Lesson observation and feedback in relation to the developing identity of student teachers

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Victoria Wright, Theresa Loughlin, Val Hall
University of Wolverhampton

Abstract
The paper shares selected findings from a small scale qualitative research project in to pre-service student teachers' perceptions of lesson observation and feedback in relation to their developing identities as teachers. It focused on observation and feedback processes; including action planning as an integral element linked to the post-compulsory sector professional standards (Education and Training Foundation (ETF) 2014), as they occurred on a PGCE in PCE programme; a one year full time postgraduate certificate in post-compulsory education course at a university.

The research approach saw interactions between the researchers and the student-teachers at various stages of their development. In Semester One, individual pen portraits and focus group contributions reflected early perceptions of their development from student-teacher to teacher. In Semester Two, all students were asked to reflect back on their individual data sets and the researchers' analyses and interpretations in a semi-structured interview.

Student teachers referred to the ways in which they were actively developing and sustaining effective relationships with their students. They explored their sense of developing an identity as teacher and that included reference to the policies and practices of the contexts in which they were placed; such as a recognition of lesson observation as a performance. It included learning from experienced teachers (related to a community of practice model). The researchers also looked at how student teachers invited and/ or commented on their own development with a few explicitly asking questions of their observer in a peer-colleague observation feedback dialogue. That suggested transitions towards ecological learning systems in embodying an increasingly independent, multi-layered approach to own development.

Key words
Lesson observation; observation feedback; community of practice; ecological learning systems.

Introducing the research

The paper focuses on a small scale qualitative research project with volunteer participants on a full time one year PGCE in Post Compulsory Education (PCE) course at a University. The project examined student teachers' own perceptions of the ways in which lesson observation and feedback contributed to their developing identity as teachers. It is to be remembered that the participants were pre-service, with potentially no existing professional identity. It is recognised that lesson observation and feedback are complex and inevitably context-bound, however the research is relatable across education sectors as it resonates with current research on lesson observation and feedback (i.e. O'Leary, 2014) in exploring ways in which those processes are perceived and enacted as more or less explicitly collaborative. It also reiterates the problematic and oscillating nature of teacher 'identity' as a theoretical construct.

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The researchers teach on the PGCE in PCE with two of the researchers acting as personal tutors (supporting the completion of teaching practice requirements). The overarching aim of the project was to address the following question: How does lesson observation and feedback contribute to student teachers' own perceptions of their developing identity as teachers? This was with a view to exploring the student teachers' perceptions of the observation and feedback processes as dialogic and participatory.

Literature review

This section explores three theoretical strands: notions of teacher identity as shifting and dynamic (not fixed), the community of practice model (Lave and Wenger, 1991a, 1991b, 1999; Wenger, 1998, 2000) as a socially situated learning experience, and transitions student teachers might make towards increased ownership of their own development that are more resonant with ecological learning systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Hodgson & Spours, 2009).

Teacher identity:

In Izadinia's (2013) review of research on student teachers' professional identity, she commented: 'Although it appears that there is no clear definition of teacher identity (Bewizard et al., 2004), there is a general acknowledgement of its significance' (p.659). If we accept this premise then we may also assume that this recognises the self as both a 'product of situations and a shaper of behaviours in situations" (Oyserman et al., 2011:5). As such, this 'sense of self and identity' may be a contributory factor that influences what individuals are motivated to engage with and 'how they make sense of themselves and others, the actions they take, their feelings and ability to control or regulate themselves' (ibid:5). The ways in which these student teachers make sense of this, or establish the 'source' of this meaning, may differ for each individual.

Warford (2011) suggested that teacher education is not 'a simple question of fact-cramming, but rather the promotion of a fundamental shift in the candidate's cultural identity' (p.256). In this way, rather than the emphasis being on the activity of 'teaching', it is the interaction with 'others' and the emergent relationship with a 'professional community' that begins to shape an individual's sense of identity (Mayes, 2002:169). Stronach et al. (2002:109) argued that 'There is no such thing as 'a teacher''. Their research on teacher and nurse data illustrated that 'Most often, professionals acknowledged a plurality of roles' (ibid, p.118). It is interesting that individuals may thus define themselves as:

> distinct and unique compared to others (referred to as personal identity – 'I' or 'me', and as similar to others as group members (referred to as social identity – 'we' and 'us')'
>
> (Bizumic et al., 2009:173).

