that the process by which a person might come to know their identity or transformed identity is identification. I consider that the category of reflection most closely aligned to identification is critical self-reflection (CSR). My conceptualisation of critical self-reflection draws from Brookfield's work (1995),

although his focus is on critical reflection rather than critical self-reflection per se., Brookfield notes that:

> [r]eflection becomes critical when it has two distinctive purposes. The first is to understand how considerations of power undergird, frame, and distort educational processes and interactions. The second is to question assumptions and practices that seem to make our teaching lives easier but actually work against our own best long-term interests. (p8)

Brookfield (1995) suggests four 'critically reflective lenses', of which one is the lens of 'our autobiographies as learners and teachers' (pp. 29-30). The use of this lens does not necessarily lead to CSR but may be a context in which this is activated. If reflection is looking at oneself in the mirror of the PLH (or similar reflective context) and commenting on what is perceived, critical self-reflection is about asking questions, developing understanding or considering reasons in the light of reflection. One aspect of analysis in my study is whether CSR is activated in the PLH accounts and what might be the triggers to support this? (See discussion in next section.) Brookfield also acknowledges the value of the social context in activating critical reflection; '[a]lthough critical reflection often begins alone, it is ultimately a collective endeavour.' (*ibid* p. 36) This I suggest is one of the triggers for CSR within the PLH process, where my presence in the discussion, through questioning and prompting, may support a lift from description of events to CSR upon those events and the impact they had on the professional life and self.

Premise Reflection

Another important theoretical perspective, which I shall be drawing upon in this chapter, is that of Mezirow's transformative learning theory. This is important to my thesis as it relates to an understanding of identity transformation. However, as I read critiques of Mezirow's work (such as Taylor, 2008) and engaged more with poststructuralist thinking I started to consider if Mezirow's theory of transformative learning was incompatible with a more poststructuralist view of narrative method and concepts of identity, perhaps being more 'structuralist' in nature. However, I was drawn back to Mezirow's work when reading an article by Bay and Macfarlane (2011) which highlighted the link between poststructuralist

perspectives and Mezirow's transformative learning theory. As I re-engaged with his work I could see that much of what we aim to achieve in poststructuralist thinking is to uncover meaning perspectives which are 'broad sets of predispositions resulting from psychocultural assumptions' and which 'refer to the structure of assumptions within which one's past experience assimilates and transforms new experience' (Mezirow, 1994, p. 223). Mezirow considers that transformation of meaning perspectives can only be achieved through premise reflection and that such reflection leads to

> [p]erspective transformation [which] involves a) an empowered sense of self,
> b) more critical understanding of how one's social relationships and culture
> have shaped one's beliefs and feelings, and c) more functional strategies
> and resources for taking action (*ibid* p161).

To me this summarises what poststructuralism is also aiming to achieve. Fenwick (2000) considers reflection to be part of the 'constructivist' perspective where 'a learner is believed to construct, through reflection, a personal understanding of relevant structures of meaning derived from his or her action in the world' (p248). She goes on to critique this perspective by stating that; 'the focus on rational concept formation sidesteps the ambivalences and internal vicissitudes bubbling in the unconscious' (*ibid* p249). This might also be a criticism of Transformative Learning Theory. My aim would therefore be to raise awareness of ambivalences and the impact of the unconscious when engaging with premise reflection. In addition I argue for premise reflection that reveals both personal and public theories, as Griffiths and Tann (1992) suggest, where 'personal theories need to be revealed (at different levels) so that they can be scrutinised, challenged, compared to public theories, and then confirmed or reconstructed' (p71).

My discussion here builds on the introduction of the concept of identity transformation in Chapter Three - Identity and Identification. My assumption is that identity transformation is supported by the use of critical self reflection, which resonates strongly with Mezirow's work. Mezirow (1991) highlights three types of reflection: content, process and premise reflection. Cranton (1996) summarises these as follows:

- Content reflection - reflect on the content or description of a problem.

- Process reflection - reflect on the strategies used to solve a problem.

- Premise reflection - question the relevance of the problem itself. Assumptions, beliefs, or values underlying the problem are questioned. (pp 81-2)

Premise reflection might be considered to be the deepest and most demanding aspect of reflection, in which meaning perspectives are uncovered and challenged. In relation to premise reflection on the self, this would be about uncovering psychological meaning perspectives; thus understanding ourselves as individuals. 'The most significant learning involves critical premise reflection of premises about oneself' (Mezirow, 1994, p. 224). Mezirow also suggests that reflection is 'inherently critical', but that 'the term "critical reflection" often has been used as a synonym for reflection on premises as distinct from reflection on assumptions pertaining to the content or process of problem-solving' (Mezirow, 1991, p. 105). If a premise is '[a] previous statement or proposition from which another is inferred or follows as a conclusion' (Oxford University Press, 2014) then premise reflection pertains to critical self-reflection that provides a summary or over-arching hypothesis about the professional life lived or the contexts in which the individual operates. Thus in my analysis of the narrative events, I have sought to identify examples of premise reflection separate from that of critical self-reflection.

Prospective Reflection

My research design incorporated prospective reflection into the PLH process as I believed that it would support the activation or recognition of identity transformation. This was based on my previous research findings (in my Institution Focused Study, Amott, 2010). However, prospective or anticipatory reflection might for some, in other uses of the term reflection, be an oxymoron. How can we reflect on something we have not yet done? Although, expanding upon my earlier definition of reflection, if we engage in considering our future selves and incorporate that into the story we tell, then we are able to provide another frame for viewing or 'reflecting' or knowing our self more. Thus I agree with Wai-Ling Packard and Conway (2006) that 'people seek some coherence in

their present or immediate self-definitions by drawing on their past, remembered selves (retrospective selves) as well as their future, imagined selves (prospective selves)...' (p. 252). Geert Keltchermans (1993) recognises the retrospective and prospective dimensions in the analysis of the professional self, where the prospective dimension was 'teachers' expectations for the future development of their job satisfaction and the way they feel about this' (p450). Conway (2001) would consider one to be 'analytic remembering' and the other 'generative imagination' (p102). Urzua and Vasquez (2008) suggest that prospective reflection is an opportunity for the teacher 'to explore their "imagined selves" in the context of various future possibilities' (p 1943). Wai-Ling Packard and Conway (2006) describe possible selves as 'images of what people hope to become, expect to become, or fear becoming in the future' (p252). In my analysis of critical self-reflection, prospective reflection becomes one of the themes identified in the PLH discussions and as a trigger for critical self-reflection. The connection with prospective reflection as a tool for activating premise reflection is also made in the analyses below.

Analysis of Categories of Reflection in the Narrative Events

Having established three categories of reflection, namely critical self-reflection, premise reflection and prospective reflection, which I considered to be important in understanding more about the processes of identification within the Professional Life History (PLH) and follow up discussions, I then undertook an analysis of the narrative events using these categories as a research lens through the viewing frame of reflection. Prospective reflection is not conducted as a separate analysis but is subsumed into the analyses of critical self-reflection and premise reflection as it appeared to be a facet of, or indeed a trigger for, both.

In my original analysis of reflection for this chapter, I used additional categories which were 'reflection', as distinct from simple description, and 'critical reflection' of which critical self-reflection was a subset. I found that this analysis of five different categories was very cumbersome and lead me down an analytical path that focused on the incidence of each type of reflection. This quasi-quantitative analysis suggested that some categories were 'better' or more effective than others and that also some of the participants in the study, who had more

instances of certain categories, might be more critically self-aware. Through the processes of reviewing this chapter, and the critical feedback of my supervisor, I realised that the analysis was not appropriate for a study of this nature and that it had led my thinking down certain positivist channels, which I felt very uncomfortable about.

Having identified the problem, I had to go back and think about my propositional statements and research goals. If my focus through the viewing frame of reflection was to be about the processes leading to identification and identity transformation I needed to identify those categories of reflection which were associated with this. I realised that in my efforts to create distinctions between firstly reflection and critical reflection and secondly critical reflection and critical self-reflection, I had moved away from this original intention. By dropping these two categories I could then engage in an analysis of the categories which appeared to be more relevant to this thesis, that of critical self-reflection, premise reflection and prospective reflection. The question I asked in this exploration was whether these categories were related to identification and identity transformation and whether they provided insight into the processes by which transformation might occur.

An Analysis of Critical Self-reflection

The first stage in this process was to read through each discussion and classify instances of critical self-reflection (CSR). I made a short descriptive (or *in vivo*) statement under each heading to record each reflective event. I needed to find out the nature of the content of each item of CSR and from this identify themes that would help me to understand the reflective process exemplified and consider whether this was congruent with my emerging theory of identification. I therefore started to code the different instances of CSR, which I did using QRS NVivo 9©. (A detailed account of this analysis process is provided as a 'worked example' in Chapter Two – Designing the Research.) After some refinements I derived a set of 25 nodes (using the terminology of NVivo) which I considered encompassed the spectrum of themes running through the instances of reflection.

I then started to group nodes together into themes. Figure 4.1 below shows the themes and linked nodes:

Theme	Linked Nodes
Identifying aspects of professional life of significance	• Identifying change • Identifying feelings • Identifying problems • Identifying skills and strengths • Identifying tensions
Statements of professional identity	• Identity as a teacher educator • Identity as a teacher • Identity with Reading Recovery
Reflections on roles in professional life	• Reflections on current role • Reflections on past role • Reflections on professional life
Recognising influences on professional life	• Influence of context • Influence of others • Job security • Motivation to change
Prospective reflection	• Ambitions for the future • Considering options
Reflections on self and evidence of self awareness	• Confidence • Regret • Self-awareness

Figure 4.1 - Themes in relation to critical self-reflection nodes

Each theme reflects a different area of critical self-reflection. The first theme of 'identifying aspects of professional life of significance' shows that CSR is a process of identifying and therefore identification. Each node contained within this theme suggested a different aspect of the professional life to which the participant had attributed significance. The second theme 'statements of professional identity' showed that CSR was synonymous with identification whereby in the narrative process the participant identified themselves with a particular professional identity at different points in their professional life. The third theme 'reflections on roles in professional life' was about critical self-reflection on professional roles and attributing meaning to them, for example Jane reflected 'I remember my first two training groups; I went on that journey with them as a RRTL.' (Jane, 27-11-12, p.xxx) Again this is an example of identification. The fourth theme built from the first whereby, in addition to significance being attributed to an event or person, the way in which that event or person has

influenced or shaped their professional identity was acknowledged. Prospective reflection, as the fifth theme, will be discussed in more detail in the section below; however, at this stage it is important to recognise it as an instance of CSR. The sixth theme 'reflections on self and evidence of self-awareness' included two categories that emerged in a few of the narrative events by more than one participant; that of confidence and regret. Both of these nodes were of instances where the participants recognised personal traits or feelings that were significant as they progressed through their professional life. The final group was a collecting point for other nodes that I identified in the narrative events which had significance but did not fall neatly into other themes.

The above analysis showed that each theme (and node) related to aspects of identity and therefore I was able to draw the connection between critical self-reflection and identification. From this I tentatively concluded that identification was a process of critical self-reflection which was specific to the context of telling stories or personal narrative.

Having established a connection, I wanted to see if the narrative events provided insight into a process of identification.

Triggers for Critical Self Reflection

In re-visiting the PLH transcripts, where instances of critical self-reflection were highlighted, I started to look for the triggers that were evidenced in the narrative events for critical self reflection. The triggers were the antecedents or reflections that appeared to lead up to the instance of CSR. The triggers identified were as follows: dissonance, identifying significant events or people, recalling feelings, recalling challenges, recognising skills and expertise, making links, seeing the bigger picture and prospective reflection. I discuss each in turn, providing some examples to show how the trigger operated. There is some overlap between the themes identified in the section above and the triggers discussed below. The distinction between the two is that a trigger leads to an instance of CSR. So identifying a significant event or person might be a trigger for CSR or might be CSR in itself; the attribution of significance by a participant is something that links to deepening self-awareness and identification.

Dissonance – This was where two conflicting feelings or memories were identified and then sought to be resolved. For Joanne this was about the memory of 'always wanted to be a teacher' with the recalled feeling that she 'wasn't clever enough to become a teacher'. Her statement of 'I was able to fulfil that dream really after having had all those doubts' showed how this dissonance activated CSR (Joanne, 19-07-12, p.xxxvii). *This is different from identity dissonance, discussed in the previous chapter, as it does not refer specifically to identity.*

Identifying significant events or people – When such events or people were called to mind their significance sometimes triggers CSR. For Jane she recalled the first few years at her school, which was in 'special measures', as a 'tough journey' and 'quite a horrendous journey at times' but in this she recognised the value she placed on the head teacher and deputy head teacher that she worked with and recognised that 'it felt like we did it as a team' (Jane, 27-11-12, p.xxviii). There seemed to be a cycle of memory which was then activated through making connections towards critical self-reflection.

Recalling feelings – The recollection of feelings seemed to be quite strong in triggering critical self-reflection. Rebekah highlighted a feeling activated during her training as a Reading Recovery Teacher Leader (RRTL) in which the training (perhaps with a focus on critical reflection) left you with a feeling 'that you are never satisfied' and that you 'don't ever get job satisfaction'. She linked this to the CSR that she was quite self-critical (Rebekah, 13-08-12, p.xlv). So perhaps the memory of that feeling during her yearlong training is linked to a self-awareness of her own heightened criticality.

Recalling challenges – Many participants called to mind particular challenges they faced through the narrative process. For Annie a significant instance of CSR was activated by her remembrance of the challenge she faced in her transition to Primary teaching from Secondary teaching. She recognised that at this time she 'kept looking back' and 'felt as though I had lost my status'. She also identified a significant person at this time 'somebody who was very important and influential in my life' who helped her through this transition (Annie, 16-07-12, p.iii). The memories of challenges in the past were often points at which the participant was able to feel a sense of accomplishment in the way these were overcome.

Recognising skills and expertise – As part of the process of telling their professional life story many participants recognised their particular skills or expertise and made links to events in their professional life. A good example of this was Joanne in acknowledging her growing identity as an 'expert'. This was linked to her recognition of 'all that knowledge base behind me' and feeling that 'I'm finally an expert at something'. She evidenced this expertise by commenting that 'people come to me and asked my advice' and that 'I've really enjoyed supporting schools'. It appeared that this example of CSR is linked to a process of 'identification' of herself as an 'expert teacher' (Joanne, 19-07-12, p.xl).

Making links –The ability to make links and connections between significant events is one aspect of criticality and was represented in the narrative events as CSR. Elizabeth, when describing her move into role as a literacy coordinator in a Primary school, made the link between that role and how it was 'still relevant to what I do now' and she recognised that 'in lots of ways on a professional level I had sort of got to where I wanted to be' (Elizabeth, 24-05-12, p.x). I considered this process of making links was also a trigger therefore for CSR.

Seeing the bigger picture – The PLH process was obviously an opportunity for the participants to look back at their whole professional life (particularly activated by preparing the professional life timeline). Several instances of CSR were activated by that experience of looking back to past events and recognising their significance in shaping where they feel themselves to be now. Jane noted that her decision to train as a RRTL, even though it was 'a bit scary at the time', was 'looking back, now I definitely know I made the right decision' (Jane, 27-11-12, p.xxx).

Prospective reflection –My earlier assumption in this research was that prospective reflection would activate CSR. In my analysis of all six transcripts it became clear that this was the case; a good example of which is from Joanne's PLH. This was activated by the uncertainty of her employment situation, not knowing if her contract would be renewed. She considered applying for a lecturing job at a local university which caused her to reflect on her level of confidence again, noting that 'I've got a very different attitude these days' and comparing this to how she felt at the point of leaving school 'thinking "I can't do it"' to thinking 'I'm

just going to go for it' and acknowledging this as a 'huge transition'. She was able to critically self-reflect and stated 'I think I can pinpoint that to happening for me going from Reading Recovery Teacher to Teacher Leader training'. Finally, she identified her 'knowledge of working alongside adults and knowledge of teaching and learning in the wider context' (Joanne, 19-07-12, p.xli). This CSR is about identifying her strengths and linking this to possible roles for the future.

In Chapter Five - Narrative and Story Telling, I suggest three tools that support identification: memory, imagination and hope, drawing from the writing of Conway (2001). (See Chapter Five for a more detailed discussion of the theory supporting this model.) In my analysis of the triggers of critical self-reflection I was interested to note the way that these three tools operate in the process of reflection. I suggest that in relation to retrospective reflection, which encompasses all of the above identified triggers except that of prospective reflection, there is an interaction between memory and imagination. The instances described above show memory (or reflection) as the trigger but then the activation of imagination on these memories is what appears to create CSR. In relation to prospective reflection it seems to be a three-way interaction. Hope for the future is built on memories from the past, the application of imagination on this is what triggers CSR and further activation of hope.

An Analysis of Premise Reflection

My second category of reflection is premise reflection, based on Mezirow's transformative learning theory as discussed in the previous section. I considered that premise reflection was different to critical self-reflection, where CSR might be a precursor to premise reflection. I also considered that premise reflection would be most likely to represent transformative learning, perhaps leading to identity transformation, and would further demonstrate the process of identification. In looking for premise reflection within the narrative events I was seeking to find instances of 'a summary or over-arching hypothesis about the professional life lived or the contexts in which the individual operates' (as stated in the previous section). Instances of premise reflection appeared to occur as a culmination of a sequence of critical self-reflections and required a statement of new understanding about themselves or their perceived identity. I analysed the

narrative events to see whether there was evidence of premise reflection and I believe that I found it in the narrative events of all participants. This ranged from premise reflection on matters personal to the participant and premise reflection related to their professional roles; where the former might refer to personal theories and the latter to public theories (Griffiths and Tann, 1992). I then looked for evidence that this was transformative in nature possibly leading to identity transformation. Although not all of the instances of premise reflection documented I consider transformative learning, there are some clear examples that appear to be transformative in nature and link more strongly to identity transformation.

In her PLH Rebekah reflected on the nature of teacher learning in Reading Recovery as something that is broader than pedagogy; 'It's about how people think and how they react and their emotions' (Rebekah, 13-08-12, p.xlvi). This premise reflection related to her professional role and is based on her experience as a RRTL and her work with Reading Recovery (RR) teachers. This premise is used by her in instances of prospective reflection to explain the challenges she faced in thinking about possible futures; for example, her desire to work within Initial Teacher Education to address the 'something missing' in new teachers. In her follow-up discussion Rebekah reflected on her professional life noting that 'nothing had been planned', she was 'reacting to situations' and how it felt 'out of control' (Rebekah, 02-04-13, p.lxxii). This linked to a second realisation of the frustration of not having a lot of choice and unfulfilled aims in her professional life. This is premise reflection on her 'psychological meaning perspectives' and appears to be quite negative in outlook, which could have been as a direct result of engaging in the PLH process. This relates to the ethical dimension of research and a commitment to 'do no harm'. Had the PLH process been an upsetting experience for her? Perhaps a settling of her professional life situation might come as a result of this process, but at the time of the discussions this was a sensitive issue.

For Joanne, in her PLH she recognised a change in attitude towards her professional life, from thinking 'I can't do it', to 'going for it' (Joanne, 19-07-12, p.xli). She particularly attributed this transformation to her training as a RRTL.

This was premise reflection on her professional self and recognised a transformation in her psychological meaning perspectives. She went on to consider this premise in more detail in her follow-up discussion where she identified her tendency to be reactive rather than proactive; 'I still allowed things to happen, rather than being completely proactive' (Joanne, 28-03-13, p.lxvii). She also acknowledged that she had been more proactive since the PLH discussion; '[the PLH] made me more reflective and being able to act on what I think has happened along the way' (*ibid,* p.lxvi). She stated that the first step towards this transformation was being reflective. Finally, for Joanne, she recognised that it was difficult to marry up what she would like to happen with what she thinks will happen, within the context of her prospective reflection, however she acknowledged that it was good to have those goals.

Jane did not evidence premise reflection within her PLH but this was demonstrated in her follow-up discussion where she concluded that 'actually doing those things that felt uncomfortable were the better decisions I made' and that 'places where I took the more difficult option have been more successful' (Jane, 08-04-13, p.lxii). This was quite transformative in nature with a clear understanding drawn from reflecting on her past that might support future actions. This premise reflection appeared to have been triggered by engaging in 'reflecting on reflection' (see next section).

Again for Emily there was no evidence of premise reflection in her PLH, however her follow-up discussion was intriguing where it appeared that she engaged in premise reflection as she commented on 'not planning a career path', 'being comfortable with change' and 'staying flexible'. However, these comments seemed not to be spoken to herself but were almost to another audience, perhaps perceived through the publication of this thesis. Some of the 'advice' that she offered included: 'taking opportunities as they arise'; 'seeing the landscape'; 'staying flexible'; doing what has 'value'; not being 'worried about change'; that change 'gives you confidence actually'; to 'maintain that awareness' and the value 'to make changes on a more regular basis' (Emily, 12-03-13, p.lviii-lix). Perhaps the premise reflection that she had already engaged with in relation to her own career path, supported by the PLH process, had now been reified into a

set of principles, or a 'public theory', that she would advocate for other education professionals, particularly within uncertain times.

Annie reflected at the premise level on two issues within her follow up discussion, both were particularly related to her own self-understanding. The first conclusion that she made was that in the process of re-telling her professional life she came to realise that it was not something haphazard but it happened because of what she identified as the 'key landmarks in becoming an effective practitioner', commenting that 'it's a science, that if you do this, this will happen' and 'what I am doing now is built on what I did then, but I don't think I quite realised it' (Annie, 15-05-13, p. xlvii & p.xlix). Her second conclusion related to the process of critically reflecting on her professional life history stating that 'I wish I had done this before' and 'why has it taken this opportunity to make me think this way? It hadn't occurred to me' (*ibid,* p.xlviii). Both appeared to be a significant revelation that she attributed to her engagement with this research, were transformative in nature and would have an impact on her future thinking.

Elizabeth's premise reflection was somewhat different to the others. It appeared to be evidenced within the PLH but as something that had already been understood prior to telling her story. This related to her understanding of herself as 'somebody like me, a working class background' and later 'a working class girl, the very ordinary background, who seriously did not have any high ambitions' but 'came to work at the university, that was beyond anything I could have dreamt of' (Elizabeth, 24-05-12, p.xv). This was an awareness of her roots and her realisation of how far she had come in her professional life, beyond expectations.

The Professional Life History as a Catalyst for Identification and Transformative Learning

In identifying this evidence of premise reflection, most of which I conclude is demonstrating transformative learning (see discussions above), I now consider whether the PLH process, and in particular the use of prospective reflection, acted as a catalyst for deeper reflection.

Firstly, I draw evidence from the participants in this study who acknowledged the transformative nature of engaging in the PLH. Annie and Jane both state how

supportive they found the PLH process, but also Joanne and Rebekah endorsed their valuing of this process.

Secondly, I suggest that the premise reflection of participants' professional lives that has been demonstrated was less likely to have happened within a different everyday context. For Elizabeth it appeared that she was more used to discussions about her professional life with friends and family, perhaps leading to premise reflection in more informal contexts. However, I wonder whether this might have been triggered by her use of life history method in her doctoral studies. For the other participants it was apparent that they had not engaged with premise reflection in other contexts, as Annie states: 'I wish I had done this before' (Annie, 15-03-13, p.xlviii).

Finally, I argue that the engagement of prospective reflection was particularly pertinent to activating premise reflection. For the participants, when called to consider their anticipated future, they were compelled to consider what could be learned from their past professional life experiences in order to explore such possibilities. In particular, those who were facing uncertain times were identifying and drawing from their expertise as educators in the broader sense, looking to possible roles in the future. This links to Beauchamp and Thomas' (2010) idea of 'appreciative intelligence', that is seeing the strengths in oneself in the present and linking this to the ideal self in the future. They also note that anticipatory reflection contains an element of imagination and activates agency 'seeing the teacher's potential as a force for effecting change' (p633). Conway and Clark (2003) suggest that prospective reflection engages the individual in considering hopes and fears about the future. This is also discernible in the narrative events and suggests its value in activating deeper levels of reflection (see also earlier discussion on memory, imagination and hope). Finally, Brookfield (1995) notes that 'recognising the discrepancy between what is and what should be is often the beginning of the critical journey' (p29).

I am wary of making strong conclusions about the application of transformative learning theory to this narrative study. Firstly, I am still hesitant because I wonder if Mezirow's work is too structuralist in nature and such categorisations of types of reflection, and the implicit hierarchies within them, might constrain one's

thinking in relation to the possible implications of reflection in life and work. Secondly, I am aware that what I considered to be premise reflection within this study might not be classified as such by another researcher. Also how do I know that what I perceived to be transformative learning, was actually so? But then who could know this, as even the individual themselves might not recognise it until sometime later? Thirdly, how can I be confident that any transformative learning is attributable to the structure of the PLH discussions within this study and might not have occurred in another context? The answer to these would be outside of the design of this study.

<u>Reflecting on Reflection – The follow up discussion</u>

I included the follow up discussions in my analysis of reflection as I felt that they were a valid part of the narrative events and that they would involve instances of critical self-reflection. I also noted that they had particular value as 'reflecting on reflection'. In relation to premise reflection it is important to note that there were only three instances of premise reflection in the PLH discussions but eight instances in the follow-up discussions. This difference may be due to the nature of reflecting on reflection and to the activation of premise reflection in this process. In the PLH discussions participants were able to engage in critical self-reflection which, as discussed earlier, was supportive of identification and indicated the possibility of identity transformation. However, it is only in the process of talking about their experience of engaging with the PLH, activated by the foci of the discussion and my prompts, that some of the ideas touched on in the PLH are shaped together into clear instances of premise reflection. If, as suggested by Mezirow's theory of transformative learning, these instances of premise reflection, particularly where they relate to reflection on self and identity, are linked to identity transformation, then I have to conclude that opportunities to engage in reflecting on reflection, as the follow-up discussion afforded, are particularly important for identification and identity transformation.

<u>A Cabinet of Curiosities as a Metaphor for Reflection</u>

In Chapter One – Setting the context for the thesis, I introduced the metaphor of the 'cabinet of curiosities'. I used this metaphor to illustrate and explain the

construction of this thesis as a cabinet of curiosities, where the narrative events in this study are the focus for examination through different viewing frames. However, I also see the power of the metaphor of a cabinet of curiosities in relation to understanding the value of narrative practices in supporting identification. In this chapter I have shown from my analysis of the narrative events that they do evidence activation of critical self-reflection and premise reflection. I also concluded that reflective practice was supportive of identity transformation. Within this metaphor it seems that the participant, in the process of telling their professional life history, is putting their professional life into a cabinet of curiosities for examination and scrutiny. I also suggest that the preparation of the professional life timeline in advance of the PLH discussion provides a useful framework for viewing the professional life. Perhaps in the PLH process, particularly activated by prompts in the follow-up discussions, the professional life lived is considered afresh and premise reflection is activated.

Conclusion

The intention of this chapter was to consider whether reflection, particularly critical self-reflection and premise reflection as employed in the Professional Life History process, might be aligned with the process of identification argued for in Chapter Three – Identity and Identification. Having defined these different concepts within the context of relevant literature, the chapter presents an analysis of the interrelated forms and features of reflection in the narrative events. A discussion of the identified themes and triggers of critical self-reflection, exemplified in the Professoinal Life Histories, concludes that identification is a process of critical Self-reflection which is specific to the context of telling stories and personal narratives.

The chapter proceeded to consider instances deemed as premise reflection within the narrative events and suggested that such premise reflection lead to identity transformation. It is argued that the Professional Life History process, particularly the inclusion of prospective reflection and opportunities for 'reflecting on reflection', might be a catalyst for identification and transformative learning. This was shown in that participants acknowledged the process as transformative and recognised that such identification had not been activated previously. In

addition, the relationship between prospective reflection and the activation of premise reflection was identified. A more detailed analysis of the value of narrative practices, as exemplified by the Professional Life History process, will be considered in the next chapter. This forms the third and final viewing frame of Narrative and Storytelling.

Chapter Five - Narrative and Story Telling

The purpose of this chapter is to consider that narrative and storytelling, particularly the Professional Life History (PLH) process using retrospective and prospective reflection, supports identification and identity transformation. This is in relationship to my third propositional statement: that the engagement with PLH narrative method, including the use of prospective reflection, is supportive for participants in terms of self-knowing and identification.

The reason why narrative and storytelling might be effective is explored through the use of a model that considers the two dimensions of structure/agency and subjectivity/objectivity. After initially defining terms and concepts for the purpose of this viewing frame, the chapter discusses three important areas when considering narrative method as supportive of identification and self-knowing: Firstly, the use of prospective reflection in supporting identification, including an exploration of the role of memory, imagination and hope in the act of storytelling. Secondly, consideration of coherence in the stories told and how this might impact on identification and an exploration of whether stories might be constructed differently on different occasions, as might be suggested by a poststructuralist view of identity. Finally, a critical analysis of binary dimensions in poststructuralist theory is used to provide a theoretical framework through which narrative events might be analysed.

<u>Conceptualising Narrative Research</u>

What is Narrative Research?

Firstly, I would like to define what is meant by narrative within the context of this research. In simple terms, narrative is 'telling a story'. Within this study narrative has two functions: as a *means* and a *method*. As the *means*, I suggest that in telling their story participants might engage in a process of 'knowing oneself' or identification (see Chapter Three – Identity and Identification, for an introduction to this concept) and in so doing might reveal something of their sense of self or identity. As Benwell and Stokoe (2006) suggest 'it is in narrative tellings that we construct identities: selves are made coherent and meaningful through the

narrative or 'biographical' work that they do' (p. 42). Narrative is also the *method* that I used for this study, recognising the unique potential of narrative data to reveal (*and obscure*) identity and provide some insight into participants' perceptions of their professional self. However, within a poststructuralist paradigm identity and identification might be considered as fleeting or shifting or obscured and that we might hold 'a variety of narrative identities' (Murray, 2003, p. 116); this was reflected in my approach to the narrative events.

The narrative discussion itself is a contrived situation in which the participant has agreed to, and is complicit in, creating a story telling episode in which they engage in a 'retrospective construction of prospective significance' (MacLure, 1996, p. 281). The expectation is that this retrospective construction would be an 'accurate' recollection of the professional life story and might be meaningful to the participant in the process of identification. The reality is that the context of the discussion, and most notably the influence of myself within it, might shape this story in particular ways; recognising that the research itself is 'story telling' work (Mishler, 2006).

