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## Landmarks in the professional and academic development of mid-career teacher educators

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This paper focuses on the professional and academic development of mid-career teacher educators from two universities in England. The objectives of the study were to analyse and compare the career experiences of teacher educators; in particular, to identify stages of development, landmark events and contextual factors affecting professional learning and academic identities. In-depth biographical interviews were carried out with 12 teacher educators, together with living graphs of their career paths. Clear landmarks were identified in both contexts, with development in teaching seen as largely positive, while research development was much more varied. Teacher educators who were further on in their careers saw research development as transformative personally as well as academically. In analysing the findings within a sociocultural learning framework, the authors draw in particular on Swennen et al.'s model of teacher educators' sub-identities, Akerlind's categorisation of an academic identity and Eraut's contextual and learning factors.

**Keywords:** teacher educators; professional development; academic identity

### Introduction

This article forms part of a longitudinal study of teacher educators' professional and academic development, building on an initial study of early-career teacher educators in two universities in the UK (Griffiths, Thompson and Hryniewicz 2010). As experienced teachers, teacher educators and academics ourselves, we were interested in investigating the perspectives of teacher educators and the construction of their professional identities within higher education. In particular, from a sociocultural perspective (Wenger 1998; Eraut 2007), we wanted to find out whether and to what extent the contexts in which teacher educators work affect their day-to-day experiences and longer-term career paths.

There is a growing body of research on teacher educators, though several researchers argue that it is still a relatively under-researched occupational group (Korthagen, Loughran, and Lunenberg 2005; Murray and Male 2005) compared to the plethora of research on academics or teachers. One reason for this may be the somewhat uneasy positioning of teacher education, situated between academia and schools; in Maguire's terms, 'inside/outside the ivory tower' (2000, 149), making it difficult to characterise or define teacher educators and their work clearly within a single professional context. However, looked at another way, this duality of positioning

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also gives teacher educators considerable strength; the multiple skills and complexity of their roles are emphasised by researchers such as Cochran-Smith (2005) and Darling-Hammond (2006), who warn against a deficit model of teacher education.

Before turning to our own study, we need to contextualise it within the wider framework of international research in this area, especially studies of teacher educators' identities and transitions.

### **Teacher educators: difficult transitions**

Previous studies have identified a range of issues and tensions faced by teacher educators, especially when they enter higher education. For example, several researchers (e.g. Murray 2008; van Velzen et al. 2010) have highlighted the dual transition that teacher educators make into university life and lack of induction into new roles (Smith 2003). In the UK and many anglophone countries, most teacher educators move into universities after teaching in schools, so they have to make the transition from school to university and a further transition from a predominantly teaching role to a wider academic role which includes research (Harrison and McKeon 2008). Studies in Australia (Williams and Ritter 2010; Wood and Borg 2010) and the USA (Dinkelman, Margolis, and Sikkenga 2006), describe the difficulties of this transitional period in terms of changing professional identities, not helped by a lack of institutional support. Teachers who were in high positions in schools move into low positions in higher education, i.e. from expert to novice, with accompanying lower status often given to teacher education (Maguire 2000). Teacher educators' partnership work in schools tends to reinforce schools as their reference group.

Contrastingly, in Israel (Shagrir 2010; van Velzen et al. 2010) and parts of Europe, such as Greece (Griffiths, Kaldi and Thompson 2009), teacher educators are largely drawn from academic disciplines and experience different kinds of transition, as they have to learn pedagogical subject knowledge and familiarise themselves with school contexts. Nevertheless, the strength of the research content in European and many other initial teacher education programmes globally (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2011), exemplified by 'top performing countries' such as Shanghai-China and Finland (OECD 2011), gives teacher educators in such contexts an advantage. Furlong argues that there is a 'sharp contrast' (2013, 10) between this research emphasis and current developments in England and Wales and parts of the USA, where government policy is drawing teacher education increasingly away from higher education and into schools, thus shifting the locus of control. Such differences in global developments in teacher education therefore have major implications for teacher educators' transitions and identities, depending on the particular context.

What these different groups share are the growing demands and accountability of teacher education (Cochran-Smith 2005), within increasingly standards-driven contexts. Shagrir (2010) argues that the interplay between the student teacher, the institution, the body of knowledge (theoretical, pedagogical and practical) and the teacher educator is essential and highly complex, presenting considerable challenges to both students and teacher educators.