In this way identity may be construed as something that is linked to the 'possibilities' with which an individual perceives they are able to engage and it is through the nurturing of that *potential* identity, the seeking of opportunities for internalisation of behaviours that self-identity becomes linked to an individual's overall self-concept (Celuch et al., 2010:256). This fluidity of identity needs to be acknowledged, and is reflected by Day et al. (2008:613):

> The architecture of teachers' professional identities is not always stable, but at certain times or during certain life, career and organisational phases may be discontinuous, fragmented, and subject to turbulence and change in the continuing struggle to

construct and sustain a stable identity.

This is similarly echoed by Izadinia (2013:695) whose review of 29 studies 'suggests that teacher identity is not stable or predetermined (Bewizard et al., 2004; Maclean & White, 2007; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009), rather, it is dynamic and created and recreated during an active process of learning to teach (Trent, 2010)'.

Communities of practice:
In an exploration of community of practice (named 'learning communities', p.700), Izadinia (2013) recognises Wenger's (1998) perspective 'that individuals develop an identity as they become a valid member of a community of practice where learning happens in collaboration with others and through activities situated in that learning community.' The situated learning perspective underpins Lave and Wenger's (1999) reflections on some of the characteristics of a 'community of practice'. They suggest that 'Viewpoints from which to understand the practice evolve through changing participation in the division of labor, changing relations to ongoing community practices, and changing social relations in the community' (p.24). That reflection resonates well with the situated learning experiences of our PGCE PCE student teachers as their sense of identification with the role of the teacher is informed by a variety of influences; including the communities in which they are asked to participate: at university on the PGCE PCE course, and in the various further education settings in which they are placed.

Lave and Wenger (1991b:29) describe how 'learners inevitably participate in communities of practitioners …the mastery of knowledge and skills requires newcomers to move toward full participation in the sociocultural practices of a community'. However, as Lave and Wenger (ibid: 32) note: 'The practice itself is in motion'. It is that sense of fluctuating identity (as 'dynamic', 'created', 'recreated' (Izadinia, 2013: 695) and transition from student teacher to teacher that the researchers continue to observe as experienced teacher educators on the PGCE in PCE. Student teachers negotiate the boundaries between the personal and professional, for instance in their teacher- relationships with their own students. They problematise their sense of the expectations and role of the teacher (including reflecting on their values and priorities, their belief systems about the role of education and its political, socio-economic and cultural challenges).

As researchers and teacher educators, we were therefore drawn to applying a sociocultural lens through which to explore how lesson observation and feedback contribute to student teachers' own perceptions of their developing identity as teachers. We recognised the inevitably changing notion of 'identity' in ourselves (as experienced teachers) and for our student teachers. A sociocultural lens was a way of exploring the shifts in student teachers' development, their sense of identity and their ways of becoming a teacher as expressed by them, and in relation to the contexts in which they were teaching. We applied two theoretical models: the community of practice model and ecological learning systems.

From communities of practice to ecological learning systems:
If communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991a) function within a traditional 'master-apprentice' approach, teachers and student teachers, if/when viewed as inhabiting this space, would recognise a "very specific knowledge acquisition setting, established practices and social processes being used to create accepted ways of being or identities (Tusting, 2005, in Hall, 2015:4). Acceptance within the professional community becomes reliant upon a shared definition of 'knowledge' and how this is demonstrated; there is an hierarchical element and allocation of 'identities'; a shared repertoire of 'stories'; the ways within which

individuals interact with the various system levels are largely pre-defined; and in terms of language, this then becomes focused on how newcomers learn 'to talk' as a key to legitimate peripheral participation, rather than learning 'from' talk (Lave and Wenger, 1991a:121). Agency is generated through a collective approach whereby the context of the community of practice engages with the actors (Wenger, 1998, 2000).

