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Being a teacher and a teacher educator – developing a new identity?

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The shift towards school-led teacher education steered by the government in England challenges the ‘traditional’ model of experienced teachers leaving school and entering the higher education sector to become teacher educators. More teachers are undertaking the dual role of teacher and teacher educator, leading the professional learning of new and experienced teachers. This paper investigates the perceptions of seven experienced teachers who take on the role of leading the development of subject knowledge of new and experienced teachers through a case study approach. The data gathering methods were primarily semi-structured interviews, with reflective journals being kept by some of the teachers. The findings reveal that leading the professional development of others has an impact on the professional identity of these teachers. For some, this new aspect of their role has changed the way that they view themselves as teachers, and their practice as teachers, for some it has contributed to their professional leadership role and career progression. Even though all the participants were clearly taking on the role of a teacher educator, not all of them embraced an identity as a teacher educator. The findings are compared to the experiences reported in the literature of teachers making the transition from school teacher to teacher educator in Higher Education Institutions to discover if there are commonalities between the two that could usefully guide the planning of professional development opportunities. The research revealed insights into early experiences of becoming a teacher educator; the impact this has on them as teachers and leaders; and how these teacher educators see their own identities developing.

Keywords: teacher educator; professional development; professional identity; academic identity

Introduction

To create effective teachers who have a positive impact on pupil learning in school we need high quality teacher education. Therefore, teacher educators, and their professional development, warrant our attention, not least because the learning of student teachers is directly impacted by who is teaching them as much as by the content of the programme (Furlong et al., 2000:36). Becoming a teacher educator involves developing a sense of self in this role (Bullough, 2005). In their study of teachers leading professional development in school, Clemans and her colleagues concluded that ‘While it is important to share the ‘what’ and the ‘how to’ of teacher education, we must not overlook the significance of the ‘who am I’ in this work’ (Clemans et al., 2010:226).

The current government-driven changes to teacher education in England were announced in *The Importance of Teaching: Schools White Paper* (DfE, 2010). A new emphasis on outstanding schools leading the training and professional development of teachers was heralded, through the designation of Teaching Schools. The initial plans were developed further (DfE, 2011), building on the premise that school teachers are the best people to be leading teacher education. Included in the vision and background to teaching schools, on the National College pages of the DfE website is the following statement:

Teaching schools will play a fundamental role in developing a self-sustaining system where:

- trainee teachers learn from the best teachers, supported by a culture of coaching and mentoring
- professional development is school-based and classroom focused—teachers, support staff and leaders improve through exposure to excellent practice within and beyond their immediate school, through observation, mentoring, coaching, practice, reflection and sharing with peers. (DfE, 2012b)

Here we see that teacher educators are not explicitly recognised as a professional group, and it appears that the expertise developed in teacher education in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) is not valued by the current government because there is no mention of this in the statement. Whether this is a beneficial or detrimental shift is not the concern of this paper. This is the context in which teacher education is currently taking place in England and the focus of this research is the experience of individuals working as teachers primarily but concurrently having a role in teacher education.

As the environment for professional learning in education is rapidly changing, there is increased diversification of ‘teacher educators’ as an occupational group. This ranges from HEI-based teacher educators, to those working as a teacher educator in HEI and school (‘hybrid educators’ Zeichner, 2010); and those who have the dual role of teacher and teacher educator within their school. Bates et al., (2010) and Murray and Kosnik (2011) suggest that teacher educators in general remain an under-researched and poorly understood group. The literature on teacher educators focusses primarily on teacher educators who are HEI-based, having left school and entered academia, moving from being a first order teacher to a second order teacher, or a teacher of teachers (Murray and Male, 2005; Swennen et al., 2010). There is very little literature on teachers with a dual role as teacher educators either in ITE or CPD. Bullough, (2005) carried out a case study of a secondary school teacher moving beyond an

identity as a teacher to take on a mentor's identity for two student teachers, using the term 'school-based teacher educator' to describe this role. Clemans et al. (2010) considered the development of an identity as a teacher educator in experienced teachers leading professional development in their own schools. How does developing a dual role impact the practice, leadership and career progression of these teachers? In this research the choice has been made not to include mentors of new and experienced teachers in this research even though they can legitimately be included in the definition of the term teacher educator (Swennen et al., 2010) but rather to concentrate on those who are working with a group of students facilitating part of the taught programme or those facilitating the professional learning of their peers. Examples in initial teacher education (ITE) are leading sessions to develop subject knowledge for teaching; professional studies; or seminars to develop Masters level skills. Examples in continuing professional development (CPD) are leading sessions to develop subject knowledge for teaching or to develop leadership and management skills. This choice has been made because the role of this group of school-based teacher educators can be compared more directly with the reports in the literature of teachers making the transition from school teacher to teacher educator in Higher Education Institutions, where there is more focus on teaching than mentoring. The rationale for this comparison is to discover if there are commonalities between the two that could usefully guide the planning of professional development opportunities. The research includes teachers leading the professional learning of less experienced teachers whether they are involved in ITE or in presenting CPD.