### **Teacher educators' identities**

The importance of the teacher educator as a role model for the next generation of teachers cannot be underestimated (Smith 2003; Lunenberg, Korthagen, and

Swennen 2007), but there is a current lack of focus within higher education institutions on the identities and roles of teacher educators themselves. Korthagen, Loughran, and Lunenberg (2005) argue that good teachers do not necessarily become effective teacher educators; they need appropriate training and induction into the range of knowledge and skills required. Likewise, Zeichner (2005), in describing his own journey from teacher to teacher educator in the USA, stresses that ‘If teacher education is to be taken more seriously in colleges and universities, then the preparation of new teacher educators needs to be taken more seriously as well’ (123).

Swennen, Jones, and Volman (2010) identify four main roles or sub-identities which teacher educators adopt at different times and in different combinations: *schoolteacher*, *teacher of teachers*, *teacher in higher education* and *researcher*. They argue that, in many cases, teacher educators have to transform themselves in order to take on certain identities, especially the researcher role, and stress the importance of studying these changes in teacher educators’ professional and academic identities.

A number of studies describe teacher educators’ engagement in self-study, in order to make up for the lack of induction, improve their theoretical, academic and pedagogical knowledge, enhance group as well as self-reflection and develop collaborative research. For instance, Williams and Ritter (2010) describe the personal journeys of teacher educators in Australia in order to develop teacher educator identities through self-study, while Timmerman (2009) in the Netherlands emphasises the importance of role models to enable new teacher educators to develop professionally. Lunenberg, Korthagen, and Zwart (2011), also from the Netherlands, report on a project undertaken by nine teacher educators who conducted a study of their own professional practices through analysis of logbooks and interviews, and discuss the contribution that this collaborative self-study made to their professional identities, self-confidence and knowledge. Similarly, research undertaken by teacher educators on an EdD course in the UK (McGregor et al. 2010), described as ‘research-led learning journeys’ (ibid. 169), involved reflections on their own professional work through collaborative discussion, problem-solving and analysis of other studies in the field. The authors argue that the process of ‘shared meaning-making’ (ibid.) led to the development and enhancement of the teacher educators’ research identities.

Several studies characterise such collaborative enquiry as action research. For example, a longitudinal study conducted by teacher educators in the USA (Draper et al. 2011) took the form of participatory action research, in which the participants investigated theories of literacy and the preparation of secondary teachers. The authors claim that the four-year study led to identity changes, improvements to professional practice as well as the development of a research community. They argue that these findings have implications for other teacher education programmes; however, they emphasise the importance of institutional support without pre-specified outcomes. Similar collaborative action research studies conducted by teacher educators are reported in Israel (Yaffe and Maskit 2010) and the UK (Houston et al. 2010).

Smith (2003) and Korthagen, Loughran, and Lunenberg (2005) argue that collaborative enquiry is vital in order to learn together, evaluate each others’ work and enhance practice and research. Likewise, Cochran-Smith (2005) stresses that ‘part of the task of the teacher educators is functioning simultaneously as both researcher and practitioner’ (219), and reinforces the importance of scholarship as a joint enterprise in developing and enriching teacher education.

### Focus of the enquiry and research questions

The research presented here draws on findings from case studies of mid-career teacher educators in two higher education institutions in England. One was a well-established, research-intensive university, whilst the other was a new university (less than 5 years old) which had formerly been a teacher training college and had a growing research profile. In the older university, teacher education was a relatively small part of the department of education's portfolio, with around 250 students following secondary and cross-phase (middle years: 7–14) postgraduate certificates in education (PGCE) and a smaller employment-based route. In the new university, teacher education provision was extensive, provided by five departments in the faculty of education, with over 2500 students on a variety of undergraduate, postgraduate, post-16 and employment-based routes. The relative scale and importance of teacher education in the two universities therefore gave rise to substantial differences in working contexts and conditions, and positioned the teacher educator participants in very different ways at the outset (cf. Wenger 1998). Other universities where some of the interviewees had worked were also mentioned as part of their accounts.

The objectives of the study were to analyse and compare the career experiences of teacher educators in both contexts; in particular, to identify stages of development, landmark events and contextual factors affecting professional learning and academic identities. Research questions underpinning the study were:

- (1) What are the key features of, and landmarks in, the mid-career experiences of teacher educators and to what extent are they similar and different in the two contexts?
- (2) What are the major factors affecting the professional and academic development of teacher educators in each university?
- (3) What strategies for professional learning are particularly useful and do these differ in the two institutions?