Looking through the lens of ecological learning systems, if, rather than a community of practice, we consider the context as one of 'learning communities' (Walker & Logan, 2008:8) then we can explore these interactions as being situated within a perspective which is more 'collaborative and fluid – more agentic' (Hall, 2015:5). Although ecological learning systems operate within similar thematic boundaries to a community of practice, this activity is not 'fixed' or 'defined' in the same ways. The system levels within which these interactions occur are much more permeable and transactional, with agency being achieved as a result of *individual* actors engaging with context in a multi-layered and bi-directional approach, enabling a 'shared framework for creative action' (Hodgson & Spours, 2009:17) which may involve an individual engaging with a number of environments and contexts beyond a defined community of practice.

Research context

The three researchers are experienced teachers who have between them worked within the post-compulsory sector for more than three decades and had involvement across Further Education (F.E., i.e. colleges, adult education, and work-based learning), but who now work in a University on teacher education programmes.

Within the context of post-compulsory teacher education, it is important to recognise the plethora of key changes that have occurred and that have had a major impact on what it means to be a teacher, to become a qualified teacher and ultimately how this has affected a sense of teacher identity across the sector. In just a decade and a half the significant changes have seen the introduction of Ofsted inspections and the regulation and deregulation of being qualified to teach in post-compulsory education.

In 2001, national professional teaching standards for the post-compulsory sector were introduced (FENTO Standards: Further Education National Training Organisation). Before 2001, there was no national requirement for teachers to train and become qualified to teach. There was little or no scrutiny of FE colleges and their adult education counterparts. Although Ofsted was a key overseer of the compulsory education sector, it only began to be fully embedded in post-compulsory from 2001.

In 2002, the Institute for Learning (IfL) was created. This was the first nationally recognised professional body for the sector. In 2006, legislation introduced reform for Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in FE and a minimum requirement to record 30 hours continuous professional development through the IfL. Membership of the IfL became mandatory in 2007 for all teachers working in the post-compulsory sector and the post-compulsory sector was identified as the Lifelong Learning Sector (LLUK).

In 2007, membership status at Associate Teacher Lifelong Learning Sector (ATLS) and Qualified Teacher Lifelong Learning Sector status (QTLS) was introduced. The Professional Standards were also reformed and embedded within initial teacher education for the sector. In 2012, the Wolf review (2011) saw the recognition of Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS status, awarded by the IfL) as having parity with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) for the compulsory sector.

In 2014, the Institute for Learning was deregulated and the mandatory membership and requirement to become qualified to teach is no longer legislated. IfL was absorbed into the new Education and Training Foundation (ETF) in 2014. The same year (2014) saw a review of the Professional Standards with 20 statements now in place and embedded in to post compulsory teacher education programmes (such as the PGCE in PCE which is the focus of this research).

The researchers were interested to explore some of the more recent transitions related to Ofsted inspections from Ofsted 'judgements' to more 'dialogic' approaches (September 2015). Ofsted's Common Inspection Framework (September 2015) stated that "Ofsted does not award a grade for the quality of teaching or outcomes in the individual lessons visited. It does not grade individual lessons. It does not expect the use of the Ofsted evaluation schedule to grade teaching or individual lessons." In Harford's review of the White Paper (March 2016) 'Educational Excellence Everywhere', the removal of the separate teaching, learning and assessment judgement grade was suggested as being 'helpful' because:

> whilst this proposal would not signal an end to classroom visits by inspectors…….it would provide an opportunity for inspectors to talk to teachers and pupils about their work and experiences in school, and gather information about the effectiveness of relevant school policies, including for behavior.

As teacher educators, our values and philosophy are firmly based in this latter change, encouraging a dialogic rather than a judgemental approach to support the PGCE student teacher in talking about, reflecting on and learning from their experiences in practice. Anecdotally, as personal tutors, the researchers still see residues and/ or practice of graded lesson observations. On the teacher education course (PGCE in PCE, the focus of this research project), lesson observations are not graded (5 of the 8 observations are assessed as pass/ fail).