Life history method is one sub-section of the broader narrative method. In constructing the design for this research (see Chapter Two – Designing the Research) I situated myself within life history research but sought to justify an adapted approach that I believed would enable both the means and the method of narrative, which I have outlined above, to be achieved.

Why Narrative Research?

Benwell and Stokoe (2006), in their book 'Discourse and Identity', persuasively argue that identity is formed in discourse. If an individual is to engage in identification then this construction of self-understanding is achieved through the process of discourse, either spoken or written. This perspective views identity as performative rather than essentialist (discussed in detail in Chapter Three – Identity and Identification), and that 'if selves and identities are constituted in discourse, they are necessarily constructed in stories' (ibid, p. 137). Sfard and Prusak (2010) argue that an essentialist notion of identity is untenable 'because it leaves us without a clue as to where we are supposed to look for this elusive

"essence" that remains the same throughout a person's actions' and potentially harmful because the reified version of identity 'acts as a self-fulfilling prophesy' (p16). However, the performative perspective is prevalent among narrative researchers and convincingly argued for in such work:

> 'Through life stories individuals and groups make sense of themselves; they tell what they are or what they wish to be, as they tell so they become, they are their stories.' (Cortazzi, 2001)

> 'We speak our identities.' (Mishler, 1999)

> 'We become the stories through which we tell our lives... Telling stories configures the 'self-I-might-be.' (Riesmann, 2003)

> (in Benwell and Stokoe, 2006, p. 138)

In taking a performative view of identity, as constructed within narrative discourse, we should view these stories firstly as socially constructed, therefore nuanced according to the audience, and secondly multiple, that a person might construct their identities differently for different audiences and purposes.

> As stories, identities are human-made not God-given, they have authors and recipients, they are collectively shaped even if individually told, and they can change according to the authors' and recipients' perceptions and needs. (Sfard and Prusak, 2010, p. 17)

Finally, narrative is important for the individual as the 'means' by which they engage in a process of identification. Denzin (2000) argues that stories of self form a map by which the individual can navigate from point A to B. In my iteration of the Professional Life History method I consider that point B is the future self and that by activating prospective reflection within the construction of the story told it supports the individual to consider their 'possible selves' (Wai-Ling Packard and Conway, 2006; Whitty, 2002). The suggestion that narrative is also the 'means' for identification might align with Connelly and Clandinin's (2006) notion of 'ground' from which individuals can engage in self-narration, where they suggest that '[t]he narratives so constructed are then seen as the textual ground

for people to retell their living; that is, to interpret their lives as told in different ways, to imagine different possibilities, and to... actively write their lives'. (p. 478)

Why Use Prospective Reflection?

Prospective reflection has already been discussed in some detail in Chapter Three – Identity and Identification. In that chapter I sought to highlight the use of prospective reflection in supporting identity transformation. I then built on this concept of prospective reflection in Chapter Four - Reflection, where I further defined prospective reflection and demonstrated the value of activating prospective reflection in relation to supporting identification as part of a reflective process. In this chapter I revisit prospective reflection again, but with a focus on prospective reflection as part of the process of storytelling and pointing to its value in activating memory, imagination and hope.

Conway (2001) highlights the roles of both memory and imagination in prospective reflection, linking also to the concepts of hope and hopelessness in Freire's work: 'Hope is critical in helping people negotiate life's transitions and adversities, both personal and political' (1994, in *ibid* p103). I expected that these three tools for identification (memory, imagination and hope) would be activated during the PLH process. The activation of memory, imagination and hope are part of the 'emotions of identity' to which Zembylas (2003) refers. In Chapter Four – Reflection, I suggested that memory, imagination and hope were tools that support critical self-reflection and identity transformation and that they interact with each other during retrospective and prospective reflection in the activation of critical self-reflection.

The use of prospective reflection within the PLH process might also link to Anthony Gidden's notion of 'life plans': 'Life-planning presupposes a specific mode of organising time because the reflexive construction of self-identity depends as much on preparing for the future as on interpreting the past…' (1991, p. 85)

<u>An Analysis of the Use of Prospective Reflection in the Professional Life History and Follow Up Discussions</u>

In order to consider the role of prospective reflection in these narrative events, in relation to my third propositional statement 'that the engagement with narrative approaches, including the use of prospective reflection, is supportive for participants in terms of self-knowing', I examined the PLH transcripts at the point at which they engaged in prospective reflection and the follow up discussions where participants engaged further in prospective reflection and were asked to reflect on their experience of this process. Several of the participants in the follow up discussions expressed a valuing of the experience of engaging in prospective reflection:

Joanne saw the value of the PLH in getting her to think about the future and to map it out. She however identified the issue of job security when engaging in prospective reflection as this would give a different outlook. For her being interviewed in the Spring term, when her role was uncertain, to her follow up discussion time, when she had her contract renewed, meant going from 'it's not going to happen' to 'yes I can do this' (Joanne, 28-03-13, p.lxviii).

Jane also saw the value of the PLH process and how it caused her to 'think longer term' into the future (Jane, 08-04-13, p.lxii). She recognised that prospective reflection was more challenging and involved deeper thinking.

Annie felt that within the PLH discussion 'it was natural to ask about the future' (Annie, 15-05-13, p.xlix). It was in Annie's follow up discussion that for me the link between prospective reflection and planning for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) was highlighted. Her future thinking related to her gaining further academic qualifications and seeking further experiences that support her in her current role. She saw a link between professional (and personal) development and keeping happy and living a fulfilled life. Her reflections led me to consider whether planning for CPD and engaging with prospective reflection are similar activities, and if so would CPD planning be supported by the PLH process?

Activating prospective reflection in the storytelling process had been valued by the participants. They acknowledged its part in supporting career planning and identifying the constraints acting upon them as they projected into the future.

A further analysis of these instances of prospective reflection in relation to their evidence, or use, was conducted. Instances that indicated an activation of memory, imagination or hope were identified and recorded. These examples were then grouped together and themes identified (see Appendix 8 for this analysis).

Memory enabled participants to identify expertise from their past experiences which might support future roles. Joanne referred to her identity as an expert and how this provided transferable skills for different roles both in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) or senior leadership within a school. Memories of positive experiences in the past also supported the identification of future roles. Rebekah reflected positively on her time training as a teacher and related this to her ideas about moving into ITE. Other participants activated memories of key points in their past which influenced their ideas about the future. Annie recognised her mother's influence on her pursuance of lifelong learning and Emily sought to identify those 'pivotal points' in her professional life that equipped her for future possibilities. In addition, participants might express regret about aspects of their professional life that had been lost which might impact on future choices. This is evidenced as Emily talked about 'missing the lack of active teaching' when working for her local authority (Emily, 12-03-13, p.lvi). It seemed that memory was activated in the process of prospective reflection and that it was used to consider future selves.

Imagination appeared to be an important part of prospective reflection. Imagination was necessary for considering alternative professional roles. Four participants identified future roles that might have been un-imaginable in the past. Joanne and Rebekah both considered moving into ITE, Annie discussed possibly studying for a doctorate and Jane considered becoming a deputy head teacher. Imagining in this way is built upon a sense of expertise and identification as such. Imagination was also activated as participants considered possible choices. Elizabeth was considering two different roles within her current university and her

reflection was based on her imagining where she could make an impact and what she was good at. In addition, in her follow up discussion, she reflected on her choice between staying in ITE or moving back into teaching. In this process, her identification as a teacher educator provided a stronger affinity to remaining in her current role. Imagination was also activated as participants identified skills and expertise which might be used in the future; which Rebekah referred to as 'keeping ahead of the game' (Rebekah, 02-04-13, p.lxx). Finally, Annie expressed imagination in her consideration of future professional development: 'I will be 70 and still motivated to follow my personal development' (Annie, 15-05-13, p.l).

Hope was also evidenced in these episodes of prospective reflection, although in some instances this was qualified by various constraints. Firstly, there were clear examples of participants identifying their 'ideal roles'. All three Reading Recovery Teacher Leaders (RRTLs) wanted to be able to stay in their current role, and for Jane the ideal would be to do this full time, which she knew was not currently possible. Elizabeth expressed her ideal role as becoming a senior lecturer (and also in writing a book). Another aspect of hope evidenced by the participants related to role and financial security. Joanne spoke of the need for financial security and the difference it made when her contract was renewed. Likewise, Rebekah valued the security of having a permanent full time contract. Another aspect of hope was expressed in the form of vision and goals. Jane's vision related to her desire to 'make a difference, to have 'a vision for the children' she worked with and to work 'where her heart is' (Jane, 27-11-12, p.xxxvi). Joanne expressed that 'it is good to have goals and to think this is where I want to be' (Joanne, 28-03-13, p.lxvi). However, expressions of hope were often balanced with awareness of the constraints, leading to comments such as: 'feeling torn' (Jane, 27-11-12, p.xxxiv) or the difficulty 'to marry up what I would like to happen with what I think will happen' (Joanne, 28-03-13, p.lxvi).

By identifying these expressions of memory, imagination and hope it further emphasised the value and impact that engaging prospective reflection can have on the individual storyteller, both their sense of identity and their preparedness for their possible future. However, in identifying the value of prospective

reflection, I wondered if it would occur naturally in storytelling episodes in other social contexts. I suspect that it would not; my experience of storytelling in informal contexts is that it usually ends when a particular event is concluded or at the point in the narrative when the present time is reached. This conclusion is tentative; however, it does cause me to consider whether the PLH method adopted in this study is particularly valuable because it activates prospective reflection.

Consistency and Coherence in Narrative Storytelling

In my initial analysis of the PLHs of my six participants, I was struck by the way in which they sought to provide coherence in the telling of their story. This also resonated with the literature on narrative (see below). All participants came prepared for the discussion through the construction of their professional time lines. In doing so they appeared to have identified themes and 'stories' which supported the construction of a coherent telling of their professional life history.

In my memo notes, following the PLH discussions, I was able to identify themes and stories (see Appendix 9). Although these memos were captured prior to the transcription of the discussions, the narrative events themselves show these identified 'stories' or themes. I suggest that this supported the notion that in the narrative process a story-teller is seeking to create a cohesive account of their professional life.

Within the literature of narrative method there is some dissonance in relation to this issue of coherence. Older works such as Cohler (1982, in Atkinson, 1998) suggest that 'the way a personal narrative is recounted at any point in one's life represents the most internally consistent interpretation of the way the past, the experienced present, and the anticipated future is presently understood by that person' (p60). Likewise Giddens (1991) speaks of the coherence of the trajectory of self. In contrast Andrews *et al.* (2000) state that 'there is no such thing as a coherent story' (p8). From my analysis of these PLH discussions I suggest that there is a tendency towards coherence and continuity in constructing the professional story, '…people seek some coherence in their present or immediate self-definitions by drawing on their past, remembered selves (retrospective

selves) as well as their future, imagined selves (prospective selves)…' (Wai-Ling Packard and Conway, 2006, p. 252). However, the lack of coherence is not in the way the story is told but in the way the story might be told at different times and in different contexts. As Clandinin *et al.* (2010) suggest '[l]ives are composed, recomposed, told, retold and lived out in storied ways in storied landscapes'. (p. 82)

Crucial to the shaping and re-shaping of the story is the impact of transitions. As new transitions are encountered and negotiated the story might be constructed differently to make coherence out of the new event. 'This kind of 'looking back' for overarching themes and explanatory links is, of course, a major part of the construction of continuity across transitions' (MacLure, 1996, p. 274). Transitions are of particular significance in relation to the construction of the PLH. All transitions involve loss (Giddens, 1991), create identity dissonance (Warin and Muldoon, 2009) and in the telling of the story they are paradoxical as 'they are located at specific points in time and space, but they are always pulled away from the present moment to their origins in the past and their significance for the future' (MacLure, 1996, p. 274).

Linked to this notion of narrative reconstruction is the question of whether narrative is always linear. Mishler (2006), drawing from Ricoeur (1980), considers that there might be two dimensions to a narrative: one is chronological, the 'episodic dimension', which characterises the story as made of events; the second is non-chronological, the 'configurational dimension' which 'construes significant wholes out of scattered events' (p32). This second dimension is in alignment with Polkinghorne's (1991) concept of 'emplotment' which is 'the means by which narrators weave together the complex of events into a single story. Through its operation, the historical and social contexts in which events take place exerts influence in the understanding of the story' (p141). This concept is what I considered to be in operation as the participants in the study created their stories. They sought to create a plot out of the distinct events or episodes in their professional lives, seeking themes and meanings to create the coherence that is a powerful driver in identification.

In the PLH method I have adopted, the act of preparing the professional life time line in advance of the discussion supported the participants to start to shape their stories in this thematic way. For most this enabled the telling of a coherent story which identified links and themes between different events in the story. However, there was also a danger with this method in that the participant was constrained into construing the story in a linear, chronological manner. Perhaps with a less structured approach the stories told may have been more diverse and themes would have taken precedence over the recounting of 'first I did this and then I did this'. However, even within this structure there is evidence of linking backwards and forwards in a non sequential manner, or as Mishler would refer to it as 'the double arrow of time' (2006).

An Analysis of the Professional Life History Discussions in Relation to Consistency and Coherence

As evidenced in my memo notes (see Appendix 9) it is clear that my perception of the PLH narratives was that there was a sense in which the participants were seeking to create coherence in their life stories. But would the participants themselves have such a sense of the coherence in their storytelling? In the follow up discussions one aspect of my prompting related to a consideration of whether they might tell their story differently. The prompts I used were 'What would you keep the same in your story?' and 'What would you tell differently?' These questions obviously identify whether the participant felt that their story was consistent and if they stated that the story would stay the same it implied that they perceived coherence in their story also. In my analysis of the follow up discussions I was looking for evidence of coherence as identified by the participants.

What was of particular interest in Annie's follow up discussion was her desire to be able to go back and make greater emphasis of the significance of some events in her professional life. For example, she had not stated in her PLH discussion the significance of her time working in the Language and Curriculum Service that 'it's through that constant contact with theories and practices and that collective reflection of being supported as a staff… that actually I believe I developed myself as an effective teacher' (Annie, 15-05-13, p.xlvii). It appeared that Annie was

seeking to address some lack of coherence in her PLH storytelling and to identify these themes that she now considered to be important at the point of the follow up discussion. In addition, what was clear from the follow up discussions was the value of the preparation of the timeline in advance of the discussion for supporting that coherence and developing a sense of 'emplotment' in the retelling of the PLH. As Joanne commented 'it was good to put down in a timeline, and certainly to think about in terms of the structure of the time and what happened when, before I then had that conversation with you' (Joanne, 28-03-13, p.lxv).

Would Stories Be Constructed Differently On Other Occasions?

In seeking to challenge the notion of a coherent and unchangeable professional life story, in my follow up discussions I sought to probe the participants in relation to: Would the life story be constructed differently on a subsequent occasion as new events and transitions have transpired?

All of the participants stated that they would not change anything about the main body of their professional story: 'no I think it's pretty much the same' (Jane, 08-04-13, p.lxiii). It was aspects of their current transitions at the point of telling that would most likely be changed. Joanne would not have mentioned about applying for another job as it has 'now paled into insignificance', although it was 'at the forefront of my mind then' (Joanne, 28-03-13, p.lxvii). Jane recognised that she was 'more stable in myself and my position at the moment' (Jane, 08-04-13, p.lxiii) and this was reflected in the way she constructed the balance in her two roles differently in the follow up discussion. Rebekah recognised that it could be updated as time had passed, but that there was nothing she would change as she read through it. She seemed to contrast the 'accurate record' of the past with the 'surmising' about the future (Rebekah, 02-04-13, p.lxix), perhaps implying that one was more valid than the other. Annie also felt that she would not change anything but considered that her telling of it was a 'bit muddled' (Annie, 15-05-13, p.xlix) and that she tried to come back to things, thus losing some of the chronology in the telling of her story. As mentioned before, she also had wanted to be more explicit about the confidence she gained from working with people and children. Elizabeth felt that the PLH was 'a good summary' and 'gives, the outline of everything' but expressed doubts about whether or not the story 'does

get very deeply under the surface' and that there were things she could add (Elizabeth, 09-04-13, p.lii). This might be partly a reflection on her own familiarity with life history method and the depth in which she sought to conduct her own research interviews for her PhD. Finally, Emily focused on the way that her reflections at the end of the first year in a new role would be different to how she would reflect on the role after the second year.

My tentative conclusion here is that there is a difference between the recent past and the longer term past. Thus the events which occurred perhaps a year ago, or more, were likely to be recalled and told in a similar manner. But those recent or current events were still being shaped in terms of the participants making meaning of them and constructing them within the story. By taking the narrative through current events and then looking into the future it was the recent past and the prospective future that were re-shaped upon follow up discussions. And this was because, as Joanne would state, 'the story is unending' (Joanne, 28-03-13, p.lxvii). In relation to identification, it seems that creating coherence in a story is part of that identification process activated through critical self-reflection. Identification with roles and identities in the longer term past, once recognised, seems to remain constant. Identification is less secure in relation to more recent events, roles and identities, perhaps needing subsequent critical self-reflection to make these new identities more secure. This might also be aligned to Connelly and Clandindin (2006) in their 'distinction between living and telling' where they suggest 'four terms (living, telling, retelling, reliving) to structure the process of self-narration.' (p. 478)

This is different from my original hypothesis where I thought that stories would be constructed differently based on changes that occur in the future. It may be that if I had asked participants to tell their whole PLH again at the follow up point I could have found evidence to support this hypothesis. However, I felt that it would be an exploitation of the good will of my participants to ask them to do this: firstly because it would have taken longer than a simple follow up discussion and secondly because they may have felt I was just asking for a repetition of the same thing and thus not seen as valuing the time. It could also be that if they were to use the same timeline to complete the re-telling then the story would inevitably

be the same or very similar. Perhaps if I were to ask these participants to re-tell their stories in two or five years' time then their stories might be constructed differently but this is outside of the time frame available for this study.

<u>Binary Dimensions of Narrative – A Suggested Framework</u>

In my reading of narrative theory and research I have been struck by the repeated use of perceived binary dimensions operating within narrative constructions and overlapping into issues of identity. The first set of binary dimensions I consider to be labels that depict two aspects of self as subjective and objective. 'Stories bring order to our experience, and help us to view our lives both subjectively and objectively at the same time.' (Atkinson, 1998, p. 10) Within the narrative episode there is a tension between these two dimensions. The intention of the story-teller (or at least the researcher) is for the subjective aspects of a person's identity or self-understanding to be revealed, in order to achieve this some degree of personal objectivity is required. However the subjective nature of the autobiographical account means that this level of objectivity can never truly be achieved, '...the histories that human beings write are not the 'objective' accounts of events occurring across time that they seem to be; rather they are, like fictions, creative means of exploring and describing realities' (Andrews *et al.*, 2000, p. 6). Likewise, Zembylas (2003) considers that 'the self should be seen as both an object and a subject of experience' (p221). Andrews *et al.* (2000) suggest that the 'outer' realm of society and culture and the 'inner' realm of personal characteristics form a distinct 'psychosocial' zone within the narrative construct. This might echo Judith Butler's seminal work (Butler, 1997, p. 19), in which she too identifies the distinction between the psychic and the social (or interior and exterior life) which is fabricated in the process of internalization, perhaps through the narrative process. Another notion that pervades particularly poststructuralist research is that of the self and other. Kearney (2003) cites Bakhtin's theory (1981) of individual consciousness which draws from a triad of perspectives:

1. Others for self: How we are influenced by other people or dominant narratives;

2. Self for others: How we present ourselves to the world. Our social persona;

3. Self for self: How we view ourselves from the inside' (*ibid.* p54)

Indeed MacLure (1996) suggests that we should consider identification (rather than identity) as 'an unceasable movement between the irreconcilable opposites of Self and Other' (p282). Thus I see an alignment in the form of these three dimensions of subjective/objective, psycho/social and self/other. However, as expressed in my introduction, I seek to take a poststructuralist position within this discussion and resist the drive towards categorising by such binary oppositions but rather to embrace the tensions inhered within them.

The other binary dimension that I wish to explore is that between agency and structure (which has been introduced in previous chapters). This was first highlighted to me in my reading of Benwell and Stokoe's book 'Discourse and Identity' (2006), but once activated in my consciousness it then pervaded much of what I read, particularly within poststructuralist literature. Benwell and Stokoe define 'agency' as an issue of 'whether people are free to construct their identity in any way they wish' and 'structure' as 'whether identity construction is constrained by forces of various kinds, from the unconscious psyche to institutionalised power structures' (*ibid*, p10). One focus for me is whether the PLH discussion itself forms an agentative act for the storyteller and another is whether in the narrative process issues of power structures are revealed. In particular I see a strong alignment between this dualism and that of subjectivity and power, explored by Judith Butler (1997) and building from the work of Foucault. The particular interest in Butler's work is the way in which she sees the paradox of subjection in which 'the subject loses itself to tell the story of itself, but in telling the story of itself seeks to give an account of what the narrative function has already made plain' (*ibid*, p11). Thus power is not just external to, or 'pressed upon', the subject but is, in the narrative act, operated by the subject as resistance. 'Power not only *acts on* a subject but, in a transitive sense, *enacts* the subject into being' (*ibid,* p13). Thus I resist the tendency towards 'othering' of the dimension of structure, perhaps in the light of the political aspirations of agency.

In my exploration of these two different binary dimensions I wondered if they might be operating within the narrative process in a way that might support a

framework for analysis. I suggest the following model as a means by which this could be explored:
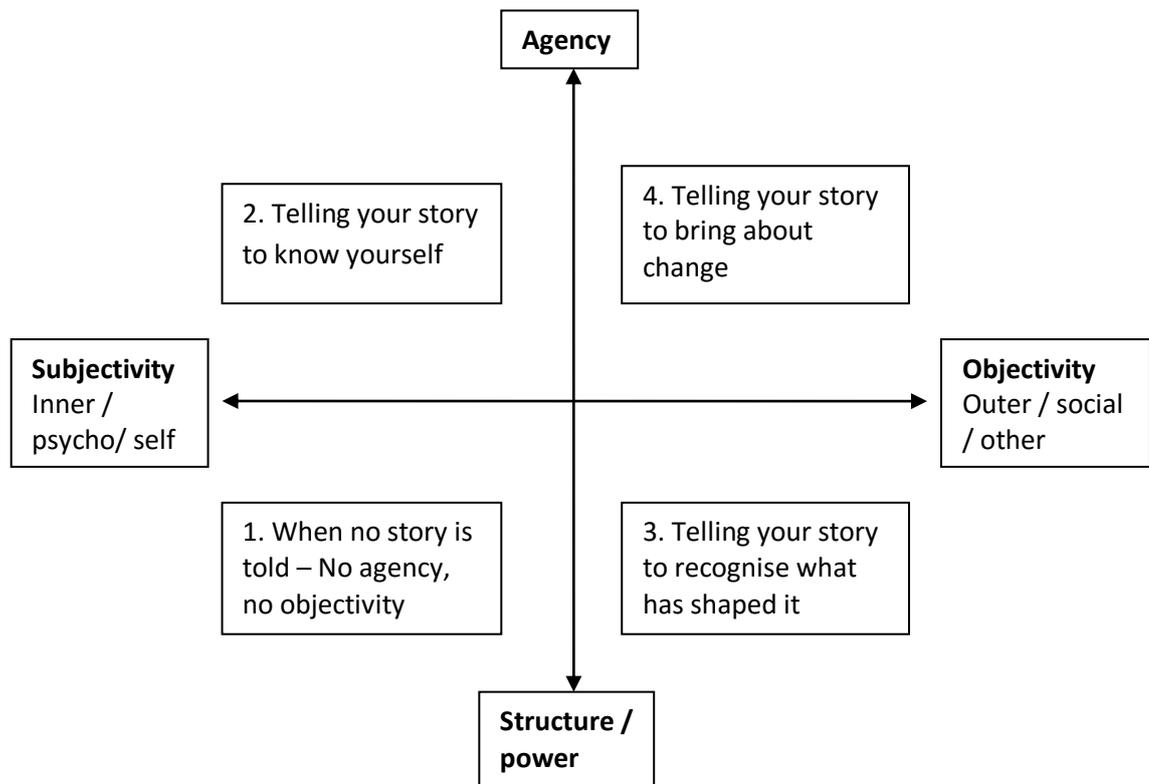
Figure 5.1 - A model that considers the activation of agency and objectivity in the act of storytelling - Informed by Judith Butler (1997)

1. Before the story was told there was only subjective experience and the influence of structure/power on the self. At this point the individual lacks objectivity and agency.

2. A decision to tell your story is an act of agency. Seeking to reveal and know the subjective experience. In this act the subject is lost and the story becomes the object. This is an act of the conscience or 'reflective self-relation'.

3. Telling your story functions to reveal the structures of culture and society, or power, that have influenced the self and the story. Revealing power as external to the subject 'acting on'.

4. Telling your story to effect change in your life or to impact others is to take that objective awareness of self as a tool for agency. Revealing power as constitutive of the subject 'acted by'.

An Analysis of the Professional Life History Discussions in the Light of This Framework

I wanted to know if this model was supported by the narrative events in this study and whether it provided further insight into the value of storytelling in relation to identification and self-knowing, but also as a source of transformative learning and identity transformation. I therefore re-visited the transcripts looking for what I perceived to be evidence of each of the four aspects in this model. (*See deconstruction statement below identifying the shortfalls in such an approach*.) In conducting this analysis, I recognised that there was a strong affinity to some of my analysis of premise reflection (see Chapter Four - Reflection) which I will explore later.

1. *When no story is told – No Agency, no objectivity:*

This point is purely theoretical and cannot be endorsed by the narrative events, as I am starting from a point at which a story is told. However, Annie reflects in her follow up discussion that this was a very positive process for her and she stated 'I wish I had done this before' and 'why did it take me this opportunity of being interviewed by you to make me think in this way?' (Annie, 15-03-13, p.xlvii) Perhaps these comments suggested that she recognised a point prior to the discussion when she lacked this objective perspective on her life.

2. *Telling your story to know yourself:*

It was clear from the follow up discussions that most participants found the PLH process supported identification. Jane and Annie were both very aware of how constructing their PLH had been beneficial to them. Jane noted that: 'it just made me start to think a little bit more' and gave her a 'clearer understanding of where I wanted to go' (Jane, 08-04-13, p.lxii). Emily saw the PLH process as seeking out the 'reasoning behind' some aspects of her life. It was 'an exercise to think about the links in my journey' (Emily, 12-03-13, p.lvii); although she questioned

whether this was just about 'articulating what I had already thought'. Joanne enjoyed the 'opportunity to reflect on what I did and why I did it'. She found the process quite emotional as she faced the feeling that she 'wasn't capable of doing' that pervaded most of her career. She was also concerned that the PLH process was 'self-indulgent really to be able to sit and do that' (Joanne, 28-03-13, p.lxvi). Perhaps this was more a concern for me as the researcher listening to her life story but does imply a cathartic effect in the narrative process. This contrasted with Rebekah who did not find it so easy to tell the story 'because with hindsight it's always difficult'. She found that in looking back on her life 'nothing was planned', 'it was more reactions to situations that happened' and that she did not have 'much control over that' or she did not 'have a lot of choice' (Rebekah, 02-04-13, p.lxxii). This gave her a sense of vulnerability in telling the story but still revealed a sense of knowing herself in the PLH process. Elizabeth was less convinced of the value of telling her story. She considered herself to be 'quite a reflective sort of person' and that she was sharing 'things that I have probably talked about at various times with other people' (Elizabeth, 09-04-13, p.li). This does not necessarily mean that she did not need to tell her story to know herself, but that she had taken opportunities in other contexts to do this.

3. *Telling your story to recognise what has shaped it:*

It is harder to find evidence that demonstrated a greater awareness by the participant of the structure/power influences that have impacted their professional lives, but there are some indicators of this. Jane was drawn to consider choices that she has made in her professional life and to consider 'what might have happened if I had made that choice instead' (Jane, 08-04-13, p.lxi). In considering choices, one is aware of the influences that constrain these choices or the impact that choice has on our agency in life. Jane also recognised in the process of telling her story that 'those uncomfortable things were the better decisions that I made, and pushing myself a bit more' (*ibid,* p.lxii). Rebekah, in looking back on her PLH, recognised the tensions between the ideal professional life where 'everything went smoothly' and you would 'fulfil your aims' versus the reality where 'you sort of lurched a bit from one thing to another' (Rebekah, 02-04-13,

p.lxxii). This too is a reflection on what has shaped the life history. Annie suggested a powerful insight: that the professional life 'is not haphazard, it is actually a science; that you do this, and this will happen' (Annie, 15-03-13, p.xlvii). Another clear insight about the forces at play within a professional life, suggesting that agency is in operation and that knowing this 'science' might support an individual as they develop their careers.

4. Telling your story to bring about change:

I firstly want to recognise and appreciate the contribution of each of my participants to this process. Although they might not have directly seen the impact that agreeing to share their story might have on a larger change process, they were willing to trust me in my research endeavour that I sought to draw conclusions that might bring about new ideas and change opportunities. However, in addition to their reflections on the PLH process Emily and Annie both sought to bring some insights that I might perhaps draw, possibly implying a recognition that in telling their story they might bring about some change, through the means of participating in this research. Annie evidenced another layer of reflection in preparation for her follow up discussion. In this she was 'looking for landmarks in what I had said'. On reflection she wanted to acknowledge the growing confidence in her performance that had been gained through 'working alongside professional colleagues' and through 'every child in every class I taught or supported'. This insight she had subsequently sought to pass onto her student teachers as part of the 'root and structure' of how she supported her students (Annie, 15-15-13, p.xlviii). Emily interweaved into her follow up discussion her personal philosophy about developing a career in education, perhaps formulated in the PLH process. She sought to identify herself as building a 'portfolio career' which linked to her metaphor of a 'rucksack' in which she selected from different parts of her experience. The values that she sought to highlight were: the importance of quick decisions and taking opportunities; seeing the landscape and staying flexible to adapt to perceived changes; and that change is okay, builds confidence and should happen regularly 'different challenge, different situation, different people' (Emily, 12-03-13, p.lix).