By mid-career teacher educators, we mean those who had held university positions in teacher education for over five years; that is, they were not newcomers to an academic context. The reasons for choosing to focus on this group are: firstly, because we had previously focused on teacher educators who were making the transition from schools to universities (Griffiths, Thompson and Hryniewicz 2010); and secondly, because a large amount of the existing literature on teacher educators is also focused on the induction and transitional stages (1–5 years in higher education), as described in earlier sections. It must be emphasised that, for most teacher educators, working in higher education represents a second career after sometimes a considerable time working in schools, often reaching high positions. We are therefore using the term mid-career in relation to the time spent in a university context.

Our previous study indicated that, after initial transitions, teacher educators start to shift their professional identities from that of *schoolteacher* to *teacher of teachers* (as in Swennen, Jones, and Volman 2010), and that a mentor or supervisor is important in this process; but we found that there is little indication that such early career teacher educators see themselves as *researchers* or even as established *teacher educators* in the first five years in academia. Hence, we were interested in focusing on the experiences of teacher educators in the mid-career phase (5–15 years in university-based teacher education) in order to explore if, how and why identities

changed in this next stage. This represents a largely under-researched phase in teacher educators' academic careers; thus this study makes an original contribution to the field.

### **Methodology and theoretical framework**

An embedded case study approach (Yin 2002; Cohen, Manion, and Morrison 2007) was adopted, with purposive sampling used to identify a representative sample of 24 early and mid-career teacher educators, representing a range of age, gender, prior experience and current responsibilities. In this article we focus on the sample of 12 mid-career teacher educators, 6 from each university (6 m, 6 f), all but one with 7 to 15 years' experience in higher education; one participant had 20 years' experience as a teacher educator and could be seen to be moving into a late (academic) career stage. In-depth, biographical interviews (Merrill and West 2009) were carried out in order to explore personal biographies, academic career experiences and landmarks, forms of support and learning strategies, as well as any barriers or problems encountered in developing academic and professional identities. Confidentiality was assured and all names have been removed from examples and interview extracts to protect anonymity.

Living graphs were also used to map the teacher educators' career paths in relation to affective responses and professional learning. The use of living graphs as an innovative research method alongside qualitative interviews was adapted from a strategy often used in history teaching (Dawson n.d.). A graph was created using a timeline as a horizontal axis and perceived highs and lows of research identity and professional development as the vertical axis. Participants were asked to map their personal biographies, academic and research highs and lows, career landmarks and barriers and successes using this graphic format. The living graphs were then used alongside discussion and exploration in the interviews. Visual methodologies are a rapidly developing area of social enquiry (as in Bagnoli 2009), but photos or artefacts are used more frequently to stimulate discussion (e.g. Cremin, Mason, and Busher 2011). One of the strengths of living graphs is that they are respondent-generated, rather than imposed by the researcher; they certainly enriched the quality and focus of the interviews. The living graphs are only briefly drawn on in this paper as we explore them more fully elsewhere (Hryniewicz, Griffiths and Thompson 2011, 2014) and space does not permit a full discussion here.

Narrative analysis of the interview data (Clandinin and Connelly 2000) was used to examine the teacher educators' own accounts, including longer-term perspectives. Coding was carried out thematically and cross-referenced by the researchers. Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three dimensions of interaction, continuity and situation are also strongly linked to the theoretical framework and therefore particularly pertinent for investigating individual and collective experiences, contexts and learning processes over time.

The overarching theoretical framework used in the study is sociocultural learning, in recognition that the specific context in which teacher educators work and their relationships within this are of vital importance in the process of learning (Wenger 1998). Swennen, Jones, and Volman's (2010) model of teacher educators' sub-identities has been particularly helpful in analysing our own research findings. In relation to higher education, Akerlind (2008) provides a useful categorisation of understanding an academic identity which we draw on in the analysis: fulfilling aca-

demetic requirements as an *academic duty or stepping stone*; *personal development* as a route to self-understanding; establishing oneself in the field via *personal achievement and wider recognition*; and *making a difference*: enabling broader change in order to benefit a larger community. Akerlind's study focused on academics' research identities, but we have found these categories equally relevant when considering landmarks in teaching. Eraut's (2007) research on contextual and learning factors in the workplace has also been valuable in helping to identify key factors affecting teacher educators' professional learning and any differences between the contexts.

### Research findings

In our previous study (Griffiths, Thompson and Hryniewicz 2010), we found that the dual transition made by a group of new teacher educators in England (cf. Murray 2008) from school to university, and, within the university context, from teaching to research, gave rise to considerable tensions and difficulties for them. The intensity of teacher education work and amount of time spent in schools as part of this left little time for research activities. Teacher educators' identities were still largely based on *school teaching*, although they were beginning to see themselves as *teachers in higher education* (Swennen, Jones, and Volman 2010). New teacher educators also lacked confidence in research and, especially in the older university, often felt like second-class citizens in comparison with those engaged in research as a core part of their roles. These findings matched those of several previous studies (e.g. Maguire 2000; Dinkelman, Margolis, and Sikkenga 2006; Harrison and McKeon 2008).