Conducting the research

Participants:

In Semester One, 2015-2016, the researchers asked for volunteer participants from the PGCE PCE course. Participants were invited to a focus group where they would discuss PGCE PCE lesson observation and feedback processes, write their own individual pen portraits, agree to supply an audio recording of a peer observation feedback session (undertaken by a peer colleague and organised by the student in their teaching placement), and to attend a semi-structured interview in which a review of their data could take place. The data collection methods including the questions employed are included in the Appendix. Out of the eight student-teachers who participated, five contributed to all data collection points (Stages One to Four in the Appendix), three were not able to record their peer observation feedback dialogue but were still asked to participate in Stage Four: the semi-structured interview, in order to both capture their voices and also (as with all participants) to check their corroboration and further exploration of the analysis.

Data analysis:

As acknowledged in the literature review, the researchers were interested in a sociocultural perspective that would invite discussion of a range of contextual influences on the student teachers' development and sense of identity as a teacher. Themes emerged from an initial analysis of Case Study One's data set (S1; to be shared in this paper), focusing on the peer feedback dialogue and then cross checking with the rest of the data (pen portrait, answers

to the focus group questions). Those themes were compared across peer observation feedback dialogues and connections built up across individual data sets.
The themes were identified as:

- Teacher-Student relationship
- Teacher Identity
- Open to developing
- Observation as performance

Themes referred to teacher-student relationship building, development of (and perspective on) teacher identity, times when student teachers shared their approach to their ongoing development such as explicitly asking for advice on areas of development, and the problematising of lesson observation as performance.

Researchers also interpreted the data through the application of the community of practice and ecological learning systems models. Underpinning that decision was recognition (as stated earlier) of the shifting nature of teacher identity, and how student teachers might negotiate those more or less hierarchical relationships formed with colleagues on teaching practice. At what point/s would they feel like they had become a 'member' (Lave and Wenger, 1991b) of the community of practice of teachers? What might that 'membership' mean? At what point/s and in what way/s would they act explicitly to develop in areas that they personally perceived to be important?

Ethics:
As two of the researchers were personal tutors, they both worked together and cross-checked some of their analyses. They also sought to interview students they had not personally observed. One researcher did not take part in the interview process, directly informed the application of the theoretical models (community of practice and ecological learning systems) and corroborated a sample of transcript analyses. Research participants were aware that the data reporting was to be anonymised and that they could withdraw at any time. Two consent forms were provided: one for the participant and a second for the peer observer (colleague in their teaching placement) stating that the video/ audio of the feedback dialogue would not be shown and that the focus of analysis remained on the student-teacher participant.

Discussing findings
A summary of key findings for each theme (teacher-student relationship, teacher identity, open to developing, observation as performance) is shared before a more detailed insight is provided through two case studies (the data analysis for two student teachers). A final review examines how comparisons across all data sets indicated that the student-teachers were variously on a continuum between community of practice and ecological learning systems models; explained as *a continuum of practice* (Hall, 2015).

Thematic analysis:
The following is a summary of key findings for each theme.

Teacher-Student Relationship
Key discussion points focused on getting to know the students (the student teachers' interpersonal relationship with their students, their students' abilities and specific needs). One participant (S3) commented: 'I try to bring humour to the classroom and connect to my students by getting to know what they are like and relating it back to my lessons'.

Participants perceived themselves as a manager of learning experiences (promoting differentiation and inclusion), as well as recognising the dialogic/ interactive nature of teaching and learning.

Teacher Identity

Students thought about the influence of the personal in the professional and transitions they were making in professional identities (sometimes reflecting on previous work experience). There was some sense of working within a community of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991b). It centred here on learning from experienced other/s, and included discussions around the development of own individual and/ or collective teacher identity. This was suggestive of Brookfield's (1995) 'imposter syndrome', a theoretical concept introduced to students on the course and sometimes directly referenced in data i.e. 'still need to build on my confidence with[in] being the teacher and not the imposter' (S5).

Student-teacher data also referred at times to their levels of confidence and to sector priorities in having to embed English, Maths and Technology in to their subject contexts. They also (in some cases) thought about the Education and Training Foundation professional standards (ETF, 2014), as a measurement/ tool through which to evaluate their performance.