Developing an identity as a teacher educator

A number of challenges are reported for school teachers making the transition into becoming an HEI-based teacher educator. Murray and Male (2005) suggest it takes two to three years for teachers coming into HEI to establish their new professional identities as teacher educators, experiencing the biggest challenges in the area of pedagogy and becoming research active. Field describes this transition as 'fraught with difficulty', and states that 'the new professional identity is hard won' (Field, 2012:811). Difficulties described in the literature include experiences of de-skilling (Berry and Loughran, 2002; Murray and Male, 2005; Harrison and McKeon, 2008; Clemans et al., 2010; White, 2011); a lack of understanding of the pedagogy of teacher education (Boyd and Harris, 2010; Field, 2012; White, 2012) and the dissimilar demands and culture of the two workplace settings (Trowler

and Knight, 2004; Boyd et al., 2006). There is a paucity of support for the transition between school teacher and HEI-based teacher educator (Wood and Borg, 2010).

Drawing on the work of Lave and Wenger (1991), Harrison and McKeon (2008) recognised that new teacher educators in HEI learn from formal & informal practices in their workplace, facilitated by legitimate peripheral participation in the community of practice, leading to increased confidence and sense of identity. Henkel (2000); Murray and Male (2005) and Swennen et al. (2010) also purport that identity is built in socio-constructive way within a community, where knowledge is acquired and reshaped; language and theories are developed and values and agendas are determined. Clemans et al. (2010), working in school with experienced teachers leading professional development, found that establishing a professional learning community of peers provided an opportunity for these new teacher educators to develop their practice and knowledge and had the unexpected outcome of facilitating the development of their new identity. The apparent need for teachers situated solely in school to be involved within a community of practice of teacher educators to provide an environment in which their identity can develop may prove challenging.

The experienced teacher taking on the role of teacher educator may be pro-active in seeking to develop an identity as a teacher educator or may resist such a change in identity, or aspects of it that do not seem acceptable to their self-concept (Bullough, 2005; Davidson et al., 2005). Among teachers becoming HEI-based teacher educators a number of groups can be recognised (Davidson et al., 2005). Some cling on to their identity as a first order practitioner and maintain dual professional identities as teachers in both schools and HE and reject an academic identity. This desire to continue to focus on maintaining a credible role as and with teachers, with the security which this implies (Dinkelman et al., 2006) is understandable. Another group recognised by Davidson et al. (2005) are those who embraced being teachers of teachers (second order practitioners) but are resistant to embracing an academic identity as a researcher as they see it as interfering with their teaching. A third group were recognised as conforming to the norms of the HEI having both academic and professional identities, seeing these as complimentary.

The challenge of developing an understanding of self-identity when the context is rapidly shifting is explored by White et al. (submitted for publication). They describe the nature of the identity of teacher educators as dynamic, being configured, held and re-configured in response to the changing landscape within which they work. This study was of

teacher educators who were actively involved in developing their professional and academic identity with the assistance of various scaffolds.

Bullough (2005) draws on the conceptualisation of identity described by Gee (1996) to analyse his case study in depth. The four ways to view identity he uses are Nature-Identity based on who we naturally are; Institution-Identity based on the position we have; Discourse-Identity based on our recognized accomplishments and Affinity-Identity based on our experiences with groups that we share an affinity with. This research revealed that the attempts of the school-based teacher educator to pro-actively engage with the HEI-based teacher educators leading the programme to develop her Institution-Identity and her Discourse-Identity were not well received. Also, her role as a school-based teacher educator was not highly valued in her school. He proposed ways that the professional identity of the school-based teacher educator could be nurtured through involvement with a group of school-based and HEI-based teacher educators that saw 'grappling with questions of identity formation' as part of their role; creating a sense of belonging where identities could be reconceived (Bullough, 2005:153). This links in with the need to socialise in a community of practitioners to nurture the development of identity, previously mentioned.