From my analysis it would appear that this model does provide a useful framework for considering the value of narrative approaches, and in particularly this PLH process. The evidence from the narrative events appeared to show these different aspects occurring. As mentioned before, I recognised that there was a strong alignment between my analysis of premise reflection in Chapter Four – Reflection, and the evidence I have drawn, particularly to sections three and four above. It would be reasonable to conclude that the two aspects of 'telling your story to recognise what has shaped it' and 'telling your story to bring about change' would both require engagement of premise reflection. If premise reflection is activated in the PLH process then this is what supports a move from storytelling that is framed and experienced subjectively to storytelling that activates an objective awareness of self, or identification.

In the very creation of this model, and its use to analyse the narrative, I am at war with myself as a poststructuralist researcher. I have created a 'structure' that I see as a limiting straight jacket rather than a hypothesis that might bring freedom and creativity. I could only justify this to myself if I were to deconstruct the above analysis and to identify the constraints held within. Firstly, I would say that the viewing frame I created caused me to search for evidence that supported this construction, rather that drawing a hypothesis directly from the narrative events, as would be advocated by a grounded theory approach. Secondly, I would want to feel that I also analysed the narrative events for evidence that might refute or disrupt this framework, and consider that I did not discover such evidence. I would however recognise that in my closeness to the narrative events and the participants I might be blind to contraindications. Finally, I would suggest that the alignment I saw between different binary dimensions and the contrast to the agency / structure dimension is subjective to my own viewpoint. Indeed, it could be argued that the agency / structure dimension could be aligned with the subjectivity / objectivity dimension, where agency is about taking an objective stance and structure is subjectivity, in the unknowing subjection to power at work upon the individual. In addition, there might be other binary dimensions that I have not seen in my readings or in the narrative events that could have added a third dimension to this model. However, I felt justified in developing this model if it proved helpful to myself and to others and provided a way forward in seeking

to uncover hidden assumptions (to be discussed further in the concluding chapter).

Telling stories

Telling stories was used in the title of this thesis because it indicates the performative nature of narrative events. It also implies an issue of truthfulness; both in that stories are more often fiction than fact, perhaps with certain elements left out or shaped in an idealistic way, and that the individual, particularly children, might be accused of 'telling stories' in order to evade the truth of the situation. Although I am not implying that the participants in this study intentionally evaded 'telling the truth' in their PLH discussions there is a sense in which the research context of the story telling episode, and my role within the telling, might have shaped the telling perhaps causing some aspects to be told differently or left unsaid. Therefore, by using this term 'telling stories' in the title it alludes to the poststructuralist roots of this thesis, implying that the story told is only partial and fleeting, and may be told differently in different contexts and subsequent occasions.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored narrative as a method and a means. The potential of the Professional Life History method developed in this study was provided: firstly, in relation to its ability to provide narrative events that are fruitful for exploring issues of identity; and secondly, that by activating both retrospective and prospective reflection it forms a site for the engagement of identification and critical self-reflection. Narrative was also considered to be a means by which the story-teller seeks to achieve some coherence in the story telling and therefore gain a sense of their identity through the process of identification. The follow up discussions demonstrated the participants' appreciation of the value of engaging in such narrative practice.

In addition, this chapter presented an analytical framework around the two binary dimensions of subjectivity / objectivity and structure / agency. The narrative events were explored using this framework and it was concluded that this framework may be helpful in considering the value of telling stories; both in

relation to moving from a subjective to a more objective awareness of self and to engage more critical awareness of the influence of structure(s) on an individual and a move towards a more agentive self.

Chapter Six – Retrospective and Prospective Reflection

This thesis provides insight into professional identity as education professionals transition into new roles. It reveals the processes engaged by narrative practices that might support identity transformation. In particular, this study concludes: Firstly, that as education professionals transition into new roles identity transformation into the identities of that new role takes place, but that this can be problematic. Secondly, that there is a process of identification, activated in the narrative act, which seems to be supportive of identity transformation. Thirdly, that the adoption of narrative practices, such as the Professional Life History (PLH) method used in this study, can support education professionals making these transitions.

In this final chapter a similar process to that used within the PLH discussions, incorporating both retrospective and prospective reflection, is applied to the findings of this study and to myself as a neophyte researcher. The chapter starts with retrospective reflection by signposting the main findings from this study. It identifies how each is supported by the analysis of the narrative events and indicates their particular contribution to contemporary literature on teacher educator identity and professional learning. Next a theoretical model is provided and discussed in order to represent the processes involved in professional identity transitions and the role of the PLH in supporting identity transformation. Finally, prospective reflection looks forward to the ways in which these findings might be applied in the field, indicating future areas for research and development. It concludes with personal prospective reflection on myself as a neophyte researcher.

Retrospective Reflection – The Main Findings of This Study

The intention of this study, at its conception, was to reveal new insights into professional identity and identity transformation for a group of education professionals transitioning from being teachers to teacher educators. The research goals, as outlined in Chapter One – Setting the Context for the Thesis, reflect this ambition.

- *to understand professional transitions for education professionals moving from being a teacher to a teacher educator;*

- *to understand how professional identity changes or transforms as such transitions are made;*

- *to consider ways in which education professionals might be supported during times of transition.*

The intention of understanding professional transitions and identity change might have been naïve. How could understanding of such a broad, complex and contested field be achieved by a small scale study and a lone researcher? However, what has been revealed through the theoretical and interpretive analyses of this study is a re-conceptualisation of the concepts of identity, identity transformation and identification. In addition, although the research design utilised narrative method, it was never intended that this would be the focus of the study. However, as intimated by the third goal, the analysis of the PLHs and the follow up discussions revealed the potential effectiveness of narrative approaches, such as the PLH, in supporting identity transformation. Further pathways of analysis lead to the emerging concept of identification as evidenced in the narrative events. Thus the latter two main findings relate to the processes activated within narrative practices and to their effectiveness in supporting identity transformation.

Identity Transformation

The first main finding was that identity transformation does take place as education professionals transition into new roles, but that identity transformation is not straightforward or certain. In addition, this study showed that identity transformation can be better supported through the activation of critical self-reflection and supportive induction for neophyte teacher educators. In this thesis I developed a working concept and definition of identity transformation that was based on Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory (1991). This assumed that as teachers transitioned into other roles, such as that of teacher educators, their professional identity would change. The analysis presented in Chapter Three – Identity and Identification, found evidence of identity transformation within the

narrative events of this study. Although there were no clear statements of identity as a teacher educator within the narrative events, key indicators of identity transformation into that role were identified, which were classified as follows: skills and knowledge, 'doing it', self-belief, future aspirations, support and independence. In addition, there was evidence of a more developed identity as an 'expert teacher' found within the narrative events of all participants. The assumption had been made in the design of this study that identity transformation might take place within the first three years of transition into a new role (with participants being selected having between one and three years in their new role). However, the lack of stronger indicators of identity as a teacher educator might suggest that identity transformation could take longer than three years. In contrast, for the three Reading Recovery Teacher Leaders (RRTLs) their identification with Reading Recovery, and the values of this programme in making a difference in the lives of children most at risk in our education system, was evidenced and demonstrated identity transformation of one kind. It was concluded that the strength of identity within Reading Recovery might have been supported through the yearlong professional development programme undertaken by RRTLs and the bond of the community of practice to which they belonged, perhaps contrasting with the induction experience of participants working within Initial Teacher Education (ITE). This study afforded a unique opportunity to contrast two very different approaches into a teacher educator role. The evidence provided showed that an extended induction into the new role, and the associated development of a strong community of practice, can be very supportive of identity transformation.

These findings might inform the contemporary literature on Teacher Educator identity, as outlined in Chapter One – Setting the context for the thesis. Firstly, the literature supports the notion that identity transformation is not straightforward as a Teacher Educator (TE) moves from being a first to second order practitioner and as an 'expert become novice' (Murray and Male, 2005). The participants in this study, whilst having between one and three years' experience in the field, were still not calling themselves 'teacher educators' as such. However, the more strongly evidenced identity as an 'expert' might align with Boyd and Harris' (2010) observation of TEs 'striving for credibility'. Perhaps the loss of credibility as a

recently practicing teacher is superimposed with credibility as an 'expert' within their field of education, and the constant striving as TEs 'to know more and more about more and more' (Davey, 2013, p. 115). For the RRTLs in this study the heightened evidence of identity transformation might contrast with reseach into TEs working in other contexts, such as School-Based Teacher Educators. White (2013 a; 2013 b) highlights the importance of being linked to a community of practice of others in similar contexts, which was one of the supportive factors identified by RRTLs in this study.

Securing identity transformation as a valid concept was not enough. It was the intention of this study to explore the process (or processes) involved in identity transformation as revealed in the narrative events. In my second propositional statement: 'that the process of reflection engaged in during the narrative events, and subsequently, is transformative in nature, with potential to support identity transformation'; I made the connection between reflection and identity transformation. Using a theoretical lens based on Mezirow's Transformative Learning theory (see Chapter Four – Reflection), I identified two aspects of reflection that might be involved in identity transformation, that of critical self-reflection and what Mezirow terms 'premise reflection' (1991). This research lens was then applied to the narrative events. Examples of premise reflection activated during the PLH process were identified and in particular premise reflection of the self. Such instances evidenced transformative learning and identity transformation. Finally, in Chapter Five – Narrative and Storytelling, premise reflection was aligned with narrative practices that 'activate an objective awareness of self' (as depicted in sections three and four of Figure 5.1). A move away from a subjective experience of identity into a more agentive understanding of self would seem to be supportive of an individual, particularly in times of transition. Thus another finding of this study is that opportunities to engage in premise reflection would support identity transformation. The PLH process afforded participants in this study with an opportunity to engage in reflection that led to premise reflection on the self.

In the overview of literature relating to TE professional learning (see Chapter One – Setting the context for the thesis), I point out that, whilst there is research

suggesting the importance of reflective practices in supporting identity transformation (see Izadinia, 2014, Mueller, 2003), there is very little research that actually adopts such practices with TEs. This study therefore adds further insights into this domain showing that engaging in narrative practices such as the PLH process, can support identity transformation.

Although identity transformation is not a new concept (see Zembylas, 2003, for example) this study has identified clear instances of identity transformation and provided the link between this and premise reflection activated through narrative approaches. Identity transformation makes a bold claim that a new professional identity might be formed within the context of a new professional role or community of practice. This does not mean that old identities are lost but may be subsumed within a re-negotiated identity, in this case as a teacher educator. As research explores the challenges faced by neophyte teacher educators (such as that by Murray and Male, 2005) the importance of supporting professional identity transformation needs to be addressed. In the section on prospective reflection below I make some suggestions on ways in which this could be developed.

The Process of Identification

The second main finding of this study related to the development of a new concept of 'identification', which describes a process engaged in during narrative practices which is supportive of identity transformation. In the analysis of the narrative events in this study, discussed in Chapter Three – Identity and Identification, there was emerging evidence of this process which I called identification. Identification is not a new term (see Hall, 2000; Atkinson, 2001) but has not been the subject of analysis within narrative practice. In exploring the narrative events for evidence of identity I could see that the PLH afforded participants an opportunity to engage in 'identity work' or a process of 'recognition' of their professional self and this is what I termed identification. The use of the research lens presented in Chapter Four – Reflection, enabled a deeper exploration of the process of identification. The analysis of instances of critical self-reflection (CSR) identified examples that related to reflection on identity or the professional self. It was concluded that these were instances of identification. Further exploration of the different ways in which identification was

triggered suggested that CSR, and particularly premise reflection, were notably activated through the use of prospective reflection and when participants engaged in 'reflecting on reflection'. This is a phrase I used for the reflection that occurred during the follow up discussions, whereby participants were able to reflect on their experience of reflection (during the PLH process).

As stated above, there are few instances of research into reflective practices that might support TEs in relation to developing their professional identity into their new role. The closest alignment to this study is that of Vloet and Van Swet (2010) in their adoption of a narrative-biographical method, as a means by which 'teacher educators – and, we suggest, teachers – can construct and re-construct their professional identity…' (p. 165). It is this process of construction and re-construction that I think is aligned to my working concept of identification. It is also noticeable that in their narrative-biographical method they engaged participants in considering their past, present and future, which again aligns with my use of retrospective and prospective reflection. In addition, the study by Williams and Power (2010) used a 'core reflection' approach (based on the work of Korthagen and Vasalos, 2005, *op. cit.*) as a framework for facilitated reflection between two TEs. They concluded that 'the study illustrated the importance of opportunities for genuine reflective conversations and for teacher educators to be listened to be trusted colleagues' and 'that opportunities for collegial interactions are an important part of the development of a professional identity as a teacher educator' (*ibid* p. 129). It is the concept of identification, and the exploration of this in relation to critical self-reflection, that might build upon, and inform, these earlier findings. Therefore, I considered that this concept of identification was a significant and useful new idea that can be further developed within both initial teacher education, and research and practice for teacher educators. These ideas are expanded in the section on prospective reflection to follow.

The Value of Engaging in Narrative Activities

The third main finding of this study was that narrative practices, such as the PLH process, were supportive of individuals in activating identification, particularly at times of professional transition. This unanticipated finding demonstrated the value and impact of engaging in narrative activities, particularly the use of the

PLH process, for individuals during times of professional transition. In this thesis I have sought to show that it is in the narrative process that identification is activated, perhaps leading to identity transformation. Chapter Five – Narrative and Storytelling, applied an analytical framework considering two binary dimensions of structure / agency and subjectivity / objectivity to the narrative events. This framework identified the effectiveness of these narrative approaches in supporting reflection that moved the individual from a subjective and constrained experience of self to an agentive and objective view of self that enabled professional growth and identity transformation. Thus this thesis claims that narrative approaches can be more than a method of gathering data but can be a means by which individuals can be supported in their professional development and self-knowing. This potential was endorsed by the participants in their follow up discussions.

Within the narrative process adopted for this study there were two aspects of reflection which gained prominence both in the analysis of the narrative events and in the personal reflections of the participants; that of prospective reflection and the value of 'reflecting on reflection'.

Prospective reflection

The importance and benefit of activating prospective reflection within these narrative methods has been repeatedly evidenced within this study, through analyses in each chapter. Prospective reflection, as described in Chapter Five – Narrative and Storytelling, is considered to be particularly effective because it activates 'memory, imagination and hope' (Conway, 2001). Retrospective reflection is based on memory and imagination alone, but by considering future possibilities hope is also activated in prospective reflection and can lead to an enhanced experience of identification and self-knowing.

This study endorses the adoption of prospective reflection within narrative practices, as suggested by Kelchtermans (2007), where the future perspective is one of the five components that make up teacher's self-undertanding. This is again endorsed by the findings of Conway and Clark (2003), in their use of

anticipatory reflection with teachers in training, and Vloet and Van Swet (2010) in their narrative-biographical method.

Reflecting on reflection

In the analysis using the research lens of types of reflection, (used for Chapter Four – Reflection), it was notable that premise reflection was particularly activated in the follow up discussions. It was concluded that these were instances of 'reflecting on reflection' and that such opportunities were supportive of identification and may be of particular benefit for identity transformation. This was an unexpected outcome and will be discussed further in the section of prospective reflection to follow. The value of 'reflecting on reflection' has not been a subject for research in the studies contained in my review of relevant literature and I consider to be a relatively new area of interest in this field. I suggest that this process can be applied in different contexts, as will be described in the prospective reflection section below.

A Grounded Theoretical Model of Professional Identity and Identity Transformation

The diagrammatic model below provides a way of representing the processes identified in this study, which has sought to draw from the principles of grounded theory but to generate further insights through the application of particular research lenses, informed by relevant theory. The conclusions described above have been represented in this model.
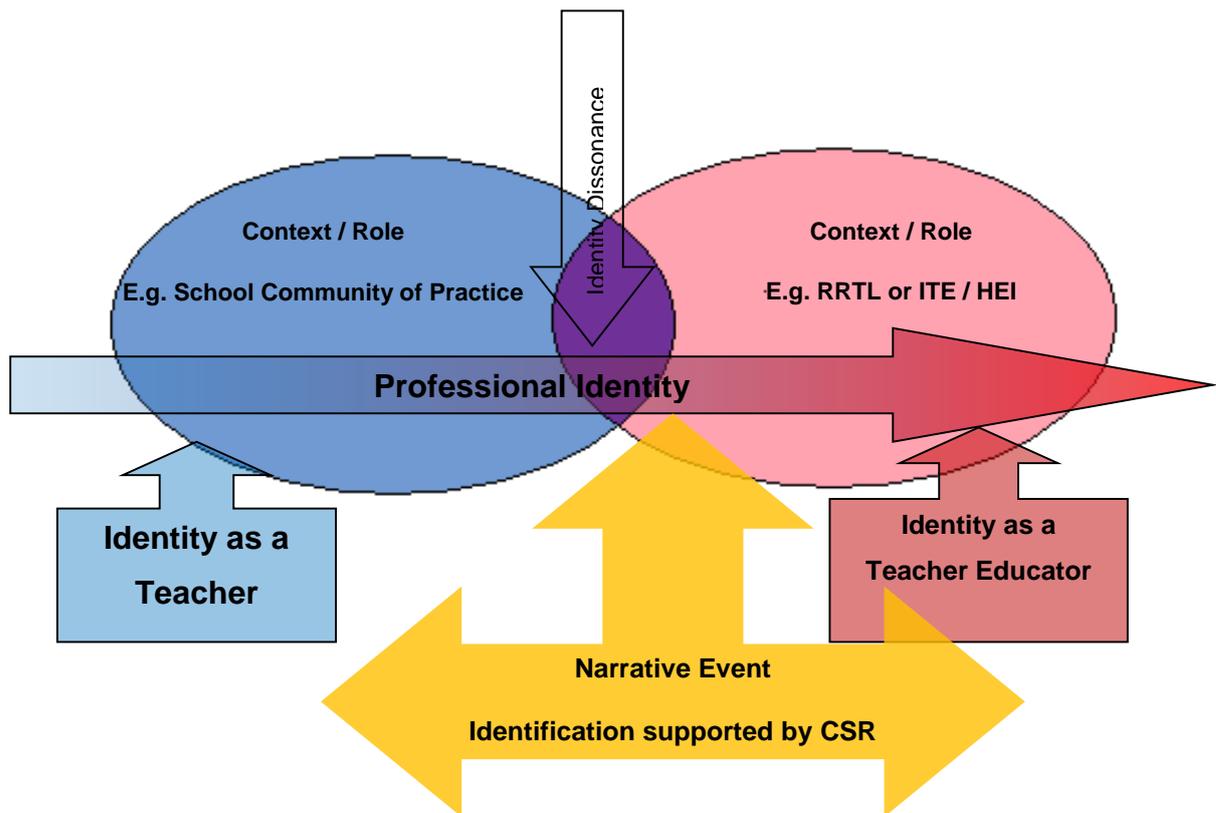
Figure 6.1 - A Grounded Theoretical Model of Identity Transformation

This model seeks to present two different processes in operation: The first aspect is depicted by the two interlinking blue and red ellipses with a timeline arrow superimposed entitled 'professional identity'. This part of the model represents the process of identity transformation as an individual negotiates a professional transition into a new role. The arrow represents the lived experience of professional identity as an individual moves between two professional contexts. (In this study that is from the context of a school community of practice where the individual has an identity as a teacher into the context or role within Reading Recovery as a Teacher Leader or within Higher Education as a teacher educator in Initial Teacher Education.) Previous research into the transition from teacher to teacher educator suggests that professional transitions may be problematic (Boyd and Harris, 2010, McKeon and Harrison, 2010, Murray and Male, 2005, Williams and Ritter, 2010) and may take some years to be realised (if at all); which has been endorsed in the findings of this study. Thus identity transformation to

a new professional identity is depicted by the graduation of colour from blue to red within the professional identity arrow; where previous identities may be merged or subsumed into the new identity as a teacher educator. The red and blue ellipses represent the two different professional contents that the education professional has moved between. The overlapping section of the ellipses seeks to show that previous identities are still retained for some time as individuals engage in their new professional role. It also suggests that in the transition between these roles identity dissonance may be triggered (Warin *et al,* 2006, Warin and Muldoon, 2009) where the previous identity as a teacher is challenged by the demands of the new role, such as working with adults and the need to become research active. (See Chapter Three - Identity and Identification, for a more detailed analysis of identity dissonance.)

The second aspect of this model seeks to represent the way that engaging in a narrative process might support the activation of identification towards achieving identity transformation. This is depicted by the yellow arrow symbol. Firstly, the positioning of the arrow suggests that the narrative process might take place sometime after the initial transition into the new role but before the new professional identity has been realised. Secondly, the double arrow used in this model represents the activation of retrospective reflection, where the participant looks back over their professional life, and prospective reflection, where they start to look forward into their future professional career. Thus this model seeks to show that the use of narrative storytelling (such as the PLH process) can trigger a greater understanding of professional identity in that new role and is supportive of identity transformation.

Prospective Reflection – Future Areas for Research and Development

In this next section prospective reflection is activated by considering the findings of this thesis (described above) and their possible application to further research and practice in the field of teacher education. Finally, concluding with personal prospective reflection on myself as a neophyte researcher.

Prospective Reflection for Research in the Field of Teacher Education

With student teachers

This research aligns with the assumption that identity development is complex and challenging where '[t]he induction phase or the first years in teaching are a time of complex behavioural and conceptual professional learning and thus a time of intensive professional development', (Kelchtermans and Ballet, 2002, p106). Role identity is problematic as '[i]t is not primarily the pre-service teacher education programmes that establish teacher role identity but, rather, previous life experiences as they relate to education and teaching' (Knowles, 1992, p147). The use of a PLH method similar to that in this study might be used with student teachers in supporting their developing professional identity. In particular, the use of prospective reflection might 'accelerate and deepen the journey towards reflective practice' (Conway, 2001, p90). Activation of narrative approaches in teacher education programmes might take the form of student teachers preparing their own professional life timelines, reflecting on life experiences that lead them into teaching, and engaging in prospective reflection as they look towards their future as new teachers in the field. Collaborative discussions with peers in telling their life histories would then activate the desired identification processes. Perhaps group opportunities to 'reflect on their reflection' might further consolidate their transition towards a more secure professional identity; although this will be affected by the nature of the social context of such discussion. The application and evaluating of this approach in initial teacher education might be a fruitful area for development.

With new teacher educators

This study has demonstrated the effectiveness of utilising narrative practices in supporting neophyte teacher educators as they move into a new role. Other writers have identified the need for new teacher educators to be supported into their roles (Boyd & Harris, 2010; Swennan etal, 2010; Van Velsen, 2010) identifying the current paucity in induction processes. The use of the PLH method might enable a new teacher educator to activate identification in this process towards their new professional identity. The application of prospective reflection

might be linked to their planning of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) as they anticipate the challenges of their new role. Such methods could become part of the staff review and development processes within their employing institution. With the benefit of reflecting on reflection, identified in this study, groups of new teacher educators might collectively reflect on their learning through this process. The question about when is the best time for individuals or cohorts to engage in the PLH process was not clear from this study. Murray and Male (2005) suggest that 'the majority of interviewees took between 2 and 3 years to establish their new professional identities' (p. 125). The teacher educators, who are the subjects of this thesis, had between one to three years' experience in this field. It is therefore suggested that the PLH might be best placed within the first three years of the transition into this new role. However, there is a possible risk that doing this too early (perhaps in the first year) might not enable the deeper reflections on the role that support identification processes, as demonstrated in this study. The research in this field identifies areas that are particularly problematic for new teacher educators such as: 'developing a pedagogy for HE-based ITE work and becoming research active' (Murray & Male, 2005, p125). I do not consider that the PLH approach would support in either of these areas. However, Boyd and Harris (2010) suggest that 'newly appointed lecturers in teacher education may need to be supported to adopt a more critical stance towards their emerging professional identity' (p21) and it is this aspect of professional development I consider to be activated in the PLH process.

With Reading Recovery Teacher Leaders

The PLH approach was developed as part of earlier modules of my doctoral studies. During my time as one of the Reading Recovery Trainers facilitating the Reading Recovery Teacher Leader professional development year, I used the professional life timeline for two consecutive years with the new RRTLs. This was designed as a collaborative activity supporting the activation of prospective reflection. Neophyte RRTLs were asked to prepare their timelines in advance of a taught session and were given time within the session to share their timelines in pairs or small groups. It was intended that this practice would support the RRTLs to become more critically self-reflective and self-aware of their developing

role as teacher educators. It appears that this practice could be easily integrated into their professional development programme. If in addition they were enabled to re-visit their timelines and their discussions as a process of 'reflecting on reflection' they might further activate the CSR and premise reflection that supports identification into their new role.

Prospective Reflection – For Myself as a Neophyte Researcher

I conclude by activating prospective reflection for myself as a neophyte researcher. Although I consider that my professional identity as a teacher educator is now secure I do not think this is true for my identity as a researcher (as indicated by my use of the term 'neophyte' in this heading). I have engaged in academic reading, writing and research through my doctoral studies over the last eight years but have relied heavily on the support and guidance of my supervisors. As I look forward to the future as a researcher I feel a sense of trepidation and tentativeness. In activating prospective reflection in this way I hope to engage in identification with this new identity as a researcher. So, where might I see my research developing in the next few years?

Firstly, I would wish to disseminate the findings of my thesis in different forums. I would like to present at an appropriate conference, such as that provided by the British Educational Research Association. I think that this would enable me to engage my peers in this research and to identify the aspects that are of particular interest to others in the field. I will prepare journal articles for relevant publications (for example 'Teachers and Teacher Education', Sage Publications) perhaps taking one of the main findings and developing this for the intended readership, such as: the process of identification; the developed theoretical model of identity transformation; or the model of 'activation of agency and objectivity in the act of storytelling'. I would hope that this would enable me to grow further as an author and academic but also that other researchers might identify the value in adopting some of these approaches into their Teacher Education programmes and when inducting new Teacher Educators into role.

Secondly, I consider that I have remained rather isolated as a researcher during the focused years of my doctoral studies. It is my intention to make connections

with other researchers in this field, perhaps through networking opportunities at relevant conferences. Within my own department we have a system of research groups which might provide another context in which I can share my research findings. I believe that collaborative practice and cross-fertilization might enable me to develop my research and also to encourage others who are actively researching in this field.

Thirdly, I would like to consider possible enhancements to programmes I am currently involved in. In my work across two Initial Teacher Education programmes, I would like to find ways to incorporate the use of the PLH process with student teachers. The approach adopted in this study used a one to one discussion but I suggest that if individuals are asked to prepare their professional life timelines, including prospective reflection, they could then tell their professional life histories in pairs or small groups. Further opportunities to re-visit their PLHs and to reflect on their professional identity formation may enhance student teacher learning. This might build on the work conducted by Paul Conway (2001). In addition, I could discuss with my previous colleagues their reintroduction of the timeline discussion activity within the Reading Recovery Teacher Leader professional development programme.

Fourthly, I would like to support new teacher educators arriving at the university. Over the last few years we have recruited a number of new lecturers into the ITE department of my institution. The induction for these individuals has been problematic in some cases (as identified by a few of our newest teacher educators). Whilst aspects of support, such as formal induction processes and 'buddying' with a more experienced lecturer (see Boyd, Harris and Murray, 2007), have been implemented, these individuals have still indicated their lack of confidence and security in their new roles. It is my intention to develop other supportive learning environment or contexts for them to engage in narrative practices. For example, offering the opportunity for them to use the PLH process, perhaps with more experienced teacher educators or paired with others new to the field. This might be linked to CPD planning, or adopted in the university staff development and review processes, by taking a narrative approach to discussions between reviewee and reviewer.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter sought to activate both retrospective and prospective reflection on the findings of this research and on myself as a neophyte researcher. The retrospective analysis of the findings of this thesis highlighted the three main areas of: identity transformation, the process of identification and the value of engaging in narrative practices. In this chapter links have been identified to ways in which these conclusions might benefit further developments in the field of teacher education. A diagrammatic theoretical model offered a framework for considering these three areas and their value in supporting transitions for education practitioners moving into new roles. Finally, prospective reflection was applied to these conclusions showing how these new understandings of identity transformation and identification, along with the processes of narrative practice endorsed by this work, might support future developments within the field of teacher education. Personal prospective reflection as a neophyte researcher has enabled me to identify the ways in which I might move from a fledgling to a confident researcher within my own institution and within the field of teacher education.

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Appendices

Rebekah

Professional life story timeline

Childhood → School → Student → Early career → Later career →

- Lining up toys and taking register!
- Brownie and Guide - leader
- Sunday School teaching
- Disillusioned by grammar school system – one 'A' level
- Change in circumstances – started Cert Ed at Padgate College
- Left school to work in office
- Matriculated through Manchester Uni. onto B.A. degree course in History and Art & Design
- Decision to teach – PGCE at Goldsmiths College – Aged 3 to 11
- First job – ██ PrimarySchool in █████ North London
- Return to home town – teaching mixed reception/year 1 for 3 years at ██████ First
- Training in SEN – RSA Cert in SpLD
- P/T TEFL teaching (3 mths)
- Return to UK to get married
- Teaching in █████ – 6 months
- P/T SEN teacher at ███████ SENCO
- D32/33 Assessor award and IV award
- Invited to tutor on SpLD Course at ██████ College P/T
- Two sons born – stayed at home for 6 years
- Moved to SENSS as Advisory teacher
- Secondment opportunity to train as RR Teacher Leader at IOE – F/T
- Completion of MA
- RR Teacher Leader role and training TAs in literacy support and individualised programmes

Predictions

- Management role within SENSS (if LA still exists)
- Initial Teacher Education (Literacy, SEN, Early Intervention) P/T

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<u>Appendix 2 – Informed Consent Form</u>

My name is Penny Amott and I am conducting research as part of my Doctorate in Education. I am seeking to explore identity transformation for education professionals in times of transition through the supported construction of professional life stories which engages retrospective and prospective reflection.

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of this research project, the purpose of which will be to:

- To understand the indicators and processes of identity transformation for education professionals during times of transition through use and development of the "supported construction of a professional life history (PLH)" method.

- To develop the method of "Supported construction of professional life history" that engages both retrospective and prospective reflection.

- To evaluate the impact of constructing a PLH on the individuals involved and the extent to which this method supports the shaping of self-knowing and identity transformation.

I would like to emphasise that:

- Your participation is entirely voluntary;

- You are free to refuse to answer any question or talk about experiences that are personal to you;

- You are free to withdraw from the research at any time.

The interview data will be kept confidential and will be stored on a password protected computer and in a locked filing cabinet. You will be asked to read, amend and agree to the transcription prior to its use for this study. You will not be identifiable in the final report and an agreed pseudonym will be adopted. You will be provided with a summary of the research findings. Any subsequent publications arising from this research will be anonymous and you will be informed in advance.