Observation as Performance

We identified comparisons to Ofsted/ internal quality observations, compliance to some degree (a sense of being seen to tick off things, and again to be seen to embed English, Maths and Technology). There was some reference to nerves i.e. 'it's really difficult especially when you're being observed… you try to be as natural as possible' (S4) and to more careful preparation for an observed lesson. Some described the observation as a milestone in their development and tied it to targets/ actions. Comments related to: 'Little wins', getting over the line, helps progress, a plan/chart you can see it' (S2). It is to be noted that, on the PGCE in PCE, student-teachers are required to complete an evaluation of the lesson plan once delivered, a reflective blog, and to develop an action plan after each of their lesson observations. Our observations are not graded but action points are monitored by student-teachers and personal tutors.

Open to developing

We again saw discussion that related to the community of practice model (Lave and Wenger, 1991b). It was particularly through the focus group discussion and the semi-structured interviews that students expressed their perspectives of wanting and at times actively seeking a dialogue, as noted: 'a conversation to go forward and you can ask questions to move on too' (S7). This was sometimes identified as wanting a more 'objective' view or different view on their teaching. In some cases, peer audios evidenced student-teachers asking their own questions i.e. related to specific need, opportunities for taking risks and trying new things in support of their own development. As in the theme above, observation was seen to be helpful and to signpost towards future improvement and recognition. Students also commented on timely and constructive feedback.

Case studies:

As Thomas (2011:14) explains, a participant cannot be a 'case' unless they are a case study 'of something'. In our application of the term, we are identifying the student teacher participants as case studies of contextual influences on the experience of becoming a teacher. They are also case studies of the different and shifting ways in which (and how) we identify ourselves as teachers.

The two student-teachers (S1, S2) had contributed to all of the data collection points (illustrated in the Appendix). Key notes are shared from the thematic analysis and from reflections on the shifts perceived between community of practice and ecological learning systems. As already noted, those reflections were presented to the student-teachers in the form of 'Sharing your data with you' sheets at a final semi-structured interview. Extracts from all student-teacher data had been annotated via the comments tool in Word so the 'Sharing your data with you' sheet shared extracts and commentary. The approach supported the researchers in checking interpretations with each other as well as supporting the participants' final reflections (sharing those comments and probing through questioning).

Case Study One

The student-teacher (S1) anticipated that the observation process would change post – PGCE. Within the PGCE context, observation was described as a developmental/incremental process- 'baby steps to bigger steps'. PGCE observations were described as 'quite an anxiety-inducing experience' and included reflection that questions (at feedback stage) would expect certain responses. PGCE observations were also seen to acknowledge what you had done well. Post-PGCE observation was associated with a 'bureaucratic lens' related to targets, to notions of Ofsted inspection judgements, and to professional identity: 'my perception of what I'm doing changes, or switches- to more of an administrative or bureaucratic mindset'. From the participant's perspective, the conceptualisation of a 'perfect teacher' does not exist: teachers work continuously to be the best they can be.

They saw themselves initially on the periphery of the community of practice. There was a sense of increasingly legitimate participation. This connects with Lave and Wenger's (1991b:95) explanation of 'An extended period of legitimate peripherality [which] provides learners with opportunities to make the culture of practice theirs.' Observation feedback was described as positioning them 'in the grander conversation of teaching'; in tune with both the community of practice model and also perhaps with Warford's (2011:256) sense of teacher education as involving a 'fundamental shift in the candidate's cultural identity'.

It was agreed in the semi-structured interview that they perceived themselves to be currently more aligned with the community of practice model. Value was placed upon knowledge and position i.e. learning from a more experienced other. An example came through a reflection on the peer audio where the student teacher described how they had wanted to 'showcase (their) skills'. Observation feedback was felt to be very important and action planning was recognised as part of their 'natural identity'. There were also some moments that linked to ecological learning systems i.e. Hall's (2015:5) reflection on 'collaborative and fluid – more agentic" development with mutual interaction, including peer-to-peer.

Case Study Two

The student teacher (S2) shared some of the perceptions already expressed through Case Study One: a sense (from being in teaching placement and talking to teacher colleagues) that observation was a performance. To some extent, this was seen as 'compliance' in particular areas such as embedding English and Maths, 'cover(ing) Equality and Diversity, ticking boxes'. Interestingly this student-teacher had requested an observation by a specific subject colleague in proactive support of their own development. This connects with both community of practice and ecological learning systems being tied to both asking for expert help and also (by implication) positioning oneself as apprentice learning from a master.