Research Approach

This research seeks to provide evidence towards answering the following questions:

How does taking on the role of teacher educator whilst being a teacher, impact on the identity of the teacher? How does developing a dual role impact the practice, leadership and career progression of these teachers? Do teachers taking on this new role see themselves as developing a new identity as a teacher educator?

An in-depth exploration of the personal accounts of teachers taking on a new role was facilitated through a case study approach (Burton and Bartlett, 2009). This qualitative interpretive methodology provided the opportunity to examine the perceptions and beliefs of these teachers. The purpose was to look in detail on each unique case which, through interpretation, may relate to other situations (Stake, 1995; Burton and Bartlett, 2009). The rationale was to achieve a thorough awareness of these cases that could contribute to understanding how teachers taking on the dual role of teacher and school-based teacher educator develop their appreciation of 'who they are' in this work.

The participants

All the teachers participating in this research were leading professional development of student teachers or of new and experienced teachers, usually in a school setting, to advance the subject knowledge of those attending the session. Seven teachers were interviewed altogether, male and female, primary and secondary (Table 1). All of the teachers except teacher E had a middle leadership role in their school.

The three teachers who were leading the professional development of student teachers were chosen because it was the first year that they had taken on this new role. They worked with a small group of student teachers (between two and six, all sharing the same subject specialism) within their own school. They led three whole days on subject knowledge for teaching. These teachers did not have specific training for the role, but did have one-to-one opportunities to discuss their new role with an experienced teacher educator. The four teachers who were leading the professional development for new and experienced teachers were selected from a questionnaire of people who had led professional development for a Science Learning Centre (part of a national network of centres working in partnership with HEIs). These teachers were identified as taking on the dual role of teacher and teacher educator. Two male and two female respondents were chosen who had revealed in their answers that there had been significant impact on one or more of the following:

- professional knowledge & understanding
- professional skills
- professional attitudes & values
- professional identity
- career progression

The Science Learning Centre provides a day of training for their presenters to learn how to facilitate effective professional development, then they co-plan sessions and team teach until the presenter is confident to lead sessions alone. Some of the sessions were located at the Science Learning Centre, but also presented in schools acting as satellite centres.

Data Collection

Data was collected using semi-structured interviews and a reflective log completed over the period of the study by the teachers working with student teachers. The responses in the interviews and the records within the logs were consistent. This supports the trustworthiness of the data (Yin, 2009). The accuracy of the transcripts and the interpretation was checked by

the participants involved. Samples of the collected data were shared with colleagues in other research fields to verify the analysis and conclusions drawn and as a check against bias (Cohen et al., 2007; Yin, 2009).

The semi-structured interviews allowed the teachers to introduce issues that were not raised in the interview, but which might be relevant to the research and enabled them to share their unique perceptions (Cohen et al., 2007). The questions were customized to make the teacher feel comfortable, using a 'responsive interviewing model' (Rubin and Rubin, 2005:15) and their involvement sought at each stage of the process, in order to build a constructive relationship (Wilson and Stutchbury, 2009).

The questions provided the teachers with an opportunity to discuss about the support for their own professional development as new teacher educators, to consider their views of their own identity and to identify the impact that the experience of leading the professional learning of others had on their practice as a teacher, a leader and on their career progression.

The data from the questionnaires and interviews were coded using the above aspects which were identified through reviewing literature on aspects of professional knowledge of teachers (Eraut, 1994; Turner-Bisset, 2001; Banks et al., 2005; Claxton et al., 2010) in order to give a holistic view. As each of the teachers educators continued to work as teachers in school, these aspects were explored with respect to impact on their classroom practice and impact on them as leaders of professional development, to encompass their dual role. This gave rise to the appreciative themes used to analyse the findings. The purpose of the research was fully explained to the participants who were invited to take part in the research. All data was anonymised and presented in such a way that no individual teacher could be identified.

Findings

All the participants were very positive about their involvement with leading the professional learning of others and felt that they had profited considerably from the experience.

Benefits perceived by teachers on classroom practice

Each teacher was able to identify an impact on their professional skills. For some this was through attending the training on how to facilitate effective professional development provided by the Science Learning Centre. This course introduced strategies for teaching adults, including an emphasis on using interactive strategies that challenged their own views of classroom teaching and led to increased use of these strategies. One teacher explained that she uses a lot of new strategies and resources in her classroom from the sessions that she

runs, to provide evidence of impact to share with the participants. Others have more confidence as professionals in their own skills and understanding about teaching and learning because they have developed a better understanding of theories behind good practice from working alongside more experienced colleagues. Consequently lesson planning has improved with a focus on learning, and more purposeful lessons. This is exemplified by Teacher C describing the difference to her now: 'I guess I would be a successful teacher but I would not have any real idea why.' Both Teacher D and Teacher E implied that preparing for the sessions was causing them to be more reflective about their own practice.