Please sign this form below to show that you have agreed to take part in this research as presented above:

Name: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 3 – Annotated Informed Consent Form

My name is Penny Amott and I am conducting research as part of my Doctorate in Education. I am seeking to explore identity transformation for education professionals in times of transition through the supported construction of professional life stories which engages retrospective and prospective reflection.

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of this research project, the purpose of which will be to:

- To understand the indicators and processes of identity transformation for education professionals during times of transition through use and development of the "supported construction of a professional life history (PLH)" method.

- To develop the method of "Supported construction of professional life history" that engages both retrospective and prospective reflection.

- To evaluate the impact of constructing a PLH on the individuals involved and the extent to which this method supports the shaping of self-knowing and identity transformation.

I would like to emphasise that:

- Your participation is entirely voluntary;

- You are free to refuse to answer any question or talk about experiences that are personal to you;

- You are free to withdraw from the research at any time.

The interview data will be kept confidential and will be stored on a password protected computer and in a locked filing cabinet. You will be asked to read, amend and agree to the transcription prior to its use for this study. You will not be identifiable in the final report and an agreed pseudonym will be adopted. You will be provided with a summary of the research findings. Any subsequent publications arising from this research will be anonymous and you will be informed in advance.

Please sign this form below to show that you have agreed to take part in this research as presented above:

Name: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

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localuser 28/1/2015 10:35
Comment [1]: I am aware that although this description of the research is taken from my research question it might be quite unclear to the participants what it is actually all about. Surely they need to have a good understanding of what I am researching and whether they are fully informed about what they are consenting to.

localuser 28/1/2015 10:35
Comment [2]: So now I have provided my research aims. Again is this adding further clarification or further complexity?

localuser 28/1/2015 10:35
Comment [3]: I know that this is what I hope they understand but how does my relationship to them, particularly the RRTLs, actually make them feel obligated to me to engage in this research?

localuser 28/1/2015 10:35
Comment [4]: This is something that is really important to me in my research design relating to the idea of a 'professional life history' but to what extent would participants feel drawn into talking about their 'personal' life and would they feel confident enough to remove such information at a later stage?

localuser 28/1/2015 10:35
Comment [5]: Again I hope that they feel able to do this but I also hope they don't as this would really impact my research. Surely they are aware of this too and again obligation to me is a factor.

localuser 28/1/2015 10:35
Comment [6]: So how confidential is it possible to be? Does using a pseudonym secure confidentiality? Confidential to whom?

localuser 28/1/2015 10:35
Comment [7]: This process is adopted to enable participants to feel secure that the narrative they provide does not contain information that they are uncomfortable with. But this does not ensure that my analysis and reporting of these narrative events is also 'comfortable' with them.

localuser 28/1/2015 10:35
Comment [8]: See comment 6. This appears as a promise of anonymity, but can this every truly be assured?

localuser 28/1/2015 10:35
Comment [9]: In relation to comment 7 I felt that it was important to change the research design here and to actually give participants access to the full report at the draft stage. I consider that without their acceptance of my reporting of their voice within the final thesis I could not be sure that they were 'comfortable' with my use of their narrative events.

localuser 28/1/2015 10:35
Comment [10]: This does not allow for a participant who might wish that their narratives are not published more widely. It just states that they will be informed.

Appendix 4 – My professional life timeline, shared with participants

CHILDHOOD

Playing 'schools' with best friend

Teaching at Sunday School

Mum gave up training as a teacher due to ill

Got married,

Started 3 Year B Ed in Bedford

STUDENT

Completed 1 year Hons. in Kingston

First job at All Saints C of E,

Position of responsibility for Science, at Valley Primary,

EARLY CAREER

First child born, Elliot

Moved to New Zealand for 2 years

Various part time teaching posts

Trained as a Reading Recovery teacher. Worked for 2 years

Returned to London

Various part time teaching posts. Including 5 years at Woodhill, Woolwich

Had 2 girls, Elanor and Lydia

SENCO at Briset, Eltham

Family moved to Jamaica for 3 years

Worked as Resource / SEN teacher

Reading Specialist, teacher training

LATER CAREER

Returned to UK

Lecturer at UEL, Primary

RR Trainer at IOE

Marriage break down

This text would be contained within my invitation email and would form the basis for the commencement of the two sections of the discussion.

I would like to arrange a time when we could have a telephone discussion following up on the Professional Life History discussions we shared last year. The areas I would like us to talk about are:

3. Your experience of telling your professional life history. Can you explore the process including: constructing your timeline, telling your story in the interview, reading your transcript. Is there anything you would like to feedback to me about aspects of this process?

4. Some time has passed since your PLH. Could you re-read your story and consider if there would be any aspects of it you might tell differently. (I attach a copy of your story for this purpose.)

I expect the interview to take about 30mins. Please think about a time and place where you would prefer to have the telephone conversation.

These probes are possible tools that I might use if I feel that I need to gain more information in response to either of the two sections.

Probes for section 1:

- How did aspects of this process make you feel? Preparing your timeline, telling your story, reading your story? Talking to me?

- Did engaging with this process change anything for you? Internally or externally?

- Was there anything that puzzled you or troubled you: in the process of telling your story? In your interactions with me?

- How did you find talking about possible futures?

Probes for section 2:

- What would you keep the same in your story?

- What part might you tell differently?

- Why might you tell that part differently?

- What was in the present at your PLH discussion is now in the past. Would you tell that part differently now?

Has your present situation changed since the PLH discussion? How did that match to your discussion of possible futures?

Appendix 6 – List of Categories and Nodes

Circumstances that influence	People who influence	Roles in Education	Training and Qualifications	Other non-categorised nodes
1. Adult teaching 2. Baccalaureate 3. Came to England 4. Can't carry on 5. College I fell in love with 6. Community stuff 7. Curriculum access service 8. Cut backs 9. Didn't get the grades 10. Dilemma 11. Experience of school improvement 12. Fell into my lap 13. Flexible 14. Health problems 15. Huge coincidence 16. 'If it's for you it won't go past you'	1. Colleagues 2. Asking everyone 3. Community of people 4. Friends for life 5. How about it 6. Mix of people 7. Observing colleagues 8. Worked as a team 9. Consortium 10. Schools forum 11. Family and children 12. Head teacher 13. Influential person 14. My husband 15. My mother 16. My teacher leader	1. Assistant head 2. Back into teaching 3. Currently in education 4. Deputy headship 5. English coordinator 6. Examiner and moderator 7. Experience as coordinator 8. First job 9. First training group 10. Headship 11. Link / literacy consultant 12. Literacy specialism 13. Management 14. Part-time 15. Primary teacher 16. Professional tutor 17. Programme director	1. Degree 2. Doctorate 3. Masters degree 4. RR teacher leader training 5. Training as a teacher 6. University	1. Challenge 2. Children's lives 3. Confident 4. Didn't know 5. Feeling torn 6. Funding 7. Identity 8. Identity as a teacher 9. Identity as a teacher educator 10. Identity as an expert 11. Influence of place 12. Influence from another person 13. Love of learning 14. Making a difference 15. Needed something new 16. On a journey 17. Projecting into the future

17. It was tough 18. Itchy feet 19. Late fate decide 20. Needed to work 21. New contact 22. Not an option 23. Now is the time 24. Nursery nurse 25. Opportunities 26. Permanent contact 27. Personal circumstances 28. Really lucky 29. Redundant 30. Somebody like me 31. Stress 32. Teacher training under threat 33. Temporary contact 34. The big crisis 35. Time travelling 36. Two options 37. Wasn't an option 38. Wonderful thing 39. Work in an office		18. Responsibility 19. RR teacher 20. RR Teacher Leader role 21. RR training group 22. Secondary teaching 23. Secondment 24. SEN advisory teacher 25. SEN teaching 26. SENCO 27. Supply teaching 28. Teacher leader role 29. Teaching assistant 30. Tutor for English 31. Two jobs 32. Working full time 33. Working with adults		18. See the results 19. Shy person 20. Significant change 21. Something missing 22. Struggle 23. Teaching children 24. Telling the story 25. There for 10 years 26. Turning point 27. Wanted to be a teacher

<u>Appendix 7 - Analysis of identity as teacher educator and education expert</u>

Key indicators for identity as a Teacher Educator

- Skills (and/or knowledge) – gained through experience or training and qualifications, e.g. mentoring, RRTL training. Recognition of these skills within themselves – skill set, rucksack, applying for new roles based on this.

- 'Doing it' – Confidence gained from doing the role, engaging with different aspects of role, even if some parts are not so enjoyable

- Self belief – Linked to 'doing it', growing confidence, feeling natural, enjoying role, success in outcomes (for students or pupils), knowing that I am good at it, awareness of aspects of role that you are good at / not so good at, love for the job.

- Future aspirations – to make a difference/impact, applying to jobs in related roles, sense of choice, awareness of own limitations,

- Support and independence – Being part of a team, mutual support. Wanting independence and to make it your own.

Key indicators for identity as an education expert

- Skills (and/or knowledge) – Awareness of skill set, rucksack. Specialising in particular areas of expertise. Able to transfer skills to new contexts. Bringing confidence. Transferable skills.

- Responsibility – Taking on positions of responsibility, or new roles, e.g. senior roles and leadership. Aiming high.

- Qualifications –Including MA, Doctorate, specialist qualifications.

- Advisory role – As 'advisory teacher' or more informally. Drawn of for area of expertise.

- Self-belief – Enjoying expertise, recognition from others, growing confidence, achieving outcomes, 'feeling like an expert', wanting to publish work, commitment, encouragement from others and what people say about them, having an impact.

- Leadership and management – Not for all. Management experience, leading others.

- Future aspirations – Further qualifications, considering other related roles, wanting to 'challenge myself', having choices, innovation.

Memory

- Identifying expertise when thinking about future –

    o Identity as an expert, transferable skills – Joanne

- Memory of positive experiences from past –

    o Moving into ITE, reflecting on time at Goldsmiths – Rebekah

- Recognising key points learned from the past –

    o Mother and emphasis on lifelong learning – Anne

    o Pivotal points – Emily

- Identifying aspects of past that are missed

    o Missing lack of active teaching when working in LA – Emily

Imagination

- Identifying new roles that would have been unimagined in the past (linked to feeling of expertise) –

    o Moving into ITE – Joanne and Rebekah

    o Studying for PhD or engaging in research – Annie

    o Becoming a DH - Emily

- Making choices – imagining possible futures –

    o Elizabeth – linked to where I can make an impact and what I am good at (linked to identity)

    o Carry on in ITE or going back into teaching – Identity as a TE over identity as a teacher

- Identifying skills as look into the future –

    o Keeping ahead of the game – Rebekah

- Proactive about professional development –

    o I will be 70 and still motivated to follow my personal development – Annie

Hope

- Identifying the ideal role –

    - Full time RRTL, not possible – Jane

    - Staying in RRTL role – Rebekah & Joanne

    - Becoming a senior lecturer and writing a book – Elizabeth

- Role and financial security –

    - For RRTLs – to continue in role

    - Financial security, permanent contract – Rebekah, Joanne.

    - Uncertainty taken out, more stable in my position – Emily

- Vision –

    - Vision for children, where my heart is, making a difference - Jane

- Link to identifying goals –

    - Good to have goals and to think this is where I want to be – Joanne

    - Contract renewal – Different outlook on my goals. - Joanne

- Constraints affecting hopes –

    - Feeling torn - Jane

    - Difficult to marry up what I would like to happen with what I think will happen. - Joanne

Elizabeth – 'Elizabeth constructed her story with a sense of the start as a working class girl with low aspirations and journeying to the unexpected levels of being a university tutor, programme leader and academic at the age of 50. She also had this story about her frustration that she was persuaded not to study English at university and how she regretted that all her life, to the point of still wanting to do a degree in literature when she retires! There is a conflict within the story of this sense of achievement against the odds and the disappointments in relation to early career choices that frustrated the path she took, particularly in the early stages.' (Amott memo – 24-05-12)

Emily – 'Emily had clearly constructed her story in her head beforehand. She conceived herself as 'a learner' and described her early learning experiences in detail. She saw herself as able to work flexibly building up a 'rucksack' of skills and expertise that she could draw on in different contexts.' (Amott memo – 06-07-12)

Annie – 'I think Annie was constructing her story around people who have influenced her. She clearly identified certain people of influence and how they helped shape her career. She also constructed the dissonance between working in Secondary and Primary education quite effectively and how that also affected her. She had a clear sense of how she wanted to construct herself at the different stages of her story and also what had shaped her as a person and teacher/educator.' (Amott memo – 16-07-12)

Rebekah – 'The themes of Rebekah's story are not quite so distinct in this PLH as in some others. She was clear about her story and was able to make some connections between different points in her career. Reading Recovery Teacher Leader training was certainly impactful.' (Amott memo – 13-08-12)

Joanne – 'Joanne had clearly constructed a sense of story prior to coming into the interview. There were key themes that she built into this, the idea that she thought she was not good enough and then turning this into a 'go for it' sense of confidence. She also saw the different opportunities that arose as shaping her

trajectory which were related to people and to circumstances. She wanted to talk about the communities/colleagues that were important to her, including the RRTL training group, the colleagues she worked with in the Reading Recovery Professional Development groups and the team she works with in the office.' (Amott memo – 19-07-12)

Jane – 'Jane had a strong sense of journey in her story; this was a metaphor she used a lot. Of course this may be influenced by my use of a timeline depicting a journey. She also had a strong sense of dilemma in her current position and as she looks into the future. Longing to be a full time teacher leader and yet that is not possible. However she is equally as passionate about her school and working with the most deprived children. She sees a future for herself there and can quite happily stay through to becoming the Deputy Head in a few years time. But still is not comfortable with letting the Teacher Leader role go.' (Amott memo – 27-11-12)

Discussion 1 - Annie – Professional Life History 16-07-2012

The first part of this story was missed off the recording, detailing early childhood and transition into English education system.

P - sorry carry on

So the challenge for me is actually learning English as well as the other curriculum subjects. So returning to my school on a Friday, from a centre to specifically learn English, of course there is no relationship with my peers. And also at the age of 14 it is quite a tough time to have these transitions. But I think one of the things, to come back to my mother, that is very important here is that she's embedded it in all of the children about how important education is. But I think with me in particular I heard very clearly, not that she said those words, that education is a way out of poverty. That's why I came here: we came to England to give you access, and I heard very clearly 'I'm not equipped to help you, I can't help you with your homework, I don't know what to do. You're going to have to fend for yourself. You're going to have to find ways around how to educate yourself'. But I think that is very much part of who I am and how important education is for me.

I left school not with enough A levels or O levels to actually go to university. So what I did, because I didn't actually have English sufficiently academically to support me, I took an alternative route. We had just started thinking about International Baccalaureate in England, and of course that's what would have happened to me if I was in Mauritius, so that's what I did. So what it offered me was the opportunity to carry on learning English but also to learn other subjects. I did that at the Tottenham Technical College in Tottenham. In fact I sort of realised it when it was in South London and I went for an interview. And the person who interviewed me said 'why did you not apply closer?' but we didn't know. But that just again emphasises the lack of knowledge and understanding of how it all worked for me and my family, still new to the country and the English Education system.

It was a two year course because you do three higher level at A level equivalent but also you do three at a subsidiary level. When I joined the International Baccalaureate course I didn't actually know I was going to train as a teacher but I think on the course I met somebody who was very kind, very patient, who not only supported me to learn English as well as the other subjects but also involved her husband. I was doing economics is one of the higher subjects and he was one of the economics tutors, he wasn't actually my teacher, but she actually got

him to tutor me. So I think that role model for me was very important, I suddenly wanted to be like her because of the help. I felt as though I could give to others.

I completed the course and then I went to do a certificate of education at All Saints College which was part of Middlesex Polytechnic. And my main subject was French and that was to teach secondary. I remember it being very taxing, more taxing than I thought it was going to be. And I remember my English still being a problem and I also remember the debate that I wasn't actually able to join. Because I hadn't actually been in England, I hadn't been to primary schools here and I hadn't started until fourth year secondary and there was a huge gap that I had to bridge as an adult.

So I then took my first post at a school in North London and that was very successful I think, I felt very at home, very supported. Not as an NQT would now but I felt on an emotional level supported, perhaps not on a professional level. So that led me to taking on, three years down the line, responsibility of Spanish coordinator within the modern foreign languages department. So my career as a secondary teacher was developing. I don't think I sought it out, it sort of landed on my lap.

And then I became involved with lots of exchanges, with France and with Spain and I taught there for 10 years. I feel that it was successful but I still felt it was something missing in my knowledge and understanding of education, of teaching and learning, of the pedagogy that I was reading about, I hadn't got the experience side of it. I got to the point where I knew I had to be proactive about my professional development, but I had no idea about how to move on. My son was born in my second year of teaching. In my fourth year of teaching I worked a 3-day week. But I still did not feel that my knowledge of teaching and learning was adequate. I enrolled on a Part-time BA English Studies course with the University of North London. I successfully completed the course. (I chose English because, I felt, it would provide me with the reading and understanding of the English speaking world, which was so culturally different to the world that I grew up in.) I gradually grew into the post, I loved being a form tutor, and for a while I toyed with the idea of becoming a Head of Year. However, I soon realised that it would take me away from teaching French. I really enjoyed teaching French and I felt rewarded when my new Head of Department (another one of my roles models) gave me an 'A' Level group to teach and for the last four years of my secondary career I taught 'A' level groups with a good degree of success..

Then came the big transition…Haringey were short of primary teachers and what they did was they offered to re-train you during the summer. So there was a six weeks' course and you would be kept on the same salary, because I think at the time primary teachers were paid less than secondary teachers, but I would keep whatever salary I was on there, with the responsibility, I would keep that.

I took that opportunity. Although one of the things, I kept looking behind me I kept looking back because I felt I had lost something because I moved from secondary to primary it felt as though I had lost my status. Because all of a sudden in primary school primary head teachers are very powerful and I had been quite autonomous as a subject teach in secondary. And all of a sudden as a primary teacher it kind of felt there was no independence, it was very… I was being led. But I think one of the things that happen to me, that inspired me and I still remain in awe, I met one of the people who actually organised the re-training, and she was somebody who was very important and influential again in my life. She introduced to me the idea of multi-cultural education and anti-racist education. Up to then I had been completely oblivious to these issues. So that was a very powerful influence.

Anyway I took my place in primary education, are taught in Tottenham at a primary school. Sorry, before then, while I became part time I started a BA in English studies. So I completed my BA and then I re-trained to do primary. And then I felt very… My marriage began to break up and there were lots of changes and I left education completely. And I joined my mother in a venture of a coffee shop, so waitressing and cooking and all of that. Very enjoyable and I think that was actually part of me coming out of my shell as well. Because I've always been quite a shy person and while in my classroom I come alive because I love the job, I love teaching, but in fact socially I'm quite a… was quite a shy person, it got better over the years as I got older, but I was. But I think the coffee shop was very important for me.

So I then left the coffee shop. The last recession hit, the coffee shop wasn't doing so well and I returned to secondary, not to primary, but to secondary teaching for a term which was the autumn term. Because there was that feeling still that I had lost my status somehow. And so I taught for a term. And then the wonderful thing that happened to me is that I actually came across the idea of actually teaching alongside mainstream teachers but accessing the curriculum to children who have just arrived in the country. There was an influx of Turkish and Kurdish children and they all settle in the Enfield area. So there were a huge need for that service. And I had joined the service and I stayed there for 10 years. That was the Enfield Curriculum Access Service.

And so I became a supporting EAL teacher and I developed my skills as an advisory teacher working alongside primary teachers. During that time, so my marriage is now broken up completely, I'm on my own bringing up my son. About three years into the Enfield Curriculum Access Service I started a masters degree in applied linguistics. And so I got closer and closer to the issues that my friend had introduced to me and in fact my thesis was on the social side of achievement for learners who come to England.

So then the service slowly became I suppose redundant because there were less people coming into the country and less need, as well as less money. It was a

big service with over 70 teachers, so we kind of made ourselves redundant because the job was done and there was no money. So slowly it was winding down and at the same time my son was about to start university and I took a job in Camden teaching in a primary school as a class teacher, with reponsibility for managing the area of EAL and EMAG. And it was a huge school, two form entry, with lots of EAL teachers and so on. And that was really a very amazing experience and it was in that post that I really developed my skill of coaching and my skill of being a mentor for students from the Institute of Education as well as from Roehampton and Middlesex. I had, I was very fortunate, lots of mentor training, not so much from the Institute but from the other universities who was sending students to us. And I think that, I wasn't quite sure, but I think I knew that there was this skill there that I actually wanted. I could still use that skill within a school, I didn't have that vision of beyond - of doing what I love doing beyond school boundaries.

Any way I started the NPQH thinking that this is what I will end up being, a head. I completed it, I did it here. I completed it and started applying for a headship. But things were not so great. My health kind of got the better of me. In a sense I think it was a sign. The headaches began to be very prominent. It was clear to me that I was doing something that I shouldn't be doing. And I did quite a few headship interviews, getting close but each time having a bout of ill health afterwards. And then I got to the point that I knew very clearly that headship wasn't for me.   It became clear when I did a bout of cover for a month, while the head teacher of the school where I was working was away. It hit me that, making everyone happy is not actually possible, even when a school is doing well. Head teachers manage teaching and learning a lot less, than I appreciated before. Dealing with human issues on a daily basis, whether they are coming from the staff or from the parents or other stakeholders, is actually more that 50% of the role. That was the turning point. And then if headship wasn't for me I didn't quite know what was. I didn't want to to turn 60 and be in a school, that was one of the things I knew about what I didn't want. But I didn't know what else. I had thought early on, when I was doing my masters, I had actually thought about further education but had no idea how, I didn't have the link, the networking to actually be able to do that.

And then of course working closely with A, and she literally was the person that actually made me believe I could do this. Because K upstairs in the secondary who was doing the French here wanted to give it up and they didn't have a French person available so she mentioned that to me. And at the same time, what had happened at the school where I was, we had just implemented MFL. And it was all coming back to me how much I enjoyed this side of it, this side of the teaching that I've been trained to do and how could I have left it for so long? I left it for 20 years almost.

I started here doing the exchange and the following year I took over from another colleague, and in the following year I started doing professional studies and it just

kind of felt very natural really. I think it was a bit of a struggle to kind of induct myself. I didn't feel the displacement I felt when I moved from secondary to primary, I was very much at home. It was another challenge which I welcomed.

P - are you able to give me a bit more detail about your time coming up to this point, starting at this university.

Like what?

P - maybe just unpack how things were in your first year.

So the first year I came in and I took over the exchange that we were doing. Now that I think about it it was quite a nice smooth way. But the point being was that a colleague was doing the teaching, she was doing the Specialism and I was just doing the exchange. So there was a lot of gap in my knowledge about the students but it was a successful exchange. And then of course I didn't know the setup here. For example, one small side issue was like I didn't know I had to claim for the days that I do, because I expected to be paid at the end of the month! First month, second month, third month it didn't happen thinking well someone had forgotten here. So I sent an email to my line manager and she said you have to claim, but nobody had actually told me that! And so there are many things that I incidentally found out. I think at the time there wasn't that awareness, if you're coming from school your use to a very different set up. But people were very helpful and I think there was lots of advice and people gave lots of their time to show me how to do things. From learning how to book rooms, how to book resources, where things are, and that you can just log on and search for the person's name and you'll know who they are and what the phone number is and how you can reach them. It's like all of these things that you find out.

This is a practical point of view, and I'm sure everybody's felt that. Like when I started there is no base. I come in with my raincoat my umbrella and my rucksack which I won't need the whole day by nevertheless I don't want to carry them from place to place.

P - how much were you working at that point?

So I was just preparing the students (for their exchange), it would have been probably about twice a week just before I went off to Paris and when I came back. A lot of it I did at home. And there wasn't a lot when the students from France came, I just needed to come and prepare them. So that would have been altogether about three times after I returned from France.

P-so were you doing another job at the same time?

Oh yes, sorry I forgot that, yes I was. Yes that first year was in the shape of a secondment from my school. And then I resigned the following summer and then I took on the Specialism.

The Specialism was fine, it was a nice group, very supportive, lots of meetings so that was very supportive. If you didn't know this was the space to find out. Yes I think Specialism was probably the easiest.

P - so was it this year that you took up the professional studies?

No last year, it's been two years. The year before those two years I started doing things like 'learning outside the classroom', doing various things, bits and pieces. And then I started supervision as well to top up my salary. And it all started to fall into place.

P - have there had been any things that have been particularly supportive for you?

I think that it's people really who have given me time. I have to say that K, who is not part of our department, has been an immense support to me for the Specialism, the actual content, from resources to sitting with her and planning and talking it through. And also I think the other areas like 'learning outside the classroom' C has been very supportive, and for The Cross-curriculum and Sustainability Day, again A has been very supportive having a discussion about the planning, even looking at A's own planning, to have an idea of how I could go about it. I think that at the time I didn't actually ask to go and observe colleagues but since I have been here colleagues have come to observe me which I think it is something I should have tapped into but I didn't think of it at the time. I think that's the real eye opener, the relationship with students, the planning, the resources and all that. And I have to say that people in the office, although I think they probably got fed up seeing me, but in their own way they filled in lots of gaps that needed to be bridged and I didn't know who to turn to.

P - can you tell me a little bit about where you think you might be going if you were to project forward in two years' time.

I think that I would like to still be here at this University. I am debating at this minute about a possible… although after the MA I said no more studying, but I'm thinking about perhaps some research maybe, a Ph.D. maybe, I'm not sure. I think I need to find the area that will really draw me in and maybe that will make my decision. But I certainly see myself here developing and growing and getting better at what I love doing.

Whereas in school I had probably thought I'm not working until I'm 60, but I think that perspective has actually changed. Not that I think it's easier or more manageable here, I think it's a different pace.

I love learning and one of the things I think, like my mother and the role models that I have spoken about before, one of the things that they had instilled into me is that long life learning. I find that really enjoyable and I find researching to put my session together I do enjoy that.

P - is there anything else?

One thing that happened, and I think you will see it, in between being at school and going for interviews on completing my NPQH, I got married again. And I think it is very important being married to the man I'm married to, he's not in education but he's very much tremendously supportive because there is that shared joy of learning that we have. I think that is quite an important factor to that decision of taking on coming here and taking more on and not being scared and being given the confidence to do it. Finally I love being in the position, of supporting people entering the profession, to develop their skills and understanding of the profession. With my years in different key stages, the experience that I have gained, and still gaining, I feel it is such a privilege to be able to support the training of new teachers because it feels that although I am not teaching myself, my knowledge and skills are still useful to promote the learning and the well-being of more children.

Discussion 2 - Elizabeth – Professional Life History 24-05-2012

When I was looking and thinking about it for me I think the story starts in that lead up to going to university. I think it was quite significant somebody like me, a working class background, a girl, nobody had been to university before. And that was a big thing in my mind, about needing to go to university as a statement of something. And I had a cousin who I was very close to and 7 years older than me. And she had been the first one in that extended family who had gone and I was really keen to have had the experience that she had had. I suppose the big crisis for me, why it's important for this professional story, was I had this real dilemma about did I do English or did I do foreign languages. I was good at both and in lots of ways the decision... Because I grew up in a small working class mining community in the 70's, unemployment was very high and things are very difficult. The steelworks in the next village had been shut down and there were whole families with no jobs and things. And so my family advised me that I should go and do the languages because English is a silly subject and no good for anything. I realise that I have been really bitter about that all my life and it's only looking back that I realise that they probably had my best intentions at heart. To them languages had more relevance.

So I went to university and did modern languages. I found straight away that this was, not the wrong choice, but difficult. I was really shy. I went off to do a degree in Modern Languages having never ever been abroad. So you suddenly find yourself in this cohort of people studying where some of them are bilingual, because they've got a parent who's German or something, they've had a chance to go and spend a year or two or whatever, and their fluency and the language... I was good at school, for my school I was good at German but compared to them I really wasn't very good at all. So immediately there was a confidence thing where I just thought I couldn't compete. So very quickly it became clear to me that I wasn't going to do anything wizzy, like being a translator for the United Nations, to me you were going to ask one of these people who were bilingual. And the English thing was always in the back of my mind that I wanted to do in English. I enjoyed my degree well enough but not the way I felt I would have done.

So I got to the end of the degree. went off to do a PGCE in German. And started teaching. That was secondary. And that was the thing. I should have said because the thing all along was that I wanted to do English and be a primary teacher but the minute people said modern languages would be much more useful it took you off into that route into secondary. And at the end of my degree before I started my PGCE I got married. Whether that's of any relevance to you or not.

So I did the PGCE and started my first job. An all boys school teaching French and German. The first year I hated it, I just loathed it with a passion. I think it was something to do with the boys. But boys are interesting and by the end of the year, when you realise how they ticked, I loved it and I stayed there seven years. And after a couple of years I became head of German and had a couple of other responsibilities. And that was fine, it was. But then I got to the point, I had been there seven years, and got to the point of thinking I wanted to have a family, and then it didn't happen, and then we found out there were problems. And at that point, when we thought we couldn't have children, Idid apply for heads of department for modern languages because I thought the career was going to have to be the way my life went. But then fortunately I did get pregnant. Had my first son and then you have to go back for your maternity thing to keep your money. So I went back for a few weeks and then I stopped work. There is only 21 months between them, so then I had M. Stopped working completely. Was at home. Then I had N and he was about 18 months old, so I must have had a gap for about three years then. So then I went back part-time which was a 0.2 which was a lovely as I was basically a mum being at home but had the chance to do a little bit.

So I did that for a couple of years and over that time when they started going to nursery I went up from 0.2 but never over 0.5. But I did get then to crisis point because I got to the stage of doing my year eight reports and realised that they still didn't have 24 hours of German behind them. Because when you look at schools at that time they wanted to put in their prospectus and things that they offered a range of languages, it looked really good, but they didn't want to give it the real timetabling support behind it. So we had one lesson a week, it was like two steps forward and one step back, so when you saw them next Wednesday they had forgotten what they had done and there was no chance to build up any sort of impetus. And I just got to the point of thinking you cannot have any joy or satisfaction when you just feel that you are getting nowhere. It was the situation in the school and I'd had enough of it. And that coincided with personal things going on at the time. And you get to the point of thinking whether or not I carry on as I am or whether I'm going to make a significant change. And as I say I had always wanted to do English and be a primary teacher and I thought I'd got to the point now where I really don't want to do this anymore, it's not giving me anything.