The student teacher shared their sense of having begun to feel more like a teacher during their Block Placement One (a sustained period in teaching placement at the end of Semester One); again illustrating Lave and Wenger's (1991b:95) 'extended period of legitimate peripherality'. Echoing community of practice terms, the discussion referenced becoming more of a member: 'changing relations to ongoing community practices' (Lave and Wenger, 1999:24), validation of teaching practice; with the observer positioned as 'an experienced voice to validate what you've done', fitting in, and using a shared repertoire. The Pen Portrait had included a reflection that: 'When I'm told I meet [ETF; Education and Training Foundation professional standards] criteria I feel less as an 'imposter' and more of a 'real' teacher'. This links with the concept of a trajectory where a novice moves increasingly within the community of practice (on a trajectory from novice to expert). Lesson observation was seen to celebrate and reinforce their position within the community. In the focus group, observation feedback was described as a two-way dialogue and value was placed by the student teacher on their participation within it i.e. recognising that they could ask questions. Action planning provided 'milestones' and evidenced 'little wins' which provided important illustrations of progress. Within the data, the student-teacher shared a sense of their own agency, for instance a desire not to let anyone down (students and colleagues).

From communities of practice to ecological learning systems: a *continuum of practice*
Comparisons across all data sets indicated that the student-teachers were variously on a continuum between community of practice and ecological learning systems. This is something that has been echoed in Hall's doctorate research (Hall, 2015:7), coined a *continuum of practice.* We know that our student-teachers can all be classed as belonging to a specific professional community – now teachers. If within a traditional community of practice (master-apprentice) model, then it is the community that will define an individual's identity through interactions and language, and 'assigned' roles. If exchanges become more collaborative and independent/interdependent, then there is capacity for multi-directional working and scope to shape and influence others – regardless of preconceived perceptions around hierarchical status. The *continuum of practice* (Hall, 2015:11) provides a different lens through which to explore how "we might bridge, or oscillate, within and across these frameworks in order to open up new ways of engaging in discussions with our students".

Across the PGCE PCE data sets, the community of practice model (Lave and Wenger, 1991b) was associated particularly with notions of 'membership' and 'validation': with shared ways of doing things (being a colleague, fitting in), wanting to be recognised as a 'teacher', looking to a more experienced other (mentor/ colleagues). It was also associated with 'shared repertoire': knowing the discourse, tools (documents, policies), culture; thereby gaining 'full participation' (ibid:29). Communities of practice view 'members' as having various stages of involvement and 'rights of participation'. They talk of shared modes of 'belonging' (Wenger, 2000): 'engagement', 'imagination' and 'alignment'. As a more flexible model, ecological learning systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Hodgson and Spours, 2009) facilitate opportunities to view the "interplay and collaborative connectivity" (Hall, 2015:4). Various examples emerged in the data such as instances when student teachers asked questions in the peer observation feedback dialogue that related to own personal queries. Those examples included taking explicit ownership of own development (a sense of asking specific questions in order to proactively further their development). There was also a sense of the student-teacher, now teacher, as teacher-researcher experimenting and reflecting on what might work best for their students (based on their increasing knowledge of them).

Conclusion
It is interesting to reflect, through a sociocultural lens, on some of the labels we apply in

teacher education: labels such as 'student-teacher' which we have employed throughout this paper. We are complicit in the proliferation of a context that positions individuals as '**student** teacher'; a distinction that arguably identifies them as a student who is learning to become a teacher; and by default, the premise is that they are therefore **not yet** a teacher. Application of the label thus situates teacher education as a sociocultural practice in tune with the community of practice model, emphasising a trajectory between 'novice' and 'expert' and a relationship (between the PGCE PCE student and the teacher educators, the subject specialist mentor and teacher colleagues) as 'apprentice' and 'master[s]'. This was echoed in the comments from the participants who talked of 'the grander conversation of teaching' (S1) during their observation feedback discussions and of beginning to feel an element of 'validation' and of becoming a 'real teacher' (i.e. 'actual teacher': S8).