Some of the teachers identified that their professional knowledge and understanding increased through the preparation, for example two presenters had to keep their knowledge of types of assessment up to date & wider than they needed for their own context. Preparing sessions provoked some to read further and to pay more attention to developments in education. Another felt her understanding of educational issues increased from working with more experienced colleagues. For another there was a growing understanding that scientific misconceptions are widespread, as the teachers on the sessions he facilitated had the same misconceptions as the pupils in school. This has led to a changed attitude, with more patience towards learners' misconceptions.

Several identified an impact on their professional attitude as leading professional development helped maintain their enthusiasm and passion for their own learning & development, for example, Teacher A said : 'I had an approach to teaching that worked, the results were good, the subject was popular, senior management were happy. But it was getting boring'. Some became more secure in their professional identity as they had undervalued themselves before this work and now had more confidence as teachers, seeing themselves more as experts.

The increase in confidence of the teachers was attributed to a number of reasons, including being sure their knowledge and understanding was secure to teach the sessions effectively; reading in preparation for sessions to keep up to date; and discussing educational issues and learning theory whilst working with more experienced colleagues. The success of the sessions they led was also positive feedback for these teachers. Several identified that the emphasis on using interactive teaching strategies with pupils and adults was new to them and provoked them to question their practice. They all noted the benefit of being able to reflect during preparation and after the sessions. Teacher A said: 'It allowed me to think more about my practice and pedagogy rather than just subject content – I think that has been useful,

because there isn't time to reflect on that in school'. Other reasons given for the impact on these teachers was the opportunity to work alongside people that they would not normally work alongside, such as technicians and teachers from other contexts. They found sharing ideas to be very stimulating, for example, Teacher C said '*[It was]* brilliant to talk to other people and hear what they do'. The experience of being alongside professionals, discussing and learning together, learning from their responses and seeing the benefit received by participants has given these teachers a new appreciation of the value of their personal expertise developed in the classroom.

Benefits perceived by teachers on leadership skills

None of the experienced teachers interviewed received any training for leading a subject in school or for leading the professional development of adults. Those who presented CPD found the training that they received from the Science Learning Centre provided invaluable professional knowledge and understanding for dealing with reluctant learners and teaching adults. One of the teachers shared that he really appreciated the opportunity to learn alongside an experienced presenter how to build a sequence of adult training. This is a skill which he is now using in his school. The philosophy of modelling interactive teaching that underpins the Science Learning Centre courses was new to many of the teachers and has impacted their thinking about teaching adults. Teacher F found that preparing and leading sessions for student teachers had helped her to clarify where she wanted to take the department now, in terms of new priorities.

A variety of professional skills have developed from this experience including using new tools in decision making as a Head of Faculty and the ability to enthuse other professionals in their practice. Teacher B said: 'It has made me consider how I do things and also, with discussions with others, made me adjust ... some of my management strategies'. All the teachers in middle leadership positions stated that they now had more confidence to lead CPD in school and wider afield, even in areas outside their expertise, using the skills they had developed through this experience. Teacher D shared: 'without having the experience of the Science Learning Centre, I wouldn't have had a clue where to start'.

Links between these benefits and further career development

Four teachers identified that they had become nationally recognised as teachers with advanced skills as a result of the opportunities and experience they gained through leading professional development. Two have become Heads of Science and two are currently

working on the school senior leadership team, which they link to the experience and confidence developed through this experience. Three shared that they now have the confidence to lead whole school training because of gaining extra skills in leading professional development and having an opportunity to put them into practice. One teacher who was taking a career break, realised through this work that he missed classroom teaching, which encouraged him back into the classroom, where he has a new enthusiasm. 'I think perhaps I had got a bit jaded – although it was going fine, I wasn't finding it that stimulating. Yes, I do find it more exciting now'. Two experienced teachers have found it valuable to be able to give back from their experience to other teachers, one of these, a part-time teacher, has found that the work with the Science Learning Centre has opened up the opportunity to work as a consultant to another school.