So I didn't know how you went about retraining to go from being secondary to primary. And by that stage my boys were at primary school and the head there was this lovely jolly friendly person, and there was no Internet and things because now you would just go on the Internet and try and find out. I didn't know what to do and I thought if I just went in and spoke to the head teacher she would tell me in 5 minutes what I should do. So I went in to have a chat with her and she said to me that if you're serious about this, and to be sure you're making the right decision, if you can afford to do it, come and work here as a teaching assistant to

see if you do like being in a primary setting and then you can take it from there. So I did that, I went and worked as a teaching assistant at that school in year four supporting a boy who had been withdrawn from school and brought back in very slowly. So I was really supporting him for a while and did that job for four terms. And then one of the teachers left and she came to me and said 'how about it?'

Well I have been really lucky, I do know that I'm really lucky. So I then got that job there which was a year five teacher. I think I taught year 5 twice and then she thought it would be a really good thing if the year five teacher carried on into year six so you don't have that thing in year six of just having to get to know them. So I did the 5, 6, 5, 6 looped around a few times which was really good because you don't have SATs every year and have a chance to do something else. And then I became literacy co-ordinator and RE coordinator, and that's obviously still relevant to what I do now. But I did know very quickly that what I thought when I was seventeen was right, to teach in primary school and have specialized in English. So I felt like it took 25 years to get to this point where I wanted to be in the first place. So in lots of ways on the professional level I had sort of got to where I wanted to be.

On a personal level, I still don't know what you would call it, there were still that part of me, I want to use the word haunted, it's a bit dramatic, but here I am as literacy coordinator leading that school but my degree is in German. And I had this romantic idea that I was going to go to university and sit up half the night discussing Virginia Woolf in a Bohemian sort of way. And that was what I always wanted and I never had that. So on the one hand I was in a primary school, lovely school, literacy co-ordinator, but I still had something that was missing. And my husband was looking around on the Internet one-day and he said, I see they're doing an MA in English at my local University. It was English in education, so it wasn't talking about Virginia Woolf, but he said you'd get yourself something, a qualification that had the word English in it, which somehow was important to me.

So I went to university and did the MA and that was wonderful. So although it wasn't literature based it was a professional qualification and I loved it. We did modules on 'readers and texts' or modules relevant to pedagogy. There were modules on poetic text and all sorts of things and I just loved it. There is something else that was aligned to that in that I now knew very firmly that it was English I loved. And I don't want to sound arrogant but I think that I was really good as a primary school teacher. I think that the way I taught literacy and lead literacy was really, really good. I'd be the first person to tell you that my teaching of DT was rubbish, I'm not a PE person or as a generalist teacher, but I still felt I had those things that I was really strong at and had a lot to give.

And then again my husband was roaming on the Internet and saw this job going at what was a local independent school where essentially what they were advertising for was a primary age teacher who would only teaching English. But I think I never would have got that job had I not been doing the M.A. in English, otherwise I don't know why they would have taken me. So I moved there and taught English and did some RS as well. And that was brilliant.

So I was doing the MA and getting to the point where you have to decide what you're going to do for your dissertation and I wanted to do something linked to reading. I was going to do something following up children I had been teaching in year six going into secondary school and look at how they continue to develop as readers and I had that project all sort of set up. But then the head of the department at the school where I was working said she didn't know if I was interested but that she was taking a group of children down to the local library to read to the reading group for visually impaired people. And I just think that sounded so interesting about reading and visual impairment and how they engage with text and what the reading group did. I always had this funny thing, I knew a lot of people who were in reading groups and I really didn't think it was for me, what on earth would I want to go to reading group for? So I was quite interested on the reading group thing. So I went with her to that meeting, and it shows what a limited idea I had, I thought they would all be reading Braille and had no idea what the continuum was of visual impairment. Because they were using audio and that seemed really interesting as a reading group that was not reading as such but listening to text and how did that work? So I thought that would be really interesting. So I did that for my MA, a study of the reading group.

When I got to the end of the MA I did really well on that. Everybody thought that it was a really interesting thing that I had looked at and they said that I really ought to carry on to do the PhD. There hasn't been much research into reading groups, much less into a specific type of reading group like that. But I didn't see how I could do the PhD as I was working fulltime but they were really keen there and they were saying to me we can make this happen, we can work out ways. In the end it wasn't as easy as they said because between the time they spoke to me and when I had to register, which was only a matter of weeks, without them knowing they had restructured the research methods section of the PhD that you have to do. They told me it was a Thursday afternoon and Thursday evening which I would be able to do but they changed it to being a Thursday afternoon and Friday morning which I couldn't do. But any way we sort of got round that and so I did the PhD. Which again was looking at reading groups. So whereas the MA was more survey, and trying to find out about what was happening out there, this became a real in-depth longitudinal study. Quite by chance one of the the reading groups, at the very time I was about to start my Ph.D., decided to start a second group and I had the chance to follow it from day one and see what happened and how it developed over time.

So I started doing a Ph.D., Still working fulltime and I should have said that my boys were now mid secondary school, about year nine something like that. So I was doing a Ph.D. and I got near the end, and on the one hand being at the independent school was really wonderful because I could teach English all day every day which I loved, but it was also a very traditional and sort of… On the one hand you didn't have the restrictions of the National Curriculum and all those sorts of things but on the other hand you have a much sort of 'this is how we've been doing things at the school for the last 200 years' which is quite limiting when you like innovation and bringing in ideas. So I liked it in many respects. And then I was getting towards the end of the PhD, and I didn't know what I was doing, then my supervisor said to me 'well when you get to the end of your PhD what are you going to do with it?' And I said 'well I really have no idea, what wouldsomeone at my age do with a PhD?' So he went through a number of options or he said you could come and work somewhere like here. And I suppose if I have been really honest there has been something deep down for long time: because again during my teaching career I had a couple of people who were on the Graduate Teacher Programme to mentor and support and as literacy coordinator mentoring NQTs and I really enjoyed all of that. So I suppose there was a little part of me that had probably thought I would like to work with students but I never thought it would happen. And again a huge coincidence at that time my PhD was drawing to an end somebody was leaving at my university and there was an opening becoming available. There was no guarantee I would get that job, it was not a shoe in the door type of thing, it really wasn't. But the opportunity came up which was lucky in itself. So I went for that and got that. And found myself at the University then.

So that's how I got to where I am now. And where I am at I teach mostly on the B.A. Ed. undergraduate programme. And you don't know this, one day in January last year I was asked to be the curriculum tutor for English on the B.A. Ed. Programme. Which, as you will know, you also teach a bit on the PGCE or if the PGCE secondary want to do a bit on phonics you dip in and out, but predominantly that's what I do. But then this time last year the lady who was the programme director, one of the joint two co-directors, one of them retired and they advertised that job and the field wasn't very good and they didn't appoint. So all of a sudden last July I found myself as the acting, having been there for two terms, new to ITT, I found myself as acting programme director. So this year's being quite hard trying to juggle, you've got all the things to do with being curriculum English as well as all the other things like developing CPD, which was additional to what the previous curriculum tutor had done, and developing these subject leader networks. There's been a lot of things to do with that, and then trying to do the programme director thing at the same time. And all the things you have as an academic being actively involved in research, I'm meant to be writing a book based on the PhD, as well as getting involved in a new research project.

So it's been quite a year to be honest. So that's where we get to where we are now.

P - So what I want to find out now are particularly your experiences of moving into this role. So if you can take me back to where you first started, those first couple of terms, and then you had that shift. Talk a little bit about how you made a role for your self and how you entered in, what were the challenges for you?

I think the main challenge, was I took over from PG who was a legend in primary literacy and she is a big character, so there is one part of you knowing that it is an impossible act to take over, so whoever had been doing that would have found it a challenge. I think you realise very quickly, something that comes with age, but you can't try to be someone else, that I can't be PG and I have to be me. You have to go in and start making it your own really. I did find those first few weeks were really hard, it felt very lonely, and I think you find yourself in your office, and when you come from a teaching background, you don't have an office. So you find yourself in your office, and you don't have a staff room to go to where you automatically meet people. Even if I went into a staff room for coffee there's a good chance that nobody would be there, it's not that type of place at the university. So I did find that really very lonely. And I do think that perception that you are working with people who are eminent academics and somehow you have bluffed your way in there and you have nothing to offer in comparison to what they are. And people keep saying to you 'but the students will love you because you've got that current classroom experience, they really like that'. But on the one hand you do know that you are bringing that experience but you know that you don't have that long academic history of publishing and somehow you are lacking in some way. And I think it takes a while for you to start to settle in and work out quite what it is you have to offer so you fit into the overall picture. I started in the spring term, and because we have the programme with these blocks of subject specialism, the first group I had was year three, and they had had two years with the previous tutor. Whereas if I had had year one they wouldn't have known any better. So I went in with these people who were quite experienced and used to a certain way of doing things, so that was a challenge actually, they were far more demanding because they're comparing all the time; at the stage where you're probably still lacking in confidence like I was.   And the year threes go off into school and the year twos come back, and then finally I had the year ones in the summer term, and they didn't have anything to compare me with so that was a brand new start.

And I would say as an English team one thing that did make it really easy to settle in, it's a good team and we are very supportive of each other. The one thing that's bad about our team is that we are very much pigeonholed, I'm the B.A.Ed. tutor and they are the PGCE tutors, and I don't think that's really helpful because again it puts you in your little office and we're not working together. And I think we've got better now and we have department meetings where we get together but now

we're quite likely to go out for a meal and that's our English meeting. So we do talk and work but its in a nice sociable atmosphere, and we get on with each other really well and that team building thing has been very good.

P - Where might you see yourself in a year's time?

I am in a particularly odd situation in that having taken on the Programme Director role I still don't know what is happening for next year, so it's quite difficult. I am in the situation at the minute of trying to push, which I've been doing repeatedly as you can imagine. Every time I go and push and say I really need to know, we're getting close to September, do we know what is going to happen? But given that we are nearly at the end of May now I think we really need to know. And I suppose I'm in the situation of thinking I have to make some choices what do I want? If it's offered to me do I want to stay? I can't carry on as I have been this year. The two roles plus all the other bits I've been asked to do has been too much. So do I want to be predominantly Programme Director and teach some of the curriculum English or do I want to be predominantly a curriculum English tutor? And that's something I'm wrestling with at the moment to be honest. My gut feeling… having spoken to a few people over the last few days because I have got a meeting lined up next week and I suspect that's going to be 'let's really talk about next year'. I have had a couple of people say to me that if I want to really make the most of the opportunity and have some impact on the learning of children in school then I should go for the Programme Director. The two people who said that to me I thought were going to finish it by saying 'keep on teaching your curriculum English', because I think of myself as an English person. But I am good at organizing things and planning, I like nothing better. So they've been saying to have an input in redesigning the programme and shaping what's going to happen and that's the way I should go. And I think on balance that probably is what I think, but I don't know. My gut feeling, if you ask me to project, is that I probably will be Programme Director next year. It's about how much of the time remaining is given over to English, I think that's probably the uncertainty.

And then projecting even further forward, it's so hard because the whole context of ITT... You know last week I was asking myself 'should I be trying to get back into school?' I'm not that long out of the classroom and to keep hearing of more or more training being moved into schools and the government not liking the more undergraduate route into teaching, so where does that leave us? There's one part of me thinking, you know when I was doing the timeline, taking off into different things… You know my aspiration is I would like to be senior lecturer, and in all honesty that Programme Director role, when it was advertised last year, I didn't go for it because I had only been there for two terms, but that was advertised as a senior lectureship. And there's one part of me thinking should I be thinking that that's the way I should go and there's another part of me thinking... People keep saying to me you're one of the people we are counting on for the REF and you should really be getting stuck into the research and that's

what you should be doing. And there's a little bit of me saying I should go back into teaching.

Could I say to you that in five years' time categorically that there's no chance I could see myself in the classroom again then the answer is no, I couldn't say that. But that's partly because I don't know what the direction that teacher training is going in. It seems so under threat, we've got huge challenges in terms of the way forward for us as an institution, I don't know what to think. I think that makes it really hard to project where you will be in the future.

I think there are other things, I haven't said actually, I think there's also that thing when someone like me, I think you will have to analyse that, a working class girl, the very ordinary background, who seriously did not have any high ambitions of who they are and what they would be. When I came to work at the university that was beyond anything I could have dreamt of. So again there's one part of you that thinks I had no ambition beyond that. And yet on the other hand I think I have to be honest and say one of the things that excited me about going to work at the university was that I was 50 last year, quite a significant thing, but I knew in teaching my options from then were fairly limited, I was pretty well going to see my time out, let's be honest. Whereas when you go to university even if it's bits of research, I didn't necessarily think I was going to be a professor, but I wouldn't have to stand still and little opportunities would come my way that would give me fresh things to do and interesting things, and that was so exciting. I don't want to see my time out anywhere, I want to have the chance to keep learning and growing.

P - one of the things that I was picking up on was that at various points there were these people that you mention that pushed you in various directions, often unnamed, and I just wondered if you could unpick any of that.

E - that interesting, anything in particular you would be thinking of.

P - Well there was your husband and he pushed you to do the MA. *(Comment added later - my husband didn't push me to do it - he saw the course and knew what it would mean to me to do something like that - to say he 'pushed' me has a different feel to it. I wouldn't have done it unless I'd wanted to).*

Everybody who knows me really well knows that I have had this huge gap, which I think is still there, and that's what's so ironic about the English thing. I feel a bit of a fraud being an English tutor, I still think I should have an English degree. It's just something, I think when I'm going to retire I would do something with English Literature. I don't know why it matters to me so much, but it does. So he knew, it's been a constant thing where I've got to, however much it seems that I may be able to plug that gap, it seems that six months later I never had the chance to sit

around and talk about Virginia Woolf. I think that there is something more fundamental in that perhaps. That when we were very first married we were both doing teacher training courses and my husband started have some fits and he had to leave the course, because at that time you couldn't teach if you're epileptic, and so he had to leave. So the beginning of our marriage was quite difficult really because obviously his life fell apart. Anyway quite by chance my father in law worked somewhere where they were looking for someone to come into the accounts department, which was not what he did, and he said to my husband why don't you go for that? He then had to do lots of training, the training was at F, we were living in R at the time and he couldn't drive. So I used to have to pick him up from work, drive him down to F, and there was the session 5 to 7 and 7 to 9, 4 hours in the evening and I had to fill in those four hours. So for the first 2 hours I would go and mark in the library and then the library would shut and then I would go and do odd little courses like typing, which was so useful for me that I could touch type. But funnily enough a couple of years ago when I was doing that PhD, and things my mum said to him something about 'it's been really good the way you've supported Elizabeth'. And he said 'Elizabeth has been so good to me during my training course'. But I didn't really know that he felt he needed to support me, I don't think he needed to support me back, but I do wonder whether looking back now when I've said at various stages 'oh I wish I had the opportunity' whether or not he's actively tried to look for those opportunities for me. But I certainly wasn't aware. That thing that my mum told me was literally two years ago, so I do wonder now when I kept on saying 'I wish I could have done English' and 'maybe one day I ought to do something' maybe he was actively looking on the Internet to try and find an opportunity for me.

P - and colleagues at work, obviously that was informal conversations.

Because I know it's coming to crunch point with what is happening next year, and people had said to me 'well you need to start to decide, if you might be having this conversation you need to decide what you want'. I think the trouble is with people like me, that really I want it all but I can't do it all and that's been really hard. I do love the Programme Director role but it's very demanding; a four year programme, the curriculum English and as you know there's a lot that's been happening as well as being expected to do all these things. But I love the curriculum English and I love my research and I want to write this book. And I sort of want, but I can't have it all and they are right I need to start making decisions about what I want.

Discussion 3 - Emily – Professional Life History 06-07-2012

I started with early childhood examples and then I have worked through my life story picking up on key events and I suppose also the key bridging points between particular things and the reasons behind those.

So I think one of the things that probably comes out from my early childhood is that I really like learning. I learned with loads of different members of the family, loads of different things. I learned to read before I went to school with my mum, that was a very clear memory, with Janet and John books, which was good because I knew one word! I learned how to make fishing nets with my grandad. I learned all the knitting and sewing and baking and stuff with my grandmother. But one of the things was that, once I had learned to read, the type of books that we had in the house were really interesting because they were the sort of things that I can remember reading. They must have been Edwardian books about the natural world because that was one of the things that had always really interested me which were done in a story type of mode, where the children in the book would meet an old man and they'd go round and explore on the beach and find out stuff. So I've always liked finding out stuff like nonfiction type of things, and I actually like thinking 'oh I know something that I didn't know before!'

I suppose going into school I was strong on the reading and the writing, I hated mental maths because it was all too fast; I like time to think. I think that is something about me, I don't necessarily react to things immediately because I like to think and I like to think of different options and I know the making of first choice isn't necessarily your best choice. But I don't know whether that was about mental maths or that the way I was taught. I couldn't spell though until I realized, when I was about nine, that actually letters had sounds; because I had learned to read 'look and say'. I had a really good sight vocabulary and I understood the nature of the way that text is structured, because it's about people's ideas, so most of what I was able to do was just to follow it through any way. And so consequently, my spelling, I can remember sitting, and I was OK I had a number of words I could spell accurately, but when I came to a word that I wanted but couldn't recall I can remember just writing it and thinking that sort of looks right. And so it was really a defining moment actually and nobody had told me I just sort of realized.

Going into secondary school again I sort of followed that humanities, geography, history, English route. I actually went to an all girls school for the first three years when I was 11 to 14. They were changing the school system where I lived and they were going comprehensive but they hadn't actually refurbished either of the buildings in order to go comprehensive and co-ed because there had always been a girls and boys secondary modern school. So we ended up as an all girls school until we went to high school and I started my GCSEs. So that was quite interesting. Whether it had any impact I don't know, but we met again the boys

we knew in primary school. We had kept some contacts because of family friendships and so on but actually for me I hadn't seen some of them since we left primary school. It was interesting to have a boy dimension again it was something that was quite interesting; like in our Latin lessons, which were quite long all afternoon, we had our teacher take a break in the middle and go into his little room and he used to leave us to chat. And that was the first break of getting to know the boys and that was quite interesting as it gave us the opportunity to get to know a group of boys and then getting to know their friends so I took on from there.

But I did stuff during that period teaching myself. I was patrol leader with the girl guides and I used to go on field trips because geography was my special interest, history and English was slightly secondary, and so I went on field trips with younger pupils and stuff. So I did that as a teaching type of thing.

Then when I decided to go to university I actually declined a place at Manchester University to do geography B.A. in order to go to Durham to do a B. Ed. Because I did know that I wanted to be a teacher. I haven't always wanted to be a teacher, I did want to be a policewoman but it was told I was too small and I wouldn't be able to throw people out of pubs! That was my grandparents told me that. And perhaps because I like reading I should be a librarian. But anyway I decided in the end I would be a geography teacher. So then I went to do a B.Ed. at Durham. In the second year they offered you, if you got a first in your second year, you got the opportunity to do two more years honours. So the honours wasn't just tacked on it was a two year course and you then had to do education lectures at the school of education and you had your geography. You went back a year actually, you went back into the second year of a geography B.A. at Durham. So I had a sort of mixed economy. So yeah that was quite funny, because I can remember going into the huge lecture theatre and they gave out everybody's packs and they had this one pack and they said EH this is your pack 'where is she?' and then everybody looked around because I was the only person. You have to achieve in order to get on and I was the only person for geography that year. That was interesting because I was different within a different group of people and I had different pressures on me. I didn't do the whole of the second year course because I had to do school experience in that third year and I had to do my education lecturers as well. It wasn't particularly well thought out timetable wise, they didn't really worry that you have to run from one end of Durham to the other in order to get from an education lecture to a geography lecture. And actually in the end of the third year they said 'why don't you just do honours geography and give up the education because it would be so much easier, you wouldn't have to do this running about' And of course it would be easier for them because of organisation. Not that I was worn out or anything, because I was managing fine. But I didn't, I said 'well no, it's a bit ridiculous because I'd have to do one year and then another year PGCE'. So I got a 2:1.

Then I went and took up my first job, which was back in my home county, which was a one year temporary contract. Because actually coming out of Uni in the early eighties there weren't many jobs around. So I took a temporary job which then became permanent and I stayed in the role as mostly a geography teacher (secondary comprehensive) but also I was a year leader and form teacher. Obviously I had to apply for the job against somebody temporary who was there as well so I got that. And I got married while I was there.

And then I decided that I would leave, when my daughter K was born. I took maternity leave and went back in about May and did the last half term. And my husband was on secondment. He was a teacher at the same school at that time. So he would look after K with his friend, which is interesting, some days a week, in a boy type way! But having finished, because I always liked learning... My husband considered doing an M.A. with the Open University but he decided in the end that he wouldn't. There was something else that he wanted to do. So he set of small publishing business with this friend of his, because they were both history teachers. So he just left the thing lying around and I suddenly said 'well I think I'll do that'. So K would have been one and so I just applied. And I thought 'well I probably won't get it, they won't want to have somebody who's actually not currently in education'. But actually I thought it would be the ideal thing to bridge the gap, so that I can keep a foot in and keep learning. And it really surprised me because I did get in. So I spent three years doing that; which was great because it got me to meet a lot of interesting people, there were head-teachers, and a few people I knew within our region. It did keep me in. It was hard work because I then had my second child and I had to make the decision whether to carry on, because she would be born at the beginning of the course, so I considered whether or not to finish that year or defer. so I said 'no it's OK I'll carry on'. So I carried on and managed to get it done.

Which then took me through to about the early nineties and then I spent a bit of time doing community type stuff: I ran a mother and toddler group and I taught Sunday school. But actually also during that time I had another side of it. I'd been asked if I would do examining and moderating for GCSE. So I used to come down to the University of London. So eventually I became a principal examiner and moderator for one of the GCSE syllabuses. So I had that running off the side and kept that geography link. But again it was always questioned when I applied 'you're not working in school so how do you keep fresh?' But they were obviously convinced that I did still know enough about the role and was able to do it. That again kept me with one foot in that world of education.

Going back into school, I went back into primary school (because although I had left college going into secondary school I did have the opportunity to do higher primary and secondary, and so I took a secondary teaching job in the end because of where the jobs were but I had had primary experience). And I went back because my older daughter's primary school needed someone for a morning

and actually anybody would do. So her teacher phoned me up and said 'well you were a teacher would you be able to come? I know you've got another little person but would you be able to come in?' So I thought actually this is probably quite achievable to do some supply teaching. But actually, no, supply teaching isn't very achievable with a small person because people will phone you up at odd times, so I would be better getting a part time job. So I applied for a Special Educational Needs job primarily, but really it was also about the school with one very big year four class and it was a bit of a bulge class and what they actually wanted was somebody who would be able to take part of the class. So I took the more able end of the class while the class teacher had the rest. But it was just part-time and suited me.

So I just worked then for about 10 years on part-time contracts. Which meant that I had to be quite flexible, because I was perhaps in a place for a year but because of funding constraints the contracts were all limited by funding, so therefore I just had to be flexible. I had to learn to prioritise when I got into the school. Sometimes I worked full time, sometimes I worked part time, it just would depend as my children got older it didn't matter to me. Sometimes I did more than one part time job and was in two schools, so it was a bit like running in Durham from one end to the other.

And actually when I finish the final job there I stayed in it for probably about three years, but I knew that was coming to an end because the funding was coming to the end. It had given me though the chance to be the English subject leader because it was quite a small country school so at every body had subject leader responsibility regardless of status. I think I was 0.6 there, so a reasonable part time contract. So I was English subject leader at the time of the production of the National Literacy Strategy. So I was the one who embedded that in that school. And then as that funding was coming to an end my husband, who had moved into working in educational software development for Anglia TV, they were bought up and what was going to happen was that the Anglia television was going to stay where it was and that all their subsidiaries were all scattered across the country. He was going to have to move to possibly London and so he, looking at our family and how old the girls were, he decided he didn't really want to move. So I said 'perhaps I'll look now for a full time job and you can have...' He had decided to start up his own consultancy, which is what he did. So I looked for a job and a literacy consultant job came up, which again I thought 'I don't know, I don't stand much chance of getting this because I haven't been working fulltime'. But because of what they wanted, they wanted you to go into lots of different schools and to do the teaching. Because it was still at that stage a literacy consultancy, actually having the profile that I had: I had been in lots of schools; and I had been working with lots of people; and I had to work in lots of different ways, which was the thing in terms of experience that enabled me to go into that role.

And the role was to work within the Education Action Zone in GY which was nice and geographically close, and also my first teaching job had been there at the high school, and I still knew quite a lot of people in the feeder schools and things. So that's quite nice coming home again. It morphed more as it went through into a school improvement role to do the Improving Schools Programme. That moved us much more away from the practical teaching. It was much more difficult to to actually demonstrate good practice because much more of the local authority role was about schools causing concern, about tracking action plans, and again that gave different skills. And they gave me the opportunity to line manage as well, because our line manager of the team got a Primary Adviser job. Because we were in rather two tiers; there were the primary advisers and there were the consultants as well, so you progressed by becoming a primary adviser. So actually within the consultants and the school support consultancy there was a lot of people so they needed an additional layer of line management. So I manage the English team. And I think that obviously gave me the management experience of quite a lot of people actually; at one time I think I had about 13 people running different programmes that all had a connection into English.

And during that time I decided that I would do my doctorate, so I did my Ed. D. between about 2003 and 2007 as a way also to focus on some of the aspects. So I was an insider practitioner looking at the way in which we evaluated our training. And as a result of what I did actually we significantly changed the way we evaluated within the English. It didn't grow into the rest of the way in which the advisory service actually evaluated their training but it did have a real impact on the way in which we wanted to interface with the people we were training. And so I think that was quite a success because it did have impact.

It became a strange time, perhaps like you felt when you are supporting Reading Recovery and ECaR, as the ties of Primary Strategy basically became unraveled because people were jumping ship at the end. They were finding other jobs; the regional structure was breaking down. So therefore, although you would say 'well actually we had a lot less', we weren't being called to account in the same way as we were related to standards. That was certainly one of the things that was a real driver as I took over the team, and my LA had always been one of the key counties for watching out for. But it was really very interesting, that sort of strange twilight zone which many people in schools, teachers and school management didn't really see the end of. They didn't see that part because they had only seen us coming in, suggesting stuff and doing things to them, and they didn't see actually the way in which we were trying to give them freedom to work in a more collaborative manner. But that hadn't been my LA's style, the culture we had created. So when we came to the point at which 'The Importance of Teaching' the white paper was published, it was the case that in 2011 it was going to completely change the role of the local authority and the impact on that. And the

way in which all Local Authorities had to respond to that in terms of education but also in terms of cuts in funding.

So we had it from both sides, we had cuts in funding, we had The Importance of Teaching, which was trying to change the whole relationship between local authorities and schools. And it was at that point that, because I had moved so far away from what I like which is teaching. And I suppose I'd put up with the fact, because training isn't teaching in any way. I was thinking about it as I was walking in, thinking about this conversation, and well training the people we were training wasn't teaching, is not the same as teaching, you haven't got at all the same aim and objective of what you're doing for the people you're working with. It's not the same, they're not in the same place. And because that had moved so much away from that I thought well now is actually the time. What will happen is: I would either have to apply for a job in the interventions side, which has actually become schools just write action plans and you go in and check if they have done the actions and you don't actually take much of a role in supporting the actions in place, so I'll either have to go that way or to the other side, which my LA has decided to develop, which was a bought in service where they were going to provide courses and that was just going to be more training. So I thought I don't actually want to do either of those things so perhaps now is the time. I had worked on the GTP and have provided training for students as part of the role any way. And I had applied for a job a while before for a SCITT programme, which was actually quite a long time ago, which I hadn't been successful in getting. But 'if it's for you it won't go past you' as some people say so that probably wasn't the right time anyway. You had to have the right experience for that particular role. So anyway I did what I would do which was to look for a new job and then if an opportunity arose to take voluntary redundancy... So again that transfer, that push into 'are you going to do it now or are you going to stick with something that you aren't really going to like, and haven't liked for quite a while now?', that was again an economic, and I suppose policy driven, driver for me to actually make a change. Which is what I did.

So I applied for about three jobs, a couple of lecturer ones which I knew I was; although it depended on their profile of the lecturer job that they wanted and if they wanted research, that is something that I have not got so much background of. When I went to Leicester and was interviewed and they decided to go on a research route rather than having someone to manage their partnership. I think they then decided to fill it with somebody there had already got, and I know that that would always fall. So having the opportunity to do a professional tutor job was really what I was looking for because I knew that was where my skill set was going to be able to provide me with a baseline against anybody else that I was applying with and I was going to have the same type of skills that the job required. So that was then the job that I got here. So I suppose that's how I got here.

P - Can you unpick a little bit of the journey in this first year?

I suppose one of the things was being invited to do the co-ordination and I thought about it and I thought well okay I'll offer. It seems as though the whole structure had changed, and when I saw the diagram, so I thought well actually I don't mind, it's something that I've done, I can manage things. So that would be interesting to help out but it was done in that vein I wouldn't have minded either way. I was happy to come to be here and to do the role and I knew there would be a lot of different things that I would have to deal with, I would have to think hard about. I didn't really mind one way or the other, if someone had said they had been given the coordinating of English I would have been absolutely fine. I was actually quite happy to take on the role and have a group of students and that has been the most exciting part of it. Because actually in them I have been able to get back into school in a different way, and in a different role, but to use the skills that I have got. Which OK I know my students would probably say 'all she asks about is pupil progress', and I do carry that with me and it's a big section of *my rucksack* that I carry around. Because I believe that's what you are there for. I do believe you are there to do it in response to the way in which different children learn and to learn to be flexible about it. I don't have a one size fits all mentality, so I hope the students get that as well. But it is important because I know that it's important for school leaders and I know that it will be important for them in the future, they need to be able to demonstrate that they understand when the children have learnt something. And I think that's been great actually through this year to supervise the students across the year, three school experiences. But actually that has been so interesting, the way in which the course has provided them with the steps for their success and how increasingly the good and outstanding student, and the satisfactory ones as well to some extent, have been able to focus and bring everything together to their heads in two places, to be able to focus on the learning and also what they're doing.