The participants had been introduced to Lave and Wenger's work on the PGCE PCE course and its associated vocabulary was explicitly drawn on in the context of this small scale research. The less familiar concept of ecological learning systems was translated to the participants through the 'Sharing your data with you' sheet (which included a summary of the two theoretical models as well as a list of the key themes; see Discussing findings). The researchers verbally described a more active participation, one in which the participant might become more agentic and/ or more self-directed, in nurturing their own development. There was a real sense of a 'shift' in perspective when reflecting on Block Placement One (sustained period of teaching practice) and the impact this had on that developing sense of beginning to 'feel more like a teacher'. In common with a community of practice context, this immersion and connection to an 'actual' professional teaching environment, as opposed to the theoretical surroundings of the PGCE course, appears to have enabled this strengthening of sense of self as a 'teacher'. The situated and individual nature of this move towards a more agentic approach, as explored more fully in Case Studies One and Two, reflected an intensely personal situated learning experience.

Common to all experiences was a sense of progress and development, of shifting identification and participation, and an increasing knowledge of wider contextual influences. This sense of identity as fluid and influenced through interactions with others, and with other environments, would indicate a sense of 'self' and a developing agency that aligns with an ecological learning perspective. Yet there was also a recognition that teaching is a 'performance', not just in terms of capabilities measured against the ETF standards and Ofsted, but also as an opportunity to 'show case' what you can do; and accordingly to demonstrate your status and competence as a professional and thus positioning oneself towards that sense of legitimate participation.

Recommendations

Reflective practice sits at the heart of teacher education courses. This research reiterates the need to continue to challenge and explore the notion of 'identity' and to regularly share and learn from each other's situated learning experiences. Introducing students to the concept of ecological learning systems could provide stimulus for closer exploration of the interactions and relationships within their placement settings and its impact on their identification of themselves as teachers.

In relation to lesson observation and feedback and its place in the development of student teachers, it would be valuable to follow students in to their first year/s in order to explore how they negotiate the translation of those PGCE PCE/ teacher education observations to institution and Ofsted specific approaches. It would also be useful to consider how they

position themselves along a continuum of practice, between a working professional learning community and an ecological learning system.

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Appendix 1
Data Collection

Stage One: Pen portraits
Individual pen portraits asked student-teachers to respond to two questions:

- How would you describe your developing identity as a teacher so far?
- How do you see lesson observation and feedback in relation to your developing identity as a teacher?

Five participants attended the focus group on 3rd December 2015 and wrote their individual pen portraits on that day. The same focus group questions were addressed and pen portraits completed by two participants on 16th December 2015 and by one participant on 6th January 2016.

Stage Two: Focus group
The focus group questions asked:

1. What do you perceive as the purpose of lesson observations in your developing identity as a teacher?
2. What are your observers [tutor/ mentor/ peer] looking for when they observe?
3. What do you perceive as the purpose of the feedback dialogue?
4. What are your expectations of the feedback dialogue?
5. How does the feedback dialogue contribute to your developing identity as a teacher?
6. What is your perception of the action planning process in developing your identity as a teacher?

In all cases, the discussion was videoed for future reference.

Stage Three: analysis of peer observation feedback audio
In February and March: receipt of peer observation feedback audios which were transcribed and analysed (5) by researchers.

Stage Four: Semi- structured interviews
Though three participants were not able to contribute a peer observation feedback audio, it was important to ensure that they had opportunity to reflect on and comment on the data analysis that we had made. Therefore, we developed 'Sharing your data with you' sheets which we provided to every participant. Only one participant of the eight was not able to attend a semi-structured interview (though they did receive the sheet).

In the semi-structured interview (and with copies of the 'Sharing your data with you' sheets), we asked:

1. To what extent do you feel this represents you?
2. How does this differ from your own perspective?
3. How do you see yourself developing in the light of those representations?
4. Underneath the third question, we prompted them to consider their developing identity as a teacher as well as the lesson observation and feedback in relation to their developing identity as a teacher.