Links between these benefits and development of professional and academic identity

All the participants had a strong sense of their identity as a teacher. Teacher E had struggled to see herself as a teacher educator, but was starting to embrace that identity by the end of the year. It was apparent that her identity as a teacher developed through the year. She recognised that the experience 'actually made me feel a lot more confident about my ability as a teacher'. She also expressed a desire to do research and develop an academic identity. Teacher G also recognised herself as a teacher educator by the end of the year. She felt she could develop an academic identity through studying, maybe for a Masters level qualification. Teacher F did recognise herself as a teacher educator both in this work with student teachers and in her role as a Head of Department leading the professional development of colleagues. However she did not identify with an academic identity, though she did recognise that she was turning increasingly to academic texts to support her practice, so was developing a scholarly identity, even if not contributing to research output herself. This indicates an interesting perception of what it means to be a teacher educator. It was clear that all four teachers presenting CPD were comfortable with the identity of teacher educator, although they did not use this term to describe themselves. They were recognised as teacher educators by colleagues in their own schools and by the HEI; they were confidently leading effective professional development for others and continuing to have opportunities to develop in this role.

Impact and Implications

The diverse group of teacher educators

The occupational group of teacher educators is becoming increasingly diverse, due to the changing context in which they work, in England and wider afield. There are HEI-based teacher educators who have followed a more 'traditional' transition from being a school teacher; there are those working in HEI and school part-time, having a role as a teacher educator in both settings (and possibly having a dual role as a teacher in school); and those who have the dual role of teacher and teacher educator within their school or further education establishment, thereby being solely school-based. In this continuum between being HEI-based and school-based those who are taking up the new role of teacher educator will experience a transition whilst they grow to understand and share in the responsibilities, knowledge and practices of the new role. The appreciative themes used to examine the data capture the impact of the work as a teacher educator on their dual role. For teachers and teacher educators the different aspects of professional development: knowledge & understanding; skills; attitudes and identity are not identical, producing distinct professional development needs for teachers becoming teacher educators. There is a different growing body of professional knowledge for teacher educators, informed by research; different demands of explicitly modelling practice to reveal to students 'how to think like a teacher' (Crowe and Berry, 2007) and a responsibility to make different informed and trusted judgements.

Challenges of becoming a teacher educator similarities and differences for school-based and HEI-based teacher educators

In the literature there are an increasing number of papers researching the experiences of teachers making the transition from school teacher to HEI-based teacher educator (for example: Berry and Loughran, 2002; Murray and Male, 2005; Harrison and McKeon, 2008; Swennen et al., 2010; Boyd and Harris, 2010; White, 2011; Field, 2012), documenting the challenges faced developing a pedagogy of teacher education, and a new identity as a teacher educator. Similarly, the teachers in the research of Clemans et al. (2010), taking on the role of teacher educator to their colleagues in school, experienced a sense of 'lost and found' in the transition of moving between the identities of teacher and teacher educator. Additionally, the demands of developing the pedagogical skills of being a teacher educator (Boyd and Harris, 2010; Field, 2012) will not be any less for those who are school-based (White, 2012).

Institutional Challenges

School-based teacher educators may face additional challenges in this transition with the different expectations of working as, or with, an accredited provider of ITE, with alternative priorities and maybe distinctive philosophies. They may not experience the different demands and culture of a new workplace setting, but they will gain a new responsibility in terms of outcomes for students and teachers from their sessions. There may be situations where the teacher educator in school has a conflict of interests between wanting the best for the pupils in the classroom and wanting the best for the students and teachers they are working with.

They will have the extra issue of continuing the role of teacher whilst developing a new aspect to their identity. When both roles occur in the same setting, there may be considerable impact from peers, or from the perception held by the teacher educator of what peers might think (see Clemans et al., 2010). The school leadership may not value each role equally. This links to the concept of Institution-Identity used by Bullough (2005) which suggests that dual role teacher educators will benefit from recognition of their distinctive role as teacher educators within their institution. As the trend towards teacher educators working solely in school is only recent in ITE, there is likely to be a period whereby both the new teacher educators and their schools are both exploring what this means in terms of the breadth of the role and the identity of the teacher educator. Other factors that will impact dual role professionals will be the percentage of time within their timetable assigned to leading professional development for student teachers (ITE) and for new and experienced colleagues (CPD) compared to time spent in teaching pupils and in leadership and administration, and whether this responsibility is reflected in the job description and appraisal system (Stevens, 2013).