But in terms of joining a big organisation and getting to know who does what, and even today I was reading an email and thinking well who is that, 'get in touch with your faculty administrator', and thinking well who is that? And then how do I find out? And actually I think being put with M in the same room, she is very self starting, so although she's working on the secondary teach first and pgce, she comes from a similar background and so that is being quite good. And she's worked for QCDA and she's been a Strategies regional advisor. So between us we got through our beginnings and we managed to work out and get our things sorted and do all those type of things and between the two of us we spend, we are our help service if you like to refer to, not that she would have known who the faculty administrative was!

So I think the structure of the course; it's one of those things that when you read it is all clear but in the doing of it, it still is clear, but there is the next job and the next thing and there's this bit that needs doing, which although it is all there in the documentation and in your reading of it… I think it is, I suppose, learning by doing,

or getting used to things by doing. But that you're just working your way through and so you're thinking okay the next thing I need to take on board is that. And I suppose that it's in those things that there are pressure points when several things come together from several different directions: and you've got to get your references done by this point, and they're all back in so you've got to do the teaching and you've got to prepare courses and all that sort of thing. Then it's those sorts of things that sort of cause, 'oh goodness! Really really hard work for a week or two weeks'.

I think next year, now that I've seen the shape of what needs to be done, and I realise that some things can be done - like the summary of school experience doesn't have to be done when I've met with the students, which is what I've done this year - I would be doing that much earlier and just getting it done. And thinking about it it might be quite interesting to see examples of on how other people do these type of things, because I'm not sure whether I go into too much detail and so therefore I'd be more efficient and giving just as much support. But then on the other hand I think that the students seem to like the way that I do it so I carry on doing it because it suits me and if I can manage to do it then that is what I will do.

So I think it's given me opportunities, it's about seeing the way in which to take those opportunities. So I have actually tutored three B.Ed. students for their projects, which was all just additional on the work load and I just had to fit it in, but as they have mostly email support or a few face to face tutorials that was achievable and I had to mark them at the end or co-mark them with people. And actually that was great because they were all really focused on literacy, which was why I was given those three students, and they were all people who were teaching assistants working in school and I think it was really nice being able to see the way in which, in three very different ways, they were able to take those projects forward. And how much impact they had actually on the children they were working with. And I did well actually, two of them got As and the other got a B so that was really good, they did really well for themselves. It was all down to them with a little tweaking for me.

I suppose again it is sometimes about those incidental things, because incidentally I was asked with a bulge in numbers if I would do the specialism, which again was extra on top of the workload and it did mean I suppose there were certain things I haven't done this year as much of; such as quality assuring the English course or quality assuring the student experience in terms of what they're doing and school. But again I enjoyed having the opportunity to teach at Masters level in order to be able to take on that opportunity. So it's about swings and roundabouts really. But again I have said for next year I don't mind because I think it will depend on the way their specialism preferences pan out. I don't have a burning need to necessarily stay on.

But what I am going to do is tutor on the Ed.D. because I am really committed to the Ed. D.. I am really committed to the Open University, because my Ed. D. was with them are as well, and I believe in that principle of open access to education which they are able to provide. But actually I was also very focused around thinking about the fact that I'm very committed towards the professional Ed. D. route because of the impact it can actually have in educational establishments, and it's usually driven by that need to make a change to something and it is practice based. So I was interested in doing that. It's more difficult to do supervision because it's a bit of a mix and more difficult to fit in in a week, but I am going to tutor on one of the modules so I will have a group of students to tutor through.

P - where there any challenges this year?

No not really, not anything that I wouldn't expect moving into new context. Because they've moved into new contexts such a lot I am quite used to it in a way. I think it is always about the opportunities. I have been used to dealing with a team of people who are virtual; because in the advisory role I might have had 13 people to line manage but they were never all in one place at the same time, so it's very similar to here in some ways. There are part-time people and people are out and there are periods of time were lots of people are working on school experience so therefore you were all really busy with that. But that's not necessarily just a challenge for me that's a challenge for every one, is the type of communication you need and the style of communication that you need to have. But grafting on to that, I know I am very aware of the need, but also that you necessarily have to think yourself back into what I would describe as just a 'big school', because it is a different way of organizing things from the way in which I would set up a funded, budget lead, driven programme. You get the budget, you decide how you spend it, you set it up, it runs and you evaluate it. And that is different though because we didn't have the same connectivity with the course participants as we do with the students. That has been something to adjust to. *(Recording stopped at this point).*

Discussion 4 - Jane – Professional Life History Discussion 27-11-12

As far back as I can remember into my childhood I remember playing schools as one or my favourite games that I used to play with my sisters. It was either schools or library ladies, which was the other game we use to play, and all my books then became the library and they would come in and borrow them. So it was very much kind of literacy based things that I was interested in at that point. And as far back as I can remember I always wanted to be a teacher that was a kind of the vision I had even as a little girl.

I remember at high school, probably towards the end of my high school, I remember being told by a teacher then that I couldn't be a teacher. I remember him saying to me 'you can't be a teacher because you're too quiet and too shy' and he said 'you'll never make it'. So I think part of me was determined to prove him wrong, that was what I wanted to do. So I went to school, stayed into the sixth form, did my A levels. And then I wanted to go to teacher training college. I think this is to do with my home background, but I didn't feel that I had the confidence to move away from home, so my original thought was that I wanted to go to the nearest teacher training college so that I could live at home. So I applied to one college, which was the nearest, but obviously you have to put other ones on your form, and another one that I had heard of that has a good reputation was a college in Birmingham. So I visited both colleges and actually it was that college that I fell in love with. As soon as I went it just felt right that I should be there. But I did put it as my second choice because I was still thinking that I wanted to be at home and commute every day. So I didn't get the grades to go to my local college, they actually wanted higher grades and I didn't get them, so I ended up at Birmingham and I think it was almost fate that that was where I was meant to be.

So I went there and I did a combination of both, as I lived away during the week and came home most weekends. I did a four year B.Ed. there and really, really enjoyed it. My main focus was between…, because you had to pick a specific age band and a specific subject to work on then. So the age band was nursery up to 9 year olds, so kind of 2 1/2 to 9 year olds. And my main subject I chose was Maths because that was where my interest was. I had an A level in Maths and to me that was where my strengths were, at that time, and where my interest was. So all through college I got it in my head that I would like to be like a Maths coordinator or a Maths lead within school. I did placements in nursery school, in a year one class and in a year two class.

The year two class was actually my last placement in Birmingham and I was offered a job at that school. But again I think I got that thing again that I needed to go home and lived at home, so I didn't take that. I applied to the interview pools. I applied to the pool in the two nearest Local Authorities, and another pool as well, because that was the system that was around at that time in 1990. And

I got offered a job from my local pool. I got offered my first job at R infants school, which was not very far from where I am now, a couple of miles down the road. And I started there September 1990. So I didn't have a career break at all, it was kind of school, sixth form, college and then straight into teaching.

It was an infant school so I had my first class was reception/ year one mixed. And then through the time that I was there it was classes up to year two. And I was there for almost ten years. During that 10 years I got married, life moved on and I had twin boys. About halfway through my time at that school I had twin boys, so that was '95. And I needed to work, ideally I would have liked to have time at home with the boys, but I needed to work. I had to go back to work when they were three months old, which was tough with two tiny babies. But I went back part-time and I went back to the job that really suited me because I was working with small groups, I wasn't given a class commitment. I had small groups which I worked with every morning and they were like special needs groups. So for literacy I had the lower ability children from year one and year two. And then I also had the higher ability children for maths, because they saw that maths was my specialism, but actually it was literacy that I was starting to enjoy. I think at this point was where I kind of did a switch from maths to literacy. I also took on the SENCO role within that time as well, so kind of Special Needs was another area where my interest was developing.

Then it got to the point when the boys got to about 4 1/2 - 5 and I was thinking I need to get back to full time, financially we needed me to be back full-time. So I started to look. I applied for a couple of jobs, but nothing fell right really. And then the head teacher at that school, and this kind of fell in my lap really, the head teacher said 'there is a school' (which is W infant where we are now) 'that are looking for a lot of staff'. Basically the school had gone into special measures, they were searching everywhere for staff and they were getting pretty desperate. So my head said, 'Why don't you trial it for a term on secondment. It would give you a feel of what it's like to be full-time and whether you can cope with the family. And then your job's open here, it's a secondments so you can come back in September and say that you've trialed it, and your job's still here.' So that was kind of ten years ago I suppose. So I came here on secondment for a term intending that I would go back, and I never went back. So I'm actually still here, other things have happened, but I'm back here now. So really there have been two main schools where my experience has been.

As I say, the school was in special measures and the head here, she started on the same day I did. And I think we were both in terrible shock after one day, because I didn't quite know what we had let ourselves in for. And I think it was a journey, quite an horrendous journey sometimes, and a tough journey but we did it. And it felt like we did it as a team. And I started to work my way, as I say, I stayed and worked full time. I started in year two and then I have worked in the last 10 years across all the classes. Again only infants, only up till as far as year

two. I was asked to do acting SENCO when I first came and then I became the SENCO, probably the September time I think. I have taken responsibility for many subjects in my time: maths coordinator, history, geography, music, science, varying ones. But all the time I was desperate to become the literacy coordinator. Quite a shift from where I wanted to be with the maths, but they had quite a strong literacy coordinator for a while. I became the key stage one coordinator.

And you know things seem to go along quite nicely but I think because so many changes had happened, and I think in me, once things had settled, it just felt like I needed something new now, I needed a new challenge, something different to do. So I did start to look around and think maybe I ought to try key stage two, just looking for something different. And then one day the head teacher called me into the office and said 'look we've had this opportunity' and she showed me a letter which was from the authority saying they were looking to train Reading Recovery teachers. So she said 'do you want to do it? You can keep your full time post, and you will do this part-time and there will be PPA cover in the afternoons across the school'. So I was really excited by the challenge, but I didn't know anything about Reading Recovery apart from I remember at my previous school we had had a Reading Recovery teacher who used to sit in the staff and I don't think I had ever spoken to her to be honest, she just took her children, did the reading and that was it. I can't remember her name even, but I do remember it happened there.

So I started training September 2007, training as a Reading Recovery teacher. And V was the Teacher Leader at the time. And towards the end of the second term in our training year she announced to us that she was going to retire and that the authority would be looking for someone to appoint as the new Teacher Leader, and that would be from the September. So if I was going to go for the post it would mean that I had literally just qualified as a Reading Recovery teacher and then I would be going straight into the training as a Teacher Leader with no CPD or anything. So my first reaction was I couldn't possibly do that. I wouldn't have the confidence, back to the old confidence issue. That got me thinking back to the high school, would I be able to do that? My expertise I felt was in teaching and working with children but not actually in leading. I suppose the experience I had was as key stage one coordinator but I hadn't done that for that long. So I just didn't feel I have the confidence. But I think it was in talking to V, and in talking to my husband as well, and I think the two of them between them made me feel that I could do it and I could have a go.

I think the idea of going to London and doing the training was all a bit scary at the time. And I remember that six week holiday before actually starting in September, and I remember a few sleepless nights thinking 'have I done the right thing?', and kind of not knowing really whether I had. But looking back now I definitely know I made the right decision. And I absolutely loved that training year. I think the friendships that are built during that time had that learning community and I think

with certain friendships you know are friends for life really, the friends that I have made there. And yeah, definitely the right decision.

I absolutely loved my first two years as Teacher Leader. I felt for the first time I'd really got control of everything I was doing. I had a line manager who was there for me. But she let me plan my own time and work it how it worked for me and my teachers and I really enjoyed that flexibility and that control really. And it was scary. And the teachers went on a journey. But I enjoyed, I still remember my first two training groups as I felt I went on that journey with them as a Teacher Leader.

And then unfortunately, due to cut backs and things, the local authority said it couldn't continue in the format that it was in. So last year, not the September just gone but the September before, they said that they could offer it to me but only in a part-time capacity. So it was then looking at coming back, I had been gone two years, and coming back. They did it on a secondment basis so my contract was still here at the school. So it was through talks with the head teacher here and through my line manager in the authority. We talked a lot through it and how it might work and difficulties it might pose but they felt that it could work. So that's kind of the contract that we came up with that I would work 1 1/2 days for the authority and the authority would pay the school for my time and my main contract would stay with the school. And that was how it was all set up to run from the September.

During that time, just before all that started off, the deputy here left, gave her notice. So mixed into the whole thing became, should I apply for the deputy role here? I was very torn then. What I had ideally wanted to do was to carry on in my role as Teacher Leader full time, that wasn't an option. So I kind of got two options really, the deputy post which was a full time job or did I go for this mixed role? I decided to give it a shot at the deputy. I think one day I'd have one thought, I was going to do that and it was decided and the next day I was in completely the opposite direction. I was really torn. And I spoke to everybody really, everybody I knew, and I'd keep phoning people up and asking them what do you think? And everybody kept saying the same thing, 'it's your decision you've got to do what feels right for you'. So almost again I felt I'll probably let fate decide, because I thought if I apply for the deputy post then I haven't withdrawn, I had applied and it was actually should I pull out or not I think was that stage I got to. And I thought well I've got nothing to lose in applying. If I got offered it there's no saying I have to take it at that point. So I thought I'll still leave myself all the options. So I applied for the post, got shortlisted, got interviewed and they whittled it down to two of us and in the end I didn't get and it was given to J. And then I had a telephone call from the head that night and she said the reason that they went for what they did because they felt that J had got something different to offer but what they actually wanted was both of us. They didn't want to cut him out of the equation because the thing he was offering was early years,

and the things I was offering were very different to that, kind of the literacy side to it and the interventions side to it. They said would I… and it was done quite informally and it was advertised internally, but they wanted to create a new role. They hadn't had an assistant head here before so they decided, because they did want both of us, to create this new role so that the three of us could work together. And also the head has always been very much on my side here and she said this will enable you to do the job that you want to carry on with as well. So she said in a way you've got the best of both worlds with your leadership role and you've still got your Teacher Leader role to hang on to.

So that's what I've been doing really for the last four terms now, of doing the two. And it's tough and everyone keeps on saying to me 'are you enjoying it?'And I think that's the main thing is that I am absolutely loving it. And it is hard and I don't think I've ever worked so hard in my life! And what I'm finding the hardest is having to prioritise all of the time. I think particularly on the days when I am Head here, because if J's out as well as her, I'm Head here and its a massive responsibility really. The first day I did that I really found out what prioritising was and how you cope with all of that. And all of the challenges that come with leadership really. So that's where I am and I feel I'm coming to decision time quite soon really. And I don't kind of know where this is going really, obviously into next year with the funding the way it is. Because the way it's worked in my LA for the last two years is that the schools' forum have held money back and that's funded my salary, it's funded the SLA's for the schools and my SLA. So that's all been held back. Plus the schools' forum has been giving the schools money as well, they've had £6000 per teacher. Plus the schools' forum has held back money for new teachers, we've trained new teachers and paid for their training this year. So I think that's been amazing really that we've been able to do that and if that can continue I'm sure it would continue but I don't know. So it feels like a time again when big decisions are being made. But I know I've got a role here and I know that I would be very happy to just become the assistant head and work here as the assistant head but equally I don't want to let go of Reading Recovery because I think that is where my heart is.

P - I'm going to take you back a little bit because I just want you to think a little bit more about your journey within the Teacher Leader role. Because actually it's interesting because you've got this very strong parallel that's gone through. I just wonder if you could tell me a little bit about to the stages through from your training as a Teacher Leader into the role. Maybe you can highlight some of the detail of that part. Is that okay? Particularly some of the things... and particularly thinking about some of the things that influenced you in that process and also the challenges that you faced and also more about your work with the teachers that you are training as well.

Okay. I think going back to my training as a Teacher Leader, I think right from the outset, and I think the reason why I was nervous about it was the bit about

working with adults. I think I felt confident in working with children but actually I didn't feel I had the confidence to lead adults. So I think that was where my anxieties lay really. I hadn't done any kind of consultancy work or anything like that. So actually going through that training year, I thing what helped me was having that whole mix of people within that training group. In that there were people who had come from a consultancy background and we had a whole mixture; head teachers... And I think having the support of different people. In a way I think I was bringing strengths to the group in that I had had the Reading Recovery experience, albeit only a year, but I had some. But I think what I gained from other people was actually the confidence that I could do it. I think the one session that felt like a turnaround for me was when we were in Manchester and it was one of the Thursday evening session where there was no trainer there and we have been given some readings to do and we had to take it in turns to kind of lead the group. And I think that was the turning point for me because I felt that whole session was down to me and I had to plan it and decide how we were going to divide up the readings and lead it and manage it. And actually I did a whole agenda and I kind of really went for it, because I thought this is my moment to prove to myself that I can do it. And it felt safe to do that because I was in a community of people that I had built those relationships and that trust with, and knew they would be very supportive in that. And I think really it was those colleagues in that group that got me to see that I could do it and helped me to do that.

And I think the teachers; I particularly bonded with the one group of teachers, and I think that was probably because when I started the training I did share that with them. And I said to them 'you know', talking about their anxieties at the start of the year, 'this is all new and we're going on this journey together, but actually I'm feeling some of it too'. I actually was very open with the one group and I think that helped. Because I knew a couple of the teachers in there. One of the teacher's I had actually worked with at R and another one I already knew. And I think because I knew them as friends I felt I could open up to then a little bit more about how I felt. And I think the nice thing was that I got feedback from them a couple of times, as a group and as individuals, saying 'you wouldn't know that you are new to this, you hide it a lot, you hide those nerves'. And I said to them 'I do feel nervous and this is all new to me' but actually they said to me the you wouldn't know that. I think V as well helped me a lot because she helped me to see that for her it was very similar as well. She's not as confident a person and she came across to me as well, and I saw that side of her. I think that helped me on that journey as well.

P - In terms of your Teacher Leader role, what are some of the highs, the things that you value most in that role? And what are some of the challenges in that?

I think the highs have got to be really the children and that you actually see the results and you think... And it's also when the teachers see that in their children.

And I must say not having that training group I really missed that because it's having that journey and having those teachers at the beginning, they're there with you but they don't really believe they can get those children there. And it's seeing that whole process that this does work actually. And those are the highs and they say 'you told me that they would get there and I never believed you, and they did!'

P - Can you just tell me how many training groups you've been through then?

Training groups, I did two in the first year and one in the second year and none since then.

P - because I thought you said something about your LA training new teachers.

They are, another TL in the consortium is training the new teachers and she's doing a combined group this year.

P - so since you've been in this role you've just been doing CPD?

Yes. So that is the one part of it that I miss. And that was an option at one point, did I just do the IPD and she do the CPD? But I think when I worked out the kind of time that I would need to do all of the visits it was that that really swung it. And also the fact that she had never had an IPD Group and needed to do that herself as well. So as the consortium really we came to the decision that that was the best way around.

P - and the challenges for you?

I think individual teachers. As soon as you said challenges one particular teacher just came straight to the forefront of my mind. And I think it's when people have put me on the spot. You know they're professionals. And this one particular lady had been a head teacher and I think I had kind of put her on this level here. And actually she confronted me, and she almost shouted at me behind the screen, and I can still picture it now and it's almost like, I can't remember the exact wording, 'just tell us!' And she was getting cross me handing over 'well what do you think?' And she just really shouted at me in front of all the other teachers 'just tell us! You're standing there and just saying this, and just tell us what the answer is!' Trying to get her to understand that was a real challenge. But I think it's when you put on something like that you've got to stick with what you believe in. I feel like I got there in the end with that teacher and certainly in the second year that I work with her she was quite different and I think we did get through that. She apologised to the teachers in the group that she had shouted at me but she never apologised me! Which was very interesting, her reaction to it. I think it was her frustration to the feeling that she wanted an answer. She was feeling this dissonance really strongly and this was directed to me, this anger. I think that was the hardest point that I can remember.

P - OK so you've almost started projecting into the future anyway. Obviously you've mentioned the challenge that you've possibly got coming up next year. So can you just go through with me where you might see yourself, all the different possibilities, where you might see yourself in a year's time, two years' time, five years' time?

This is where it is really hard. This is where I feel torn every day. When I'm here, if I was perhaps here for three days consecutively, I start to feel, and I'm feeling that a lot lately, 'OK this is where I need to be, this is the job and a need to make a decision now to stay here and I need to do this'. And it only takes one thing to lead me down the other track. Because it was the last, we went to Manchester for Teacher Leader training, and actually I was feeling at that point maybe next year I should just stick to one role, because I think stress, home life and things... And then I went to that and at the end of that day I thought 'no I'm not going to, this is what I believe in, and I'm not going to be torn'. So I really don't know which way it's going to go. Even this morning, I was coming out and I thought maybe I should just stop doing the two roles and just give up. I think the ideal would be for me to go back to Teacher Leader full time. If you offered me the two options that is the option I would go for at the time. And I think that is why I'm so torn because that is what I really want to do. And I think why it's hard is because I'm trying to do the two jobs to the best of my ability. And I think there has to be some leeway somewhere. And I feel I'm not doing the two jobs the best that I could. I think sometimes when I go and I listen to someone like J and some of the other Teacher Leaders who were doing things full-time, and I think 'I'm not doing a very good job as a Teacher Leader because I'm not doing that and I'm not doing that', and I kind of beat myself up about it really. I think I've only got 1 1/2 days to do it actually and I can't do all of that.

And then I come here and sometimes J will say to me 'I wish you were here today' or 'I wish you don't have to go'. He even said that to me yesterday 'I wish you weren't going out in the morning because I could really do with you here'. And then I feel this is where I need to be. So if I was given the choice that is what I would want to do, but obviously that isn't an option. The way I feel right at this moment is that I want to carry on as I am and I want to fight to try and get as many schools continuing next year and hopefully try and get some new schools recruited. Probably I wouldn't be able to take those but within the consortium I would like to expand in my LA. I don't want to see the authority lose it and I don't want to see those children and schools lose it. I knocked into a fantastic teacher this morning. I trained her the year before last and she didn't work for most of last year. And she worked in this school until the summer term and she was a teacher from the neighbouring LA and I knew she was an excellent teacher, in her training year she was an excellent Reading Recovery teacher. And that school was quite blind in that they didn't continue it, their money when elsewhere. and so that teacher lost her job and I managed to get her into this school where

she is now. I manage to to get her in last year, into this school because they wanted to start it, were very keen but obviously had left it too late. And they saw, they looked at the data, and I went and had a chat with the head. And I said 'I know a teacher who could come in tomorrow and start Reading Recovery for you. And if I was going to recommend someone to you that's who I would recommend'. So I got her in there in the summer on the understanding that he said she would only be here for a term because we've got somebody to do this job and we want to train her from September. So I've been to that school today. They saw in that term what I had seen in that teacher and they said we can't let her go. So they're now training their own Reading Recovery teacher as planned by they're keeping her because they're seeing what she is doing with her children. So actually they've got eight children in Reading Recovery at that school. And I look at things like that and I think look what a difference that is making. And I looked at this little boy that she was with today and she said 'you know everybody had kind of given up on him'and he's there at level 12 doing brilliantly. And I just think I can't let the authority loose that.

So I don't know, I really don't know. I don't feel at this moment headship is for me. I don't feel that's where I want to go. I kind of could see me being a deputy, maybe five or six years down the line I could see me doing that. I think the disadvantage I've got is that I've never done key stage two. And because there aren't many infant schools, and I've only ever worked in infant schools, I think I am disadvantaged. Although our link inspector, he was on the panel for the deputy interviews, and that was one of the questions I posed to him when they kind of said I hadn't got the role. And I said 'has that put me at a disadvantage?' And he said 'definitely not, you could go tomorrow and apply to primary school and quite easily do that role.' He said that wasn't a problem. But I could see some heads thinking it was if I had never even taught in key stage two, not even on an experience in college. I think infants is where I'm suited. I have limited myself if I only want to be deputy in an infant school. But I don't know. The idea here is that my Head is doing a phased retirement so that in three years' time she will retire hopefully and her vision is that J will step into the headship role and I would step into the deputy role. That's the school vision and that's where the head here and the governors are planning for the future. So I could see that happening quite comfortably really. And the three of us here as the leadership team has worked brilliantly and even though it's only in it's infancy, and we've only worked together for such a short time, I think we three people have got the same vision for the children. The children here are really really tough. So I think this is where my heart is. I couldn't see myself working in a school, even though you know... in a school where children are... I think for a lot of our children this is the only security they get. And I think of the difference we make it in their lives just being here. I think I couldn't ever let that go. So I think that's in Reading Recovery or in the role here.

P - I think you are being schizmatic here, but you are actually saying that it's the same passion for both, for the most deprived children.

Yes, and it's the difference you're making. Whichever way I choose I know I am making a difference to those who need that.

Note discussion took place in her current school where she is assistant head.

Discussion 5 - Joanne – Professional Life History 19-07-2012

And thinking about my childhood I was always called a bit of a tomboy. I loved to play schools and I always wanted to be a teacher. And if someone had said 'what do you want to be when you're older?' I always said I want to be a teacher. I was always involved in brownies, guides and then on to adventure scouts, that was the social side to my childhood. I passed the grammar school exam and went to Sutton Coalfield grammar school for girls. I then left there and wanted to be a nursery nurse. Because I thought at that point I wasn't clever enough to become a teacher. So I enrolled on the NNEB course at Sutton College. And a few weeks before I was due to start the course the course was canceled. So I was at a loss thinking what on earth should I do? So obviously the lecturer at the college saw some potential in me and said 'why don't you do your A levels?' So I then said 'okay, I'll give it a go'. So I did, I did some A levels and they went fine but I said I'm not going to university and I'm not clever enough to go into university. So there were all of these doubts all the way through. So on the very last day of the UCCA and PCAS forms being due in I sent in mine and thought I'll just apply and see what happens. And obviously I got the replies back saying 'yes come for an interview' and I ended up going to Plymouth University to do my B.Ed. and it was at the Exmouth campus, Royal College.

So that was it, I finally decided 'yes', I was going to be a teacher after all. So it was nice that I was able to fulfill that dream really after having had all those doubts. Before I started university I was employed at Haven the holiday camp as a Haven Mate, like the Butlin's redcoats, in Torquay in Devon. So that was a super season just before I started university and I had a really good time there. And while I was at the university for four years I worked in a wine bar, I worked my way through that way. So those were my student days.

For my early career I got a job at a primary school near Birmingham. I was the year one teacher. My second year of being a year one teacher I took over responsibility for ICT, which was quite a responsibility at the time because we were starting up the Birmingham Grid for Learning. So I really enjoyed taking part in that. The specialist subject for my B.Ed. was actually PE and expressive art, which is a bit different to what I'm doing now! I was then a reception teacher at the same school and then I left and had my son in 2000. So I took the full maternity leave and went back part-time as a nursery teacher because I could just work the mornings. I then took over geography as a subject leader and I then had my daughter in 2003. That was all while I was at the same school.

I then returned back to that school but only for a short while and then went on supply, as it was too far for me to travel every day, it took about an hour's journey every day, so it was too far with the little ones. So I did supply in my local area from about 2004 to 2006. At which point my mum was the rep selling educational books for Oxford University Press and she went into a school in Walsall who were

looking for some classroom support for a qualified teacher to go in and support year six children who were struggling for their SATs and to do some PPA. And she said 'oh my daughter can do that'. So I went and worked at my next school. I was there for four years in the end from 2006 to 2010. Two of those years I was supporting in the classroom taking groups out and doing group support as well as PPA.

And then the head asked me if I would like to take on the training to become a Reading Recovery teacher. I didn't know anything about Reading Recovery at that point, that was in 2008. And I said 'oh yes that sounds good' and I trained from 2008 to 2009 as a Reading Recovery teacher. And at that point I think that was a shift that I felt happened in my own understanding of teaching and learning and I see that there is quite a key turning point really for me in my career because I saw teaching in a completely different way, I saw observation particularly in a different way. And I was there for two years as a Reading Recovery teacher. And I felt that I got that whole ECaR model quite deeply embedded within the school, in that second year particularly.

I then had a visit from my Reading Recovery Teacher Leader who said that there was some money coming from the government to train Reading Recovery Teacher Leaders, and again I said 'I can't do that I am not good enough, I can't do it'. But then I went home, thought about it for a couple of weeks, I suppose, and then I thought 'do you know what, I'm going to go for it, I'm going to apply!' It wasn't happening in my Local Authority at the time, we didn't have the funding, so I looked online and found my current Local Authority, who was the nearest area that had the funding, so I applied to them. I got an interview, came for the interview, and got the job there and then which was nice. It was a real boost to my confidence actually because there were about five candidates and we all had a presentation to do and then we went through to interview stage. And so I did my presentation and everyone else did theirs and then I went through to my interview first and when I came out they told me that they had sent all of the other candidates home and they had just taken me through to interview, so that was a real confidence boost, which I needed.

So yes, I did my Teacher Leader training in 2010 to11.

P - can tell me more, unpick that a little, some of the transitions in that?

Again at the start of that year I was just a little bit overwhelmed by the hugeness of it, well actually from that meeting in June when we were given all the information. I remember sitting there and thinking 'oh my goodness this is huge', and just feeling totally overwhelmed by the size of the task, and especially with it of being at Masters level, my previous doubts, 'can I do this?' But I was also excited about it because I wanted to challenge myself. I felt I was at that point in my career to challenge myself. My children were both at junior school so there

was less need for me to be so much so there for them and I wanted to give myself that challenge. So it was exciting.

The first term was really full on. I think I started to feel more in control after we had handed in the first practice essay for research methods. We handed back in and had that back and I had fairly positive feedback on it and then I started to think 'oh I can do it, OK it will be all right'. And I started to deal with things, not look at the bigger picture too much. And those booklets saying this is what you need to do this week and this is what you need to bring, and I started to look at it more on a week by week, get through each week sort of basis. I cut it down into chunks and that worked really well for me.

Spring term was OK. I just remember spending most of my time in my kitchen working and the children coming in and going out and I just sat there and worked. But because I had the end goal and I knew it was only a year and I knew the benefits that there would be by getting this. And actually, because I was employed, there wasn't an option with it. All those things made me do it. Because I think at times I need somebody motivating me, giving me a good poke to get things done and I knew I hadn't got an option, I had to get it done, so that was fine. And then the summer term I found that really tough because I started to feel that I was flaking a bit under all of the pressure. And it was all starting to come together and there was all those hand in dates. But I think you might have said to us about the roller-coaster and just hold on tight. And it was almost like a treadmill and you just keep going and keep going, so I had got the insight. It was good to have the support of our group for that but I didn't feel the I had a huge amount of support from the authority simply because I wasn't here as much as I am now. Now I am based here and this is my office base, I work from here and now I have a lot of colleagues I am close to, but at that point I hadn't got those links. So because it was a new authority, new school that I was in, everything was new, so that for me... In fact in September I actually felt quite lonely as everything was new and I had been so deeply embedded in the school I had come from and everything was familiar, and everything became new, that was hard.