In the second stage of the research, working with more experienced teacher educators, some similar tensions were still apparent, but also a range of clear landmarks or stepping stones, which marked transitions and transformations in the teacher educators' identities as they moved on in their academic careers. We start by considering their teaching roles and trajectories as *teachers of teachers* and *teachers in higher education* (Swennen, Jones, and Volman 2010) before looking at the development of *researcher* identities.

### Teachers of teachers

All the mid-career teacher educators in our sample were experienced *schoolteachers* prior to entering higher education. They had made the transition into teaching in higher education and were established, confident *teachers of teachers* (Swennen, Jones, and Volman 2010). However, this had not necessarily been an easy transition; several mentioned the 'steep learning curve' after moving into higher education. Another told us: 'What was more difficult was adapting my role as a teacher to teaching adults, because I thought a teacher was a teacher was a teacher' (female, old university). In both institutions, some teacher educators felt that their reference group for teaching was still schools and this validated their teaching, although others were somewhat critical of such prevailing attitudes: 'They haven't made the transition in their head. Their identity is still grounded in being a school teacher' (female, new university).

For many, though, teaching was what they valued most in their academic lives, as one described: 'The most rewarding for me is the teaching and seeing the development of very very bright young teachers, or new teachers into the profession, and



for me that's what keeps me going' (male, old university). Like other researchers (Murray 2008; Swennen, Jones, and Volman 2010), we found that the teacher identity still persisted among some of the experienced teacher educators, in some cases surprisingly long after their transition into higher education. In the new university, this could partly be explained by the prominence of teacher education as a core activity (closely related to its history as a teacher training college) and the high value associated with this. A teacher educator with 20 years' experience (the most experienced in our sample, who was moving into late career) explained this further:

I still regard the teaching as what my job is here ... when it comes down to it I'm absolutely certain that it's the quality of our teaching and learning which sustains us and which is our anchor and our research is predicated on that. I've got no doubt that's where my commitment belongs ... That's why I'm here. (Male, new university)

This teacher educator saw his strong commitment to teaching as 'morally right' and he always put teaching first even though he had a strong publications record. The way he managed this potential tension was to make a clear separation between these activities in terms of time allocated to each, even though his research drew on and linked closely to his teaching. He also had a long-standing record of undertaking collaborative research and writing, which he preferred to individual research because he favoured collegial approaches generally.

In contrast, at the old university, there was more pressure to do research and this undermined the value that was afforded to teaching and teacher education, as an interviewee with 14 years' experience who had moved into a management role described:

Unfortunately teaching has become the least amount that I do and I don't like that very much ... There was this continual pressure to be studying for a higher degree and to do research ... we were fighting to try and get proper recognition of the PGCE and a feeling that the PGCE wasn't seen as part of the academy. (Female, old university)

For this teacher educator, the pressures to do research had drawn her away from teaching; her perspectives on the devaluing and exclusion of teacher education (in this case the postgraduate certificate) were very close to those described by Maguire (2000).

Looking at the interviews and living graphs overall, all Akerlind's (2008) four categories of academic identity could be seen in relation to teaching (see Figure 1). It must be stressed that the largely linear progression shown in Figure 1 is only indicative and particular trajectories varied between teacher educators. Nevertheless, clear landmarks in teaching were identified by the teacher educators and were very similar in both contexts, although differently valued, as we have seen.

Appointment as subject or phase leader was the first landmark or stepping stone, with further appointment as programme or course leader later on seen as important personal development and achievement. Equally important were issues related to student feedback; particular cohorts could make a big difference positively or sometimes negatively. The following interviewee, who had gone on to lead teacher education in his department, illustrates this clearly:

Over the first two years my confidence in being a teacher educator took off. I really enjoyed teaching the PGCE and undergraduate courses. In 2003, three years in, I had a