Professional Learning Community for Teacher Educators

A further complexity for school-based teacher educators may exist within the concept of Discourse-Identity (Bullough, 2005), where there is a need for engagement with a community of others who can recognise our accomplishments. This is illustrated by the teachers leading ITE who did not have the opportunity to meet others engaged in a similar role and to work alongside experienced teacher educators before they started their role. All three expressed a perceived need to be able to discuss with other teacher educators, including those more experienced, in order to have a better understanding of their role, one saying how useful this would be to 'work out where you are at' (White, 2012). This contrasted with the teachers leading CPD who had a day of training and then worked alongside more experienced teacher

educators until they were confident to lead professional development alone. These teachers appreciated the training for teaching adults which was not readily available for them in school, despite their leadership roles. They described the day of training as effective because ‘it was personalised & responsive – you knew you would take away something that would make a difference to you’ (Teacher C). All of these teachers said that being trained in leading adult learning sequences through co-planning and presenting with a more experienced colleague had a great impact on them. They also appreciated the honest feedback and affirmation they received from the experienced teacher educators.

In view of these findings, it appears that new teacher educators need access to a community of practicing teacher educators to increase their confidence and sense of identity as well as to develop their practice. This concurs with other reported findings (Murray and Male, 2005; Bullough, 2005; Harrison and McKeon, 2008; Clemans et al., 2010; Swennen et al., 2010). Schools and HEI-based teacher educators will need to consider how they will provide for the need of school-based teacher educators to be involved within a community of practice in which their identity can develop. Bullough (2005) expressed a similar need for mentors in US schools. This need was also expressed as an area for concern in the UK (House of Commons, 2010).

Developing a new identity?

It is essential that teacher educators attend to the development of a professional identity in this role because as Wenger (1998:149) proposes: ‘There is a profound connection between identity and practice...practice entails the negotiation of ways of being a person in that context’. Teachers taking on the role of teacher educators in their workplace have been reported to experience an ‘identity crisis’ (Clemans et al., 2010:215) due to having a secure professional identity as an effective classroom teacher whilst sensing a lack of expertise and confidence in leading the professional learning of colleagues.

HEI-based teacher educators are expected to develop a professional and academic identity by their institutions (Boyd et al., 2011). As discussed earlier, there are a group of HEI-based teacher educators who are resistant to assuming an academic identity (Davidson et al., 2005), and there are some that are also resistant to assuming a professional identity as a teacher of teachers rather than a first order practitioner (i.e. a teacher). The findings of this research illustrate a variety of levels of appreciation of developing an identity as a teacher educator of those who are working as school-based teacher educators in a dual role whilst being teachers.

To expect those with a dual role of teacher and teacher educator to develop an academic identity may be very challenging in terms of time commitment and accessibility to academic studying resources. However, it can be argued that there is a need for teacher educators, whether HEI-based or school-based, to develop both a professional and academic identity. Teacher educators are expected to lead professional development at post-graduate and Masters-level. To be leading professional learning at this level, even if not formally employed as an academic, it would be reasonable to require the leader to embrace the identity of an academic (to behave and think like an academic). Many teachers do have an academic approach to their work, being reflective, and reading widely to develop their practice. It is a desire for the work of teachers to be research-informed (DfE, 2012a) and for Teaching Schools to be engaged in practice-based research (DfE, 2012c). In order for teacher educators to lead others, there is a need to be engaged in research to develop their own knowledge, skills and confidence. For some this will include seeking recognition for the level at which they are working through Masters level accreditation, on beyond.

As the current context is one in which teacher educators are not formally recognised as an occupational group, this may be a further barrier to teachers embracing an identity as a teacher educator and the full professional and academic role that this entails, rather than seeing themselves as a teacher who does some teaching of students, or a teacher who leads some CPD sessions. The changing education landscape may be undermining the conditions needed for individuals to acquire and sustain a strong sense of identity as a teacher educator, causing communities to be more dispersed and requiring a range of skills in dual role teacher/teacher educators whilst not recognising the need to develop a strong sense of identity in the role of teacher educator.

This research, together with that of others (Bullough, 2005; Clemans et al., 2010; Woolhouse and Cochrane, 2009) advocates the provision of opportunities for new teacher educators, wherever they lie on the continuum between HEI-based and school-based, to be involved with other teacher educators, including those more experienced, to explore together their professional knowledge, practice and identity. It is important for schools and HEIs to find ways to work together in partnership to develop ‘new forms of affiliation and identity’ in order to provide opportunities for new teacher educators ‘to expand and enrich their senses of self as teacher educators’ (Bullough, 2005:154).

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