But then you get to the end of the year and hand everything in, its just 'let's get going then'. I was glad in the summer term that I got three new schools, so I then joined my group with a colleague in another authority. We were able to have an IPD group which meant a lot, because with all that work to then not have an IPD Group would have been a bit disappointing. So that was nice to have that.

So then I moved into the full role of Reading Recovery Teacher Leader and I have thoroughly enjoyed this year. It's been really nice to feel like the expert and have all that knowledge base behind me and to support everything I'm doing now. I do feel like I'm finally an expert in something. And because I've done a bit of everything here there and everywhere I've always been good at everything but

not an expert of anything, but now I do feel like I am, so that's really nice. Not that I know it all but people come to me and Iask my advice and I can support schools. And I've really enjoyed supporting schools and seeing the success that they have. I went into a school this morning and the head teacher said 'we've been so pleased with the results, we've got 100 per cent level two readers on key stage one this year' and that is just… it means job done really. So yes it's been a really good year delivering IPD with a colleague and I've been delivering CPD with a different colleague, so that's been good, being able to work well with both of those colleagues.

Also very recently this month I've been given a school to be a link consultant with. So it means I liaise with the Education Improvement Advisers and consultants to ensure that the work plan is being met. So it means I hold all the bits of information I suppose and make sure that's coordinated between the EIA and consultants. And so that's nice to be included in that capacity to do that extra role.

It's been a challenge again this year to get schools to recruit for next year. But I have managed to get a group together for next year but I feel like I could have done with more support from higher up to put that into place, similar to last year, I felt that last year as well. But I've put a lot of effort into recruiting schools but I struggle with the fact that I feel like I'm going in and selling something to schools and that's not what I signed up for if you like. I don't feel like I'm good at selling it. I'm good at delivering it and doing the teaching side of things but I feel like I'm trying to sell to people.

P - And in terms of the newness of it and those feelings of isolation...

The school that I'm based in has been a friendlier place, schools are different aren't they? But it might be that I'm more confident in what I'm doing so I probably come across differently than I did last year in that school, its hard to know. I've been very welcomed in the school in which I've been working and I have agreed to be a governor in the school for next year. So rather than going to do work for my... for the course, I come here to the office in the afternoon and I work upstairs in a group office, with eight of us in the office. So again just by being here it gives me that sense of belonging. And also there are a lot of conversations going on but if you weren't there, it's not totally important that you hear them, but the fact that I'm there hearing things, it feels like I have more of a handle on what is happening generally, the general overall picture of what is happening. I'm not that separate person who just comes in and does ECaR and then goes. So that's useful to be here.

I suppose my role has been a little bit different to a normal Teacher Leader because I do everything with another Teacher Leader. And actually that has been quite supportive as well in my first year to plan and deliver things. I've never

actually been on my own to plan and deliver these things although I have been very much involved in all of it, it's been a collaboration. But having said that I was really conscious that I wanted my own IPD Group this year. So yes I've done that, it was all great and we had a really good group but I want my own group now. I feel that's sort of a transition as well.

P -so looking into the future then...

Because the funding of ECaR is not what it should be, my contract is only until March next year, I have actually applied for another job, which I'm waiting to hear if I'm getting an interview, which is a lecturing job at a local university. So that may be the direction I go in. I wasn't looking particularly for jobs but I just saw that one and thought I could do that. I think I've got a very different attitude these days. Down here, *(pointing to the timeline)* when we were thinking about feelings, as a student in the early days I remember thinking 'I can't do it, can't do it'. I've started to think 'I'm just going to go for it' and think if people want me then they will say yes. So that for me has been a huge transition. And I think I can pinpoint that happening for me going from Reading Recovery teacher to Teacher Leader training. And thinking 'I'm going to go for it'. Maybe it's my age! So I have applied for this new role. I think I'd tick all the boxes on the application form, but we'll just see. So if I go in that direction.

Alternatively I'd quite like to get back into school, deputy head level perhaps, and try and see if I can put my knowledge of working alongside adults and being a leader of adults, and knowledge of teaching and learning, into the wider context. So not just based on literacy but in the wider school context. I know those skills are all transferable, that might be another direction I go in. So there's two options at the moment.

P - there isn't a possibility of carrying on this role then?

I don't think so. I have been sent a letter that says consider this to be your notice and March is the end of your contract. But I had the same letter last year so it's not a definite. But the position that I've applied for is a permanent contract and it's closer to home. And so I'm thinking about more long-term now and I'm at the stage where I need to start being more secured in my role. I'd like to move house and I can't without a permanent contract. So that is another factor that is persuading my choice I guess.

Discussion 6 - Rebekah – Professional Life History Discussion 13-08-2012

Well apparently according to my mother I used to line up my teddies and take the register, I was about four, so maybe that was symptomatic of what I would be. And when I look back I can't actually remember a time when I didn't want to be a teacher I have to say. Maybe being the eldest of three girls did have something to do with that as well. And my family certainly equate teaching with being bossy and telling people what to do. When I was in the Brownies and the Guides I always aspired to be the patrol leader, and so I suppose there was an element of wanting to teach and be in charge!!. And also because we used to go to church and so I was Sunday school teaching from about 13 or 14.

But then I went to a comprehensive school. We moved from here with my dad's job to Fleet, and I went to a brand new comprehensive school there for one year. But then he moved back again because of parental responsibility and so I went to the grammar school, I must have been at the top of the comprehensive school. But the comprehensive school had a very broad curriculum, boys did cooking and we learned to wire a plug, and I'm quite a practical person and that suited me. To suddenly be put in a grammar school system with a more restrictive curriculum, with Latin etc. And I had missed the first year with all those friendship groups and I really struggled all the way through. I hated that system, the elitist system I really didn't like it, it didn't suit me at all. So consequently I didn't do very well. I remember after 'O' levels, going to see the careers teacher, you know you go in and I said I'd like to be a teacher, 'oh my dear' she said 'I don't think with your results you can be a teacher, maybe you'd like to be a school Secretary! I can arrange for you to talk to the school Secretary.' You can imagine at 15 or 16 that really dents your ambition. I did carry on to do 'A' levels but didn't do very well, I only left with one 'A' level.

And so I left school to work in an office and various things transpired, my circumstances changed suddenly and I thought I'll go back to teaching. I started a Cert. Ed. there as it was linked to Manchester University I was able to matriculate through Manchester Uni onto a B.A. course. I also took a second 'A' level while I was there. I was now studying for a B.A. in History and Art and Design. The first year had been common with the Cert. Ed. people so I had my education module and I'd done some teaching practice so I got it in my bloodstream as it were. At the end of the B.A. I was adamant that I wanted to teach. I was determined, because I had not gone to a very good college, that I would get into good one to do my post grad so I got a place at Goldsmiths. And this was in the late seventies and early eighties and that was one of the best teacher training establishments.

I did my post grad for children aged 3 to 11, nursery and primary, and I absolutely love that. I felt like I had come home. I adored it, I loved everything about it including teaching practices in Catford and Deptford. I was reminded of them

when I started Reading Recovery. It really reminded me of that initial teacher training because it was very much about using the direct experiences of the children. They had to experience it in order to want to write about it and read about it. And it reminds me of that conversation in Reading Recovery. And I remember that every day I would get children to write things and I would help them to write the bits they couldn't do and the bits they could do they did independently. Then they would read it back. It was really interesting.

After the training at Goldsmiths I got a job in Hendon, North London. There were a lot of EAL children there, which of course I hadn't really encountered. It was quite an experience but I enjoyed it, but it was tough. And I decided I wanted to come back to my home county. So I then got my first job at a first school and I taught a mixed reception and year one class and stayed there for three years.

I got itchy feet and I decided it was time for me to go abroad and I taught overseas for six months, and I was teaching Malay children, not at an international school but with national children. But then personal circumstances over took and I came back to England to get married.

I did some TEFL teaching for three months part-time, and odd bits and pieces but nothing very much. Then my two sons came along and I stayed at home for about six years. But by the time C was about three, and attending nursery, I began to think about resuming my career again but I didn't feel like going back into classroom teaching.

I decided to gain further expertise and went to college to study for the RSA certificate in specific learning difficulties so that I could move into SEN teaching. At the end of the training the course tutor was taken ill and I was invited to stay on and tutor on the SpLD course. And so that is how I got into adult teaching. I never would have dreamt of doing that at all but I was inspired by the subject This was on a part-time basis in the evening which fitted in well with the children. I got some qualifications in that, I got my D32/33 assessor award and then I did an Internal Verifier Award.

I decided that I couldn't just be lecturing in SEN but I also needed teaching experience too so I got a part-time SEN teacher job in a local first school. The SEN job evolved into the SENCo role but it was still part-time. I saw a job advertised for SENSS, the Special Educational Needs Support Service, and gain a position as an SEN Advisory Teacher. That was in 2006. Still part-time it was 0.6. Work was very varied and really opened up the SEN thing, because up to then it had been mainly dyslexia and dyspraxia, whereas SENSS deals with a lot of complex needs children, on the autistic spectrum, hearing impaired, a wide range. I was teaching children with severe and complex needs usually on a 1:1 basis but also advising staff and schools.

Suddenly out of the blue the Reading Recovery Teacher Leader job came up as a secondment. I was sort of head hunted for it. My boss said she thought it would really suit me. So I went for it, not entirely sure I had my eyes wide open, anyway I did. It proved to be quite a turning point. Trying to become a Reading Recovery Teacher and a Teacher Leader all in one go was very challenging and I had to work very hard. I loved it and I did thrive on it, I think. I enjoyed doing my M.A., most of it. I don't think my IT skills were quite up to it which meant everything took longer than it should have done. But certainly it transforms how you think about everything.

So I'm now in my second year as teacher leader, which I really love. What I don't enjoy is the marketing and the political side and the lack of funding. Literally we only had that first year of funding and suddenly there was no money and that's a constant battle. The good thing is the head of SENSS is really really behind it and that has been really good.

I'm doing a lot of the ECaR interventions training as well in order to be income generating. I've probably trained 100 people this year in FFT and BRP as well. Schools buy me in to train parents and TAs in BRP, or they may want to do a staff meeting and train them all in running records all that sort of thing.

Did you know that I work in a neighbouring LA as well? I am training two new groups of Reading Recovery teachers.

P - I just really want to know a little bit more about your role and the transition into that role and how that was.

The challenge is that each facet has its own language; idiosyncratic language with its abbreviations. In my previous job in SENSS I had just studied for the OCR diploma at post graduate level. I was so entrenched in that language; talking about auditory sequential memory, visual discrimination, and also administering three hourly assessments on children, and writing up detailed reports. When I started the Reading Recovery training at the IOE any mention of dyslexia jargon or terminology wasn't recognised, so I did find it difficult. I felt that some people were denying the existence of dyslexia and I had to work through that myself.

Having done Reading Recovery I feel that you can almost certainly sort out dyslexia very early on and certainly negate most of the symptoms and difficulties a person would have. But I still think they might go on to needs some additional support.

So it's been hard but somehow you have the skills to do it. I think it's the training, the detailed training, and the quality of the training from the IOE that gives you the skills. But then it it also means that you are never satisfied with what you have done and so whenever you have a group of teachers and you have a

session, you always think you could have done it some other way, but I suppose that's good. You can't ever feel satisfied, I don't think, you don't ever get job satisfaction! But for me I'm quite self-critical any way.

And I think sometimes you have to separate between building character... A lot of teachers really struggle in Reading Recovery and when they start it in particular they are knocked for six, and I think that's quite hard to see and you want to help people more but you know you can't because they've got to discover it for themselves.

I've got one small group of teachers, which started in January. The teachers that you think think won't get it, do get it, and the ones who you think will, don't. Four were fine and went through the process quite quickly, one who came from an SEN background struggled but got there by about March or April. But there was one who even now I'm not sure she's really really got it. And that's really hard. And I've still got another term and she's going to have a second cohort. But of her first cohort of children three were referred, one was discontinued but not at a very high level, and I know that two of those children didn't really need to be referred. And that's really difficult, I'm asking myself should I have gone in earlier? I did offer extra support visits and I did start doing some but it was later in the day. And you wonder should you have gone in earlier because it's those children's lives. And I'm still struggling with that. Because it's all very well that they're in their training year but the children's lives are at stake. And I would get emails saying 'help, help, I don't know what to do', and I would expect them to have made more progress than they had. And I'd come back again and they still hadn't made the progress. And when I tried to give advice and go she'd say to me 'but when it was M you told me...'And I'd say 'yes but that was M. But each one of these are individual.' And you'd think that she'd have got the idea that it was individual from watching all these lives lessons and from hearing the conversations, because her colleagues are very good... So that's interesting and we'll see what happens this term. But you don't want to put pressure. I never wanted to make her feel that she had three who were referred. Most are the others were fine, I had an 86% discontinuation rate and there were two of them that got four through. And it wasn't that they were less challenging schools. So those sorts of things I find challenging.

P - you said that you wanted to separate 'building character' from something else, but I wasn't sure what the something else was?

I suppose how to do the Reading Recovery, and doing that properly. Because we are talking about something that is broader than a pedagogy. It's about how people think and how they react and their emotions as well. For the children we are teaching it's to do with their emotional response to learning which is learnt by the results or outcomes that they've got, or how teacher's have treated them, and so it's the same for the teachers.

P - So can we start looking through into the future. Where might you see yourself in a year's time, in five years' time?

Yes I was trying to make some predictions, well that's a hard one isn't it because of the funding. It's really hard to get Reading Recovery off the ground because there's no funding for it. I don't want to just by teaching TAs, I don't want to be doing FFT and BRP which is what I spend quite a bit of my time doing. So I've got that dichotomy there.

I would really like to go into Initial Teacher Education as well because when I go to schools and look around I feel that there is something missing in a lot of these new teachers, the NQTs I see. I don't know whether some of them have even got the enthusiasm. And they see it as a different job… You know I'm thinking back to when I was at Goldsmiths and when I first came into teaching, and that was pre National Curriculum of course and pre ''phonics phonics phonics. And so I would really like to get into Initial Teacher Education, on the literacy, SEN and early interventions side. Or possibly management within SENSS, simply because I like working with people and sorting out their problems and difficulties. So one or other of those, or possibly a bit of both.

P - so what will determine which route you take?

I will look at the advert (for the neighbouring LA) and see what it says. If they're looking for some experience of school development or school improvement, which I haven't got, then I won't be able to apply for it. I don't like to spend so much work time travelling in the car, I really don't like that. Now I've got a permanent full time contract, I guess an SEN trainer with the Teacher Leader role for as long as it lasts. So how do you decide, I don't know?

P - Are their anxieties around this?

Yes certainly, it's the funding, it's absolutely the funding. I now have budget sheets to complete. I don't think education should be a political football. But the LA is being decimated isn't it, if this government has its way. So I wonder whether going into university into Initial Teacher Training is a better bet.

Discussion 7 – Annie – Follow up discussion – 15-05-13

P - basically there were two areas I want to talk to you about. First of all is your experience of telling your professional life story, so thinking about the processes involved in that. And and secondly just to look at your story and to think about any aspects that you might tell differently. So in relation to the first part of this interview I just wondered if you could think about the process in three parts. There's a construction of the timeline, and then telling your story to me when we had the interview and then reading your transcript after all. Is there anything in general you would like to feedback to me about any aspects of those processes?

A -I think the experience of going through my professional life history was a very positive process for me because it actually forced me to think about my pattern, where I've come from and what the influences were that made me a successful teacher. I think that I hadn't had the opportunity to reflect really in that sort of structure. So what is it that makes me good at what I do, or good at what I did etc. So there is that aspect of it. I think that the timeline was good in two ways: first, I think I thought it's easy, I do remember where I started, what I did and in what order I did things. Then I reread the script that you sent me and I thought 'how strange' I told it this way but in fact I completely forgot, there were gaps, that although they were there in the story but they're not actually in the order that they occurred. So I think the timeline actually supported that reflection of going back and thinking, 'no this one happened first and as a result of this, this is what I went on to do'. And then to come back to the actual story of the professional life as well, I think although I felt I implied that I was very motivated and wanting to be a successful teacher, but I thing what I didn't make explicit in the story telling is of the very important landmarks of how I became an effective practitioner. I think that perhaps the retelling of my professional life actually made me realise it wasn't something that had happened haphazardly, it happened because of this. So for example I spoke to you about that service that I worked for for a period of 10 years and, the language and curriculum service, I think that on reflection and reading what I actually said I thought that I hadn't actually explicitly said it's through that constant contact with theories and practices and that collective reflection of being supported as a staff, not attached to a school but going to school to work, that actually I believe I developed myself as an effective teacher. I realise that it is not haphazard, it is actually a science, that if you do this, this will happen.

P - so it seems to me that you have had another layer of reflection almost after doing the interview and the transcript, which is about seeing the ways in which you've become an effective practitioner and those things that have influenced you, is that right?

A - yes

P - so when did that take place? Is that something that has been on going or was that something in preparation for interview?

A - I think in a way it's when you first, I think it was in March when you first sent me the transcript and the questions. It's kind of started then, and I started asking myself 'well yes there is the narrative of my professional life history' but actually I was looking for the landmarks in what I had said, so it kind of was in preparation for this follow up. But I think it also kind of stayed with me about the confidence of my performance. It may go beyond subject knowledge and discipline and the principle of (?), it's about insight that I gain, and I felt that happened after the interview, I felt that the insight that I gained affected my practice. That actually working alongside professional colleagues, who were willing to share, and also about every child in every class I taught or supported.

P - I'm just wondering if you could tell me a little bit about how the process make you feel, in terms of those different stages again, preparing a timeline or telling the story of reading the story back.

A - How did it make me feel? I think it makes me feel very positive and actually it makes me think about what I'm doing now and how I can have a positive impact on how I approach my students. For example in the professional studies, or my students on supervision. I feel as though it has supported me to reflect very deeply into the teaching that I do and its impact on the people that receive it. Then when I was growing as a teacher but also now as a tutor. I mean to the point that I think that we all, every teacher, I wish I had done this before. I felt that 'why has it taken me this opportunity of being interviewed by you to make me think in that way?', but it hadn't occurred to me.

P - This relates to my next question, has this process changed anything for you either internally or externally?

A - Yes, I think there are two angles: I feel very positive about my achievement, I think that despite the odds, I think that as the story told I kept feeling a little bit helpless not knowing what to do, and it seemed at the time that it was by chance. I've lost the question can you repeat the question?

P - It was just whether the process has changed anything for you?

A - Well it has actually changed in the sense that it made me think about, there needs to be the root and the structure of how I support the teachers I support to develop and the students I support. It made me think about how I as a tutor need to be more explicit about what I mean, for example a simple example of behaviour and how you manage and promote good behaviour.

P - Was there anything that puzzled you or troubled you in the process of telling your story or in your interactions with me?

A - I think that, I tend to think of myself as a reflective practitioner and what surprised me and puzzled me was that, I thought, as I said earlier, 'well why hadn't I had done this process before?' But I think it's perhaps because it never occurred to me that it had such power to impact on what it is that I'm doing now. In a way I guess I felt as though I am aware that what I am doing now is built on what I did then but I don't think I quite realized it, as I do now.

P - So in particular how did you find it talking about possible futures?

A -You mean like what do I go on to do now? How did that make me feel? I told you that I thought perhaps I could engage in to research. How did it make me feel? I think it was a fairly natural question to answer. I don't think it was contrived. As a practitioner I think I am always proactive in my own professional development and I think each year of what it is I would like to achieve, what would I like to do for myself? I have focus on lots of subjects to keep up to date with my specialism, for example. So when you asked the question I said well perhaps a Ph.D. In research and things. Not to the subject specific but perhaps the teaching and learning side of it. But I think it wasn't contrived to me it was a natural question to ask me.

P -I'm going to move into that next section, reflecting on the story and whether there is anything you might change about the story. So could you just tell me if there is anything you might want to tell differently from that rereading of your story?

A - I don't particularly think I want to change anything. I think I said to you just a few sentences ago that I realise that I got, for example when I went to do my degree in English, I kind of had forgotten that. I was still teaching in Secondary, I was doing part time, and that kind of in the story got a bit muddled. And then I tried to come back to it. But I don't think there is anything particularly that I want to change. I think one of the things that I didn't make explicit and that is my confidence as a practitioner had a lot to do with the people I worked with and the children I worked with. And I didn't make that explicit, I didn't say it.

P - So what was in the present when we did the interview is now in the past, it was about nine months ago, would you tell that part differently now?

A - Yes I think I would. I think I would be a lot more coherent and a lot more, perhaps there would be a lot less narrative and give account. I think I would be a lot more, I think I would punctuate what I had said by how it had impacted on me more. It would be more pronounced if I were to do it again.

P - Now your present situation is pretty much the same as it was when I interviewed you. But when you talked about your possible futures how does that match now, would they be the same? Would you change that at all?

A - No I don't think so. I think I'd probably put the Ph.D. on the back burner for another year probably. But I think as I get near to my 60th birthday I'm thinking, 'oh yes, well I'm not sure about engaging for another three or four years in research and writing'. But I think what hasn't changed for me is that I will be 70 and I think I will still be motivated to follow my personal development, to ensure my professional development as well as my personal development is key to my being happy and fulfilled.

P - So that's really the questions I wanted to ask you. Do you have any general comments or things that you wanted to feedback to me?

A - Except to say thank you for the opportunity to actually reflect. You gave me a space to think about my development as a professional and how it happened. But also I think more as well, the second important thing, as I said, is I hadn't actually been explicit about how the confidence and insight is actually about working with people like myself, professional colleagues, and that reflective process.

Discussion 8 – Elizabeth – Follow up discussion - 09-04-13

P - I sent to to you two areas years that I'd like to discuss with you in this follow up. The first is a reflection on your telling of the life history process and the second area is in relation to you revisiting your life history that we compiled together and seeing whether there is anything you might tell differently, particularly in the light of time passing. If we start with the first area, if you think about the process as in three parts: first of all is the constructing your timeline in preparation for the interview, and then telling your story to me, and the third stage is reading back your transcript and the process of seeing if there was anything you want to change in that. Was there anything in general that you would want to feedback to me about any aspects of those processes?

E - not really. I think to be honest, constructing the timeline, I think in lots of ways when you're the sort of person that I am I think that I am quite a reflective sort of person, so in a way I was just sharing with you things that I have probably talked about at various times with other people. So it wasn't the sort of thing that I've never ever thought about, because I think at different stages of your life as you are moving from one thing to another. As you know I hadn't been very long in this job, and you have to make the decision are you going to move or not, you find yourself talking to various people about what you've done in the past and what you think you might be going to do in the future, and what's brought you to where you are now. So I felt quite comfortable doing that, because as I say it's something that I think I have done privately in my head and I'd done with family and friends and so on at different times, just looking at that professional journey I suppose.

P - How did the process make you feel, perhaps in telling your story to me or in reading the story back as well?

E - As I have said this is something I have done reasonably often, not often exactly but talked through to people. It's different when you're talking to somebody you don't know very well. Obviously you feel a little bit more guarded to say things, you obviously going to, with your family and friends, feel that they're going to be less, not that I thought you would be judgmental, I didn't. But when you're talking to somebody who can't fill in any of the gaps, whereas other people when you talk to them there are things that they automatically know. So it is less comfortable in that respect. But obviously I was perfectly happy with the purpose of what you were doing, I didn't feel uncomfortable exactly. So no that was fine.

P - In terms of reading your story back was there anything about that so you wanted to comment on?

E - Just thinking back for a minute though, one thing I would say in relation to the interview and things. One thing I found difficult was trying to get a grip in my mind on how much detail you wanted. And I remember thinking at the time that actually

I was bringing up elements that I wondered whether you would pick them up and ask further questions, I wasn't sure if they were really important and that you would want to take them further. And it was quite interesting for me, probably I would have expected the interview to have been longer and to have looked at some of things in more depth. And that's the sort of thing of not being entirely clear about how it would be and where it would go.

P - Did that feel difficult for you then?

E - No, but I think the felt a bit frustrating because there were certain things that I felt were important to me. And I suppose that links to what you were saying, I hadn't really thought about it, but I thought that, when I mentioned things like the background I had come from, you know working class girl, and I thought those things were really significant, in what had driven my professional journey on. I thought we'd probably come back to it and talk about it a bit more. Frustrating is not the right word, but...

P - I suppose it might be a difference in terms of the methodology that I was trying to adopt. Would that partly be because of your own experience of what you were doing with your research?

E - Possibly, and maybe, I think you are right it is partly to do with that but I think it's also partly, I can't remember now to be perfectly honest, whether or not we had said how long. I didn't want to take too long in case you had more questions to ask me. I was sort of telling you the outline of it and that then having shared the outline of it you might go back and look at things in more depth. So it's probably a combination of those things.

P - So when you read the story back did you feel that it was incomplete then?

E - No it's a good summary, in that it gives the outline of everything, but whether or not it does get very deeply below the surface I don't know. And in that respect, I don't mean the things as any criticism, given that I wasn't sure of how long we were going to take, and how long I should talk for uninterrupted, and given that where we were I felt really conscious of the fact that we were sitting there and people were coming up to ask to borrow chairs from our table and things like that. I just think that I felt that, maybe it was me, I just should have just gone into more detail of things, I don't know.

P – It's difficult because I don't want to respond too much about my rationales for what I was doing but what I was really wanting you to do was to give you the opportunity to tell the story in the way that you wanted to tell it and that I suppose for me probably what I was really interested in was what was more current, particularly around transitions that are in the latter part of your story.

P - If I can just go back to a couple of points that I've got here. I was just wondering if we could think about the discussion around the possible futures and

either how you felt about that or if there was anything that was difficult for you in that?

E - No obviously because we met, it must have been May time, because we mentioned that in the transcript, and I was looking ahead and saying to you that I didn't know what was going to be happening in the next academic year, where as obviously I do now. So time has moved on and I know what I'm doing a little bit more. It was interesting reading it back and all those things there about would I go back to teaching and the uncertainties about Initial Teacher Training, which probably I would say I am still (*struck away*) almost daily about whether I should stay here or whether the days in this environment are numbered and I should be doing something else. They were the two main thing reading it back, saying I don't know what is going to be happening in September, and the bits about saying, you know, the bit where I said something like 'if you ask me in five years' time whether there's any chance I'll be back in the classroom, there's no way I could say no to that'. That was quite interesting realizing that I had said that however many months ago that was.

P - this is moving us into the second area that I wanted to talk about. Having read your transcript, I don't know whether you've read it more recently, was there anything that you would want to change or tell differently in that story?

E - No not really. There were things that I could add, because as I said I know what I'm doing now whereas I didn't then, but I don't think there is anything I would change.

P - So if we can talk a little bit about that now, because obviously what was in the present for you at that time is now in the past, so would you tell that part of the story differently, would you want to add anything to it now?

E - I wouldn't tell it differently because when I was talking to you then what I was saying was that I didn't know, I was doing acting programme director and would have to make some decisions about what would happen and I was having to make some decisions about how I would move forward with that. Obviously I did take the programme director role. What was interesting reading it back was this thing about saying I really can't carry on doing both things, whereas essentially I have carried on doing both things, and it has been very difficult I can tell you trying to do the two roles at the same time. So that was interesting reading it back looking at yourself thinking aloud at that time, thinking that there are the two roles that I do, the programme director and teaching the curriculum English, and each of those mean different things to me, and what I have got to offer in those two different roles, and how challenging it is trying to juggle both of them. Essentially I have, we have got somebody new starting this term who I am hoping it's going to help to alleviate that work load of it a bit.

P - So obviously your present situation, you've explained that now, so how did that match with your discussion of possible futures then?

E – Well in a way that's what I've just been touching on, the possible futures are from my point of view, the two possible futures are whether I stay in Initial Teacher Training or whether I think about moving back into the classroom. And I think that's still the dialogue I am having with myself, in my head, the different reasons on different days. Some days it's about workload and I just think this isn't possible, I can't carry on with this type of life and at other times, because the things that are happening in teacher training, I am wondering what the future is going to hold for me. Whether there is a long-term future, with things moving into schools and the things we're hearing about Ofsted and what will happen if people don't get outstanding for Ofsted. And so it's rather scary and unpredictable, and so again you think to yourself, I can't tell you that I have a firm vision in my head about what the future is.

P - There's another question I just wanted to ask you and see how you respond. Did engaging with this process change anything for you?

E - No I don't think so, because it's something I had thought through before, it wasn't the first time I'd sat down and tried to think through the journey that I had been on and look ahead to where I might go from here. So I don't think so.

P - is there anything else that you wanted to add?

E - no I don't think so.

Discussion 9 – Emily – Follow up discussion – 12-03-13

P - Really what I am trying to get at with this is to see whether you think that, we're over half a year down the line, whether reflecting back on your story you might tell it differently in any way.

E - No, I don't think in looking at it I was going to tell it any differently. I think that the links I was trying to make about some things happening to you, because there were incidental things in the rest of your life around, and there is pivotal points, turning points if you like, all points of making a decision about stuff. No I think reading it back through I think it was pretty much what I wanted to say.

P - So when you tell the story, it must have been..., I think we did it in the summer term. At that point, what was in the present for you, you know the present tense, what you talked about then is now in the past. Do you want to tell me a little bit about...? Would you want to catch up with your story from that point on? Or is there anything about what you were saying at the present that you might change or tell differently?

E - I suppose when I was talking about the present, I was talking wasn't I about coming to the end of that first year, having experienced everything in that was in that first year about being in this place. And you do realise how just being in a familiar context makes such a difference to you, when you make such a big change, is that actually in your working life because so very quickly you start to understand even geographically knowing the place, knowing the rooms, the resources, anything like that. It's really interesting because this year has had a very different feel. Because not only was I more focused on the creation of the teaching I was doing, which was from planning that I had done, the team had done, from when I had been here, which makes the difference. But also just by being here and understanding how things work and where things are. Making connections I think has become now much easier. I took the job very episodically for the first year, because I had to, and I was constantly surprised almost, even having read the handbook or whatever, I was constantly surprised by the next job. And I think I said that in the first interview.