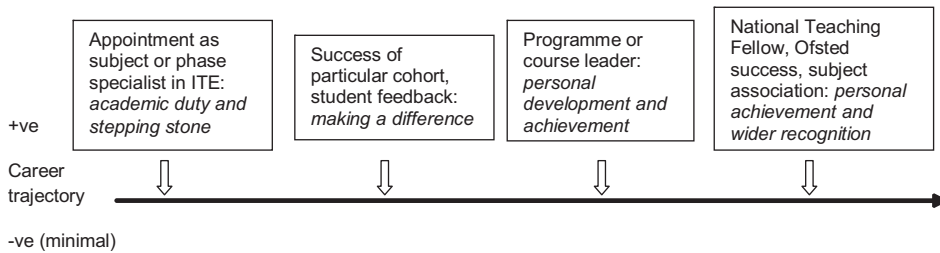


Figure 1. Landmarks in teaching, in relation to Akerlind's categories (2008).

fantastic cohort of PGCE students ... It was a very, very positive group. All got jobs, all were very good. It was a real high in teaching. (Male, old university)

Similarly, 'the response from students ... and the feeling of self-satisfaction when you have achieved or seeing the development within the students that I teach' (female, new university) were the most rewarding aspects identified in the interviews in relation to teaching. These quotes show a largely positive view of teaching which go beyond Akerlind's (2008) fulfilling an *academic duty* or requirements and show *personal development*, as well as touching on wider applications, *making a difference* in terms of employment or students' learning and development.

Moving on in their careers, noted landmarks such as teaching awards, successful inspection results and being acknowledged as experts by organisations such as subject associations led to *wider recognition* of excellence, which the teacher educators cited as personally fulfilling, as a recipient of a university teaching award explained:

The event [inspection] was very powerful because you know it was a public event ... and I found myself thinking this is the first time I have been formally, by my institution, praised ... actually to have someone take you aside and say 'That's a fantastic job you've done there'. (Male, new university)

In the old university, such external acknowledgement, together with positive feedback from partner schools, could make up for a lack of internal recognition: in one case, for example, a (male) teacher educator had become a national trainer in his subject, which gave him a strong sense of being valued.

Not all the accounts of teaching were positive. Several interviewees described the intensity of the teacher education work, including large amounts of direct teaching as well as school visits to watch trainees teaching, partnership work with schools, assessment and related committees, as we found with new teacher educators (Griffiths, Thompson and Hryniewicz 2010). For instance, one participant (female, new university) described her previous work at a different university as 'unworkable' because she 'taught every day for often six hours' on different teacher education programmes, leaving her no time for research. For this and other reasons, many teacher educators' careers moved into other kinds of teaching, as we shall see next.

### Teachers in higher education

What was evident in talking to the teacher educators was how their roles in the university had diversified over time into other kinds of work. Apart from those choosing – or being pressured in some cases – to take on management roles within

teacher education, many were moving into other types of teaching, such as undergraduate or masters courses in education. An example of this shift in identity or academic *stepping stone* (Akerlind 2008) was described clearly by one interviewee:

When I was appointed it was as a single – a singular identity. I was a PGCE tutor and I characterised myself as that ... whereas I now see that as sort of subsumed within a larger understanding of my activity ... I understand myself as a university teacher and lecturer, to be an academic. (Male, new university)

In his and several other cases, this shift started to take place because of involvement in the growing amount of masters-level work on the postgraduate route and this was generally regarded as a positive and more challenging dimension, as another interviewee told us:

I really like my teaching ... One high point was the specialist module on the MA. Every year the PGCEs do a research project, normally at M level. This year, I think the research projects are publishable – very good data. (Female, new university)

The inclusion of masters-level work on postgraduate certificates in education (PGCE) and the (then) move towards teaching as a masters-level profession in the UK (Gilroy and McNamara 2009) were to some extent changing the quality of teacher education teaching, which led to an increasing imperative for teacher educators to re-conceptualise their roles and extend their expertise.

*Personal development* (Akerlind 2008) came through as the strongest gain from the interview accounts. Teaching masters courses was a new challenge – ‘a totally new level’, as one put it, ‘that’s made it necessary to do a lot more personal research for teaching ... I feel a great need to remain very up to date and abreast of current research’ (female, new university) – but also brought new rewards, ‘as they have led me into areas I wouldn’t have thought of going into and they have given me breadth and depth’ (ibid). Several teacher educators at both universities described this kind of research-informed teaching, which enriched and fed back into their teacher education as well as into other teaching, as in the following example:

‘What’s happened is, since doing the EdD was brilliant, because it meant that I actually learnt how to do research and then gradually I got MA students and it made sense of the PGCE.’ (Female, old university)

In her case, the development of research through a professional doctorate was a key factor; she also described the way that preparing materials for another course had led into writing a textbook and her first publication. The importance of supervised academic study was found to be valuable and important in our earlier research (Griffiths, Thompson and Hryniewicz 2010). Here we were seeing the outcomes and developments which resulted from further