But this year because you know what is likely to be happening, you make better use of the time that you've got. But also I think of being able to develop links between different parts of the job and to see different opportunities. So I think that is something that really does occur to you, that the longer you are somewhere, I don't know where the pivot point comes, where the longer you have been somewhere it starts to have a negative effect. Because I think perhaps there is that, that you think that actually in the second year it gets even better, and hopefully next year I'll be able to build on that, although circumstances are going to be really different aren't they about the whole structure of the thing. But

making the changes that you know are going to be the positive things, so not having to be so reactionary I suppose.

P - You remember last time that the recording stopped, and that was that the point where I was asking you to project into the future and how you think it might be for you in two years' time, five years' time. Would you mind just having another stab at that for me?

E - I think, from what I can remember we said, it is probably still pretty much the case, is that I, certainly for the short-term, so for this year and next year, I'd certainly will be looking to stay here doing what I'm doing here. From that point on I know I was looking to use the opportunities that perhaps I was building here. Certainly this year I have worked as a tutor on the doctoral, on the Ed D, to be able to develop, I think I described it as perhaps a portfolio career, to be able to think about perhaps how I might use different aspects of the experience that I had got in order to perhaps work possibly part-time here, or for another partnership, perhaps in the same area of work. Because I do find it really rewarding actually and I do think it was part of almost missing school. And I remember I talked about it in the first interview, it was back to teaching again. I liked when I first went to the local authority, the consultancy was based around you did the teaching to demonstrate things for people. And then moving into, although I don't mind management side organisationally, I do think that the lack of the active teaching was something that I really missed. So that is something I have been able to return to and to keep having contact with them and keep talking about, even if I'm not doing it but actually talking about it more developmentally to students, because the point at which they're at compared to working with somebody who is already a serving teacher and for whom development follows a slightly different path, in terms of the advice that they're looking for. Plus I was working for the National Strategies so it all seemed driven through them.

So yes I suppose really my long-term aim for sort of five years' time will perhaps be something like that. I was trying to think, when I got interviewed I was going to be, about to have my grand baby, or to have the grand baby come into the family. So I suppose I am still quite family centric so it would be nicer sometimes to be a bit nearer. Although actually I have got quite used to the Monday to Friday type of way of working, as have the family.

P - OK we'll move on to the other section that I wanted to talk about, which was really just getting you to reflect on your experiences of telling your professional life history. So if you think about it there is sort of three processes involved. There is the constructing of your timeline before you came to the interview, there was a process of telling your story in the interview, and then the last process was reading the transcript afterwards. I just wonder if you could feedback to me any aspects of those different processes, and thinking about how you felt, and the impact it had on you?

E - Yea, I think it's always interesting to reflect and I suppose building the timeline I was aware that perhaps I was trying to pick pivotal sort of points. I think I had that in the back of my mind to make sense of it rather than... So it had some type of structure, but it was able to reflect some of those pivotal points and the reasoning behind them and to be able to look at it and make connections between those things. And I think I was really interested in reflecting back and how it was quite a theme. And I think it was just in reflecting back that you began to realise how what you think you know is what had happened, and you had internalised that yes these turning points are positive, sometimes they had come from something that is quite a negative, so you just keep moving forward. but also sometimes making quick decisions on the spur the moment, such as doing my MA and that was a spur of the moment type of decision.

But I suppose always within the context of the very early side was what I think I said right at the beginning, was that I really just love learning. So that is something that has just been the whole theme all the way through. So it's been quite a driver for me, that if you like learning then you are happy to be in that context. I do think I wondered whether there were too many bits. I think I've probably wonder from the diagram whether we did cover everything. That there were some things that I left out in talking about it, the little branches. And I think also there were other branches, even in the thought process, but I didn't follow through any way. So it was selective but for a purpose.

And then retelling that, I suppose having the timeline, I did pretty much keep to those key things. And thinking back about it, yes I think it's not something I had ever done before in that way, so that was interesting to, I suppose that through the telling of it was only an articulation of the thinking of it. I think I was quite close to it. But it was a little fleshed out, obviously supported by some of your questions through it as well in terms of prompting.

E - And what was the third one?

P - Just in terms of then reading the story back and seeing it in the transcript.

E - Apart from thinking 'gosh don't you speak in a convoluted way sometimes Janet!' Which I know I do. You know making those links as you go through and the fact that I digress off sometimes. Yea, I think in terms of reading it back, I thought I can see me here, I can see the way that I think, I think part of my personality comes through a bit. But as a reflection on what's gone before, put together I think it's quite interesting reading through me actually talking it through, although I had done the thinking process of drawing the diagram, was interesting to see then how I did articulate it and digress in order to give perhaps what I thought was context which, if I was editing it, I would have tried to take out. Equally some of it I think was context that did add to it. So even if grammatically it was a little bit here and there, which I think any way transcribing what people

say is always going to be the case. So I suppose that way of being able to add to the context or some of the other thoughts around, rather than saying 'and then this happened and then this happen', I think I've tried to draw in some of the reasoning behind and some of the aspects within my life.

P - In that process did you feel there was any personal benefit to you? Either in the process of that or talking to me?

E - I'm not sure I suppose would be an honest answer to that one. I think it might depend on possibly where you are in your career. I think it was interesting for me because I was at the beginning and I think it was interesting when you asked 'have you had any challenges?'In terms of reflecting on that, other than obviously just starting the job, which is a challenge. I'm not sure about the history side. I think yes, I found it interesting as an exercise to think about the links in my journey but I don't know whether I was perhaps articulating what I had already thought, you know I had internalised. Because of the way I presented it was obviously something I had a run through in my mind. I think that in terms of, possibly in terms of being asked, I think I always find it hard when I'm asked well what would you do in a year's time or five years' time, because my career has been quite... I think sometimes I make a decision quite quickly, I'll see something and think I'll go for it. Or there has been something to prompt me to go for it, some other outside influence, or condition or situation that has prompted it. I think I don't plan a career path so therefore I wasn't looking back and thinking 'do you know that all turned out the way that I thought it would!' Because I don't think I've ever approach to life in a way. There might be some people who might view it in that way, but I certainly didn't look at it as a reflection of 'it has all turned out as it would' 'I've got to the place that I have aimed to get to, that is what has been in the back of my mind always'. I think having said that though there has always been that interest there to do something related to teacher education at its heart and its various levels. So I have come a full cycle I suppose. And always within the world of education. So that has been quite interesting to look at the fact I have almost come to where I started. Because of my commitment that I wanted to be a teacher and do a teacher's training rather than making a choice of actually ending up doing a PGCE myself.

But I don't know whether the purpose behind it necessarily would be to start to explore what you might do in the future, in answering the question where do you think you might be in the future. I think I'm pretty wedded to the fact that perhaps I do take the opportunities when they arise. And I think seeing the landscape as its developed as well, and we're looking forward into the future, I suppose I think well actually your approach Janet, you need to just stay flexible, you need to collect the skills, you need to be able to look at other opportunities. And really the whole landscape around ITT is changing and you need to be able to position yourself in a place that you feel, I suppose happy to be contributing in a way that you feel is valuable. So that has also been at the heart of what I've done. I like

to feel that what I do has been a value, to individuals or to the children in terms of their progress too. That's pretty much my driving force and I just meld myself into the current situation. I've never been worried about change. That's something that perhaps again, even reflecting to see how when I was put into changed situation it came OK. So it gives you a confidence actually. So perhaps looking back it does give you that confidence, that you know, you were in this situation. My husband had to make a decision to take redundancy but actually another job came on the back of that for me. Those steps that you take through for quite big change situations it does come out OK at the end. But you have to maintain that awareness and flexibility.

P - So did the process of doing the interview or thinking through your story actually help you come to those sorts of understandings or did you feel you had those already?

E - I think I've probably already had some confidence in terms that things are never necessarily... Something good or positive shall I say can come out of a more difficult situation. So it is always best to remain aware of what you might be able to do. To being quite open to giving things a go and trying. But perhaps reflecting back, because I had been in the previous job for 10 years, to which I would equally reflect is too long and I will be more careful this time. But even though the nature of the job changed, I suppose that did mean that every year was different. But I think within the same context, however difficult you might feel that it is to step outside of the working context that you are in, I think it is probably more important for me to make changes on a more regular basis. I think, although when I was working part time I had to change, again it was driven by a change, but I was never really very worried about it. I quite like to be somewhere different, to have a different challenge, a different situation and to meet different people and to make other contacts for networking. I think also that it occurred to me that I need to be less... Shall I say more selfish. That one of the things about possibly staying within a particular job or particular role is sometimes because you think there's still this to do and it's important not to do it. Or accepting opportunities within the job, or not accepting opportunities, that actually would be of benefit to you because you have other aspects of the job to fulfill. So I think perhaps I was also thinking there should be opportunities for me to be able to do perhaps what I would like to do as well as what the job defines and not spend all of my time thinking about the Ofsted folder, however difficult that might be!

P - So again is that something that, those thoughts that were triggered in that process, or is that just you reflecting further on where you're at?

E - I think that it would be, perhaps triggered by the process of thinking back and timelining it, reflecting on that length of time, and being able step back also to be able to see it slightly from a distance and the choices that perhaps you had made

within some roles that you might do differently other times. So yes I do think that was something that was valuable for the process.

P - Is there anything else that you would want to feedback to me in the process of either things that troubled you or puzzled you or things that you disliked?

E - No, I think it was interesting just to talk about it and the fact that you didn't necessarily ask that many questions around it, so it was actually a splurging of the timeline and the way I saw it. That was good, rather than it being led to particular directions. And I think it could so easily happen that you would be taken off into different avenues that would not necessarily reflect the journey. And I think if you are looking for a professional life history then getting the person just to talk it through, basically what they have already planned to say, I think the planning process is good for that because you do need something to hold on to. And I don't know what other of your participants have done but it was useful to have the diagram and to be able to take it through and then for you to have it so you could see the sort of interrelationships if they hadn't become clear in the way that I had articulated to it. And I don't think there was anything that puzzled me about it. I suppose that in reflecting about it, I think it is quite interesting that it brings your life history together with a focus. But with a focus that probably has been influenced by lots of other things as well. So it is quite an interesting activity to do.

P - Is there anything else that you want to tell me about?

E - No I don't think so, having read it through I don't think there was anything glaringly missing or that I would have particularly felt I would have wanted to change. I think that we have rounded off the last bit, the sort of future bit, so it was good to finish that bit off. As I was reading it I was thinking what was the last bit, so thinking forward, so we only needed to do that last bit.

Discussion 10 – Jane – Follow up discussion – 08-04-13

P - so I sent you some ideas of what I wanted you to talk about. There were two main areas, the first is about your experience of telling your professional life history, and that involves a specific processes that you got involved in for my research and the second area then was to reconsider your story and to see if there were some aspects that you might tell differently in relation to time having passed. So if we can start off with that first section. If you think about the interview process in three stages the first stage was constructing your timeline, and then it was telling your story when I came to interview you, and then the final stage was reading through your transcript and seeing that there was anything you wanted to change about it. So just in general terms is anything that you would like to feedback to me about any aspect of that process? OK so if I were just a probe a little bit more in that. In terms of are there any aspects of the process could you think about how they made you feel? For example preparing a timeline?

E - I think it kind of made me reflect even before getting it down on to pen and paper. After you ask me to do it and I looked at what was involved in it I think it kind of made me look back over my whole career and look at the paths that I have taken and the choices that I have made and consider why I have made some of those choices. It just made me start to think a little bit more.

P - OK and how did that make you feel?

E - Emotional in some ways I think. Some of the decisions I had made, and thinking sometimes did I do the right thing? It helped me looking back to think that I had made the right decision. And starting to think about what might have happened if I didn't do this, or what might have happened if I had made that choice instead. I think it was quite emotional really doing it.

P- And was that the same for telling your story?

E - I think it was much easier to tell the story having done the timeline. If I hadn't had done that I think I would have found it quite hard to just speak to you about it all. I think having that all planned out and already to have gone through those thought processes was really helpful.

P - And obviously probably not so much in terms of reading your story afterwards.

E - No I think a lot of phrases that you say yourself that you don't realise you say are in there and it's quite strange reading it yourself. A bit like hearing herself, a recording of your voice, felt a little bit uncomfortable, but yes I think it is an accurate reflection of everything I wanted to say.

P -Having done the process, did anything change for you either internally or even externally?

E - I think probably just having a clearer understanding of where I wanted to go. We were talking at the end of the conversation about where things might move on in the future. And I think even since then I have been thinking a lot more and having conversations with different people about where things might go in the next five or 10 years or so. I think just starting to really think about that. I hadn't really thought that far ahead in my whole career at any point, to think longer term.

P - So that was a helpful thing for you?

E - Yeah.

P - In the process of telling the story was there anything that puzzled you or troubled you?

E - No I don't think so. I think maybe it just helped me to understand myself a bit more, if that makes sense?

P - Can you unpack that a little bit, helped you to understand yourself?

E - I think just thinking about the things that have helped me in the past and have influenced my choices and the things that I have enjoyed. It helped me to think about things that I was more comfortable doing and the things that felt uncomfortable but actually doing those uncomfortable things were the better decisions I made, and pushing myself a bit more. Rather than going for an easy option sometimes. I think the places where I took the more difficult option have been more successful.

P - How did you find talking about a possible futures?

E - I found that quite interesting really. I had to think about that probably more than any of the other things, I think the other things were easier to talk about. I think that involved a lot more thinking. I think at that time you did the interview I was in quite an emotional state any way and I think a lot of the difficulty was to do with the position I was in at that time. Now my position is a little bit more stable. I think I would probably feel quite differently about doing that at this moment in time than I did then.

P - That probably leads us into the second section. You say that things are more stable for you now. Can you just fill me in on what your situation is?

E - Only in that the local authority can confirm that I can continue with the post next year and that the schools forum have put the money aside again in the same way for another 12 months. So that I can continue with the role and my head teacher is really supportive and has said that she knows that this is what I want to do and she wants to back me up in this. So I know now that from September for another 12 months I will continue as I am. The uncertainty has been taken out of it I suppose. And that's what's made it easier.

P - Obviously that conversation we had was nearly nine months ago, so from this perspective now would there be anything in your story that you might tell differently?

E - No I don't think so, now I thing pretty much the same. I'm just more stable in myself and my position at the moment.

P - So that part, particularly around what you were telling was at the present, is now in the past. So would that part be told differently? I remember some of the themes that you were talking about, particularly was around that almost feeling torn between the two roles, and you want to do one but was finding the demands of the two roles was quite a lot for you.

E - I think in a way I am still proving that but I think I have come to... I think the reason I'm more stable and settled is because I realise they are two very different roles and two very challenging roles and I think I've come to understand that I can't ever give it full time, kind of throw myself in completely to either role, because I just haven't got that capacity to do that. And I think especially talking to the headteacher at the school about this, you know I did go through quite a rough time, and I think talking to her about it and she was saying to me 'you can't possibly do all of this'. And where I felt inadequate that I hadn't done things the way I would have wanted to do she said to me that 'you're doing it part-time and you've got to understand that, and that people around you need to understand that, that you are trying to do two very different roles at the same time'. So I think it's not beating myself up as much, that's where I've come to at the moment in that I give each one the best I can give it in that time. I think that's where I feel a little bit more sure of myself. And I think there is always going to be that 'if only I had had more time on this than I could do this better'. I think there is always going to be that there but I have come to accept that more.

P - And obviously when you were looking into the future, would that part change at all in what you were saying?

E - I think in the near future it hasn't really changed, that I wanted to carry on doing both. I think in my heart of hearts now if somebody said to me what would I want to choose, I think that being the teacher leader is the role, that is the role of my choice, doing that full time would be my choice. I think I a more certain of that now. But then equally, if that wasn't an option, I could equally see myself moving into a deputy head role. I think I could go either way, but I know of my choice it would be the teacher leader role that I would choose. I think I'm probably more certain but I don't want to be a head teacher, I think that's kind of because of recent experiences. And I don't know whether that might change in five or 10 years' time down the line, I don't know but at the moment I've had little bit of a taster of that and I thing for me at the moment that's just a step too far and too scary.

P - Are there any other reflections that you wanted to share with me, any other thoughts?

E - No I don't think so. The only thing I would say, and I don't know whether this is part of it really, but kind of my children are now in a similar position to that I was in when I started that story. And that seeing it from another angle, and now my son's thinking about university and applying to university. And it kind of brings all the emotion back to me from a different perspective now. It kind of brought me back to that life story of myself and starting to wonder for them both where their life stories might go.

P - So that's interesting, I hadn't thought about that. Is good to have those sorts of reflections.

Discussion 11 – Joanne – Follow up discussion – 28-03-13

P - When I emailed you I said that there were two areas I wanted to discuss: first of all was your experience of telling your professional life history when we did that in June / July time; and then the second thing was to reflect back on your interview and to see whether your story might be told differently or maybe there are certain parts you might want to add to it or whatever. So is it OK if we start off with the first part, just thinking about your experience of the whole process? So just to recap, in my mind there is sort of three stages: the first stage is constructing your timeline; the second stage is then when I came, and you told your story for the interview; and then the third stage is reading back your transcript and reflecting on that.

P - So is there anything you would like to feedback to me about aspects that process?

J - It was all fine. I found it quite an enjoyable process. It was good to put down in a timeline and certainly to think about it in terms of the structure of the time and what happened when before I then had that conversation with you. It helped to process my thoughts and put everything into the right order rather than flitting back and forth. I found it OK talking about all of that with you, I felt comfortable doing that. And reading back over what I had discussed with you. It's pretty much as I would repeat it again if I had to tell the story again, of the process of my career if you like. So there was not really anything that I would want to add or take out.

P - OK can you just think a little bit more about how you felt in that process? Was there anything about your feelings in any of those stages that was interesting that you want to share?

J - In terms of feeling that it was useful?

P - Well whatever...

J - OK. I quite enjoyed having the opportunity to reflect on what I did and why I did it. And actually not so much why I did it but to think about things having consequences in later periods of my career and particularly in my journey. It was good to reflect and think 'OK well this had happened'... I was thinking particularly how I was enrolled on NNEB course at college and at the last minute it was canceled and actually changed my whole career path, possibly, I may have gone into teaching any way at some point. For me that was like a real point of change. And so it was quite emotional really to go back and think actually I realise now that I can do it but at the time I've always had those feelings all the way through that I wasn't capable of doing, reaching my potential, and someone else always has to say 'yes go one you can do it'. And actually reflecting on that made me

realise, made it more obvious to me. Perhaps it wouldn't have been if I hadn't have had to gone through the consequences of what happened.

P - OK that is interesting. Did that process change anything for you in terms of doing the interview and telling your story? Maybe changes internally or even externally as a result of doing that?

J - I don't know really. It's quite a tricky question.

P - I mean you can say no, it's fine.

J - I don't know whether it did really. It possibly made me more ready to be reflective. Rather than just carrying on regardless. There is that idea that once I've done it once, and reflected on your career path, perhaps it made me more aware of my lack of confidence and now thinking maybe just go for it. And that I am capable of doing things. So perhaps in that way yes possibly. It made me more reflective and being able to act on what I think has happened along the way.

P - Was there anything that puzzled you or troubled you in the process of telling your story?

J - I was very aware that I didn't want to come across as self indulgent, if that makes sense. Like going into every little detail of my journey. Because you know not everything is relevant in the professional sphere. So I was aware of that.

P - So you mean you were maybe not talking about personal things, but keeping things just focused on the professional?

J - Yeah. Personally for me it's nice to have an opportunity to talk and to say 'this happened to me and this happened to me'. Is quite a selfish thing really, it's self indulgent really to be able to sit and do that. And to keep it focused on professional career path eccetra, that was what I was particularly conscious of doing.

P - You know the bit where we were talking about looking into the future, how did you find that?

J - Well for me at the time the future was a little bit uncertain because I had recently applied for a job, thinking that my role would not be carrying on. And I didn't get that job in fact. But since then my role has become a little bit more secure, as far as I can see. So looking into the future is quite tricky isn't it, because I know what I would like to be doing but it is whether... I don't know whether other people around me are going to be able to allow that to happen, you know the systems around me. So it is actually quite difficult to marry up what I would like to happen with what I think will happen. But I think it is good to have those goals and to think this is where I would like to be and then to try and find a way of getting there really. But sometimes I have gone through my career and

things have just happened and I have just been reactive rather than proactive. So in a way it's good to think OK where can I see myself in one, five, ten year's time. I had not really thought like that before, and things have just sort of turned up as it were. So now I am at the stage where it is good to think about where I would like to be, even though I might not actually get there.

P - You said you haven't been proactive about things in the past, do you think that you have been more proactive because of thinking about things in that way?

J - Yes I would say probably, yeah. (hesitant)

P - It's difficult, I know, because it might not be to do with the interview, it might be to do with the other circumstances as well.

J - I think generally as I've gone, sort of climbed, through my career, I think I've had to start thinking about where would I like to be, what would I like to do. I still think I've got a bit of a way to go there. I still allowed things to happen rather than being completely proactive. I think the first step is actually being reflective and thinking about it. So yeah, over the past sort of 12 to 18 months I feel that I have definitely started to think more in those terms. But that may be down to having to sit down and map it out, plot it out for your research.

P - Shall we move onto the second area then? Which was really just thinking about the fact that obviously it is probably about nine months since I interviewed you, time has passed, and you have already mentioned some things have changed. I was wondering firstly if having reread your story whether you think there was anything in the story that you might have told differently?

J - Well looking back now I possibly wouldn't mention about applying for another job, that situation was very much of the moment when you interviewed me. And now it's sort of paled into insignificance, if you like. But it was more, I suppose it's that idea that it's just unending, at the time that was really at the forefront of my mind I now know it is just one of those things that I did and it didn't work, so I wouldn't necessarily include that if I was talking now, that wouldn't even come into my consciousness when I was thinking about the last 12 months.

P - So obviously what you were talking about was happening for you at that particular time is now in the past, so would you... I know you've already mentioned that... But would you tell that part differently? So that the way you were talking about your life then which was very uncertain, and you had the possibility that your contract would not be renewed and you bought up a few issues about why you might want to change your role, would you re- tell that part differently? How might you tell that part?

J - I'm just going to have a quick read through this bottom part then. Yeah, I mean part of that I would tell kind of differently but I still... I said alternatively I would like to get back into school at the deputy head level perhaps, and that is still really

in my mind if things don't work out with the reading recovery teacher leader situation. My contract has now been renewed for a further 12 months and that has given me a completely different outlook on my goals. I was starting to lose a little bit of momentum and motivation. You know 'it's not going to happen, it's not going to carry on'. And now some one, again it's typical me, says 'yes we want you for another 12 months' and now I think 'yes I can do this'. Now I'm more motivated, I've recruited, and really want to get things moving again for the authority. Yeah so I'll probably tell that part differently. So I want to try and hang on to this role that I'm doing currently as long as is possible. So I won't be actively looking now for new positions unless something happens to my contract, which I'm hoping it won't.

P - And the last part of the interview was obviously looking into the future and talking about what your goals might be? Has that changed at all? You mentioned that you might still be interested in going back into school at some stage, was there anything else that you think might be the same or different?

J - It's pretty much making sure, one, that I'm happy with the role I am doing, and that I am making a difference. But the other thing that for me has slightly changed is that my family situation has changed. My husband has been made redundant since I spoke to you. So now my focus is on making sure we've got financial security. So actually that is in the back of my mind as well as my own professional life, and building on my professional status. So it's trying to juggle those two now. So that might be a bit different to the end.

P - Because obviously one of the problems with your current role if that it is just on a temporary contract. But that might make you feel that in the future those circumstances that you might need to look for something with more security or are you still happy to carry on?

J - It does make me feel like that but as far as I know, once you have been in a role for three consecutive temporary contracts I think that then becomes a permanent role. I hope so. Hopefully if I can hang on for this third year than that won't be so much of a problem. They are making widespread redundancies throughout the local authority. It doesn't mean that I am actually safe in the role. So yes I have got those things in the back of my mind as well. I am hoping he will find employment and very soon and then I can get back into thinking 'let's just go career career'. So yes it's a difficulty at the moment.

P - So that's really the extent of what I was wanting to discuss with you unless there is anything else that he wanted to share all reflect on.

J - No I don't think so.

Discussion 12 – Rebekah – Follow up discussion – 02-04-13

P - When I emailed you I said there were two areas I wanted to talk about. One was just in terms of your experience of the professional life history process that I took you through. The other area was just in terms of a follow-up about how you told your story and whether you think you might construct it differently as time has gone on. I'm thinking it might be helpful to start with the second area, because I think that we haven't spoken for quite a long time, then maybe it would be good to catch up. What I'm thinking is first of all whether you feel that, having reread your story, whether there is anything, in the light of future developments, whether there are things that you might want to change.

R - I think it could be updated obviously because time has passed and things have changed since then. No I don't think there is anything I would change having reading through it. I would probably put it in a more erudite way if I was writing it, and I was telling it then it is as I told it.

P - But in terms of the things you've talked about from your past you feel that that isn't something you would change.

R - No I wouldn't change it. It is an accurate record.

P - So in terms of the things that you talked about that were current for you when I interviewed you in August, obviously time has gone by since then, so would you tell that part of the story differently?

R - I think at that time it was so difficult to know where things were going in terms of the local authority and job opportunities really, and the whole Reading Recovery and the area of ring fencing and budgets. I think it was only surmising, so it wasn't really telling a story because I don't know whether it was factual in that sense. And I suppose now, another six months on, I think there probably is even less job choice and job security than there was then. It was hypothesising really I think.

P - I'm not up to date with your situation now. It might be helpful if you could just fill me in on what you are doing now.

R - I'm in a really good position because I have got a permanent job, which is good because a lot of people haven't, working for SENSS, which is a special educational needs support service. So I'm sort of doing a bit of one thing and a bit of another. Still Teacher Leader but that's only going to last until August, because I've only got five continuing contact schools. And also my work in my neighbouring LA, because I was covering for their Teacher Leader. So that's come to an end. And when that came to an end obviously my line manager has given me SEN work to do. So I'm doing a mixture of things. I've got a caseload in a primary school, that's for 6 hours a week. Then I'm also doing some OCR assessor work. We train people in the OCR level seven diploma in specific learning difficulties. SENSS actually run a course, in fact they run two courses

the level five and the level seven. I'm doing a bit of that and also there is a school that has just lost it SENCO and they want me to stand in for the SENCO one day a week, just to literally keep it ticking over until they can appoint someone. So I'm going to be doing that after the Easter for a day a week. That was my original Reading Recovery school so I do know it quite well. So a bit of a mixed bag, variety -is the spice of life and all of that. Each of those elements I enjoy for different reasons. But it's not very joined up, it's a bit frenetic going from one thing to another.

P - So how does your current situation match to when you were looking into the future before when I interviewed you?

R - I think SENSS is more secure than I thought because a lot of local authorities got rid of their SEN departments. In the current economic difficulties schools aren't buying in.

P - Are you able to project into the future now and would there be things that would be different in terms of what you might be thinking about?

R - I still think that my training... I have just started delivering 'Write Away' training, and I can't deliver enough days. They have sold out. And I've put the CPD online. So I think it's finding areas that schools feel they need their skills updating and then offering that training. So there's that training element. But there are a finite number of schools in a local authority so there comes a point, may be a couple of years later, when you don't need that training anymore. So I think you've got to keep ahead of the game. So for FFT for example I have trained at least 60 schools with more than one person in each school, and in some cases the entire school, so we're getting to the stage when practically every one has had that training who could have it. So whereas that took up quite a bit of my time I need to look to the future and that is what I'm doing. Also the training in dyslexia teaching and assessing, that's really a big area as well so I could see that expanding, and that takes a lot of time. But I enjoy that because I consider that to be a sort of extension of my mentoring role and of course it involves lesson observations and feedback and individual support, although it's in a different context.

P - So there's a sense in which you feel that, although not involve directly with Reading Recovery, there's still some of those skills that you are applying.

R- Yes undoubtedly. Reading Recovery is still at the core of my being.

P - We were talking about your experience of telling your professional life story. Basically the process as I see it is in three stages: firstly constructing your timeline, then telling your story in the interview with me and then reading your transcript and seeing if there is anything you wanted to change. So I just really

want to see if there was anything you'd like to feedback to me about that process or aspects of that process.

R - The timeline was very useful to do, to see it in linear form, visually I think. And that helped concrete where things are. Because when you're getting on with your life you don't really have the time to look back and think what happened when. So I did find that useful, quite surprising.

P - And then what about telling your story in the interview?

R - I found it quite hard, it wasn't easy. Because with hindsight it's always difficult isn't it. But I think when I looked back I thought nothing had really been planned, does anyone plan their life, I don't know? It was more reactions to situations that happened. So I'm not sure I had much control over that.

P - So how did that make you feel when you were telling the story, getting that sense of control?

R - Well vulnerable I suppose and also thinking 'did I not think outside the box?' That's what I was really asking myself 'why didn't I think more laterally at the time?'

P - Did that process continue in terms of when you read the transcript?

R - Yes very much so. But having said that it was factual it's just, I suppose, thinking about the 'what ifs'. 'What if I hadn't done that?' and 'what if I did go there?'

P - So in terms of engaging in that process with me did that change anything for you? Either perhaps in your thinking or even in other aspects of your professional life?

R - Maybe it just makes you analyse a bit more about your circumstances. But it also brings frustration, because I think that in these economic times you don't have a lot of choice. I haven't got really any choices at the moment to make. And I am grateful that I have got a permanent job that I really enjoy and is challenging. So I think it is a very different time to 10, 20, 30 years ago.

P - Was there anything that puzzled you or troubled you in the process of telling your story or even in your interactions with me?

R - No I don't think so. I mean it's uncomfortable, I could say that, but it's not troubling, just uncomfortable.

P - And what was uncomfortable about that?

R - I suppose we always look back and think it would be nice that everything went smoothly and you would want to go for things and have aims and that you fulfill

those aims. So I felt I sort of lurched a bit from one thing to another, mainly because of circumstances.

P - In particular, the experience of talking about your future, how did you find that?

R - Again I think frustrating really because of the limited choices. Yes I would say that really.

P - Is there anything else you wanted to talk about or tell me?

R - No I don't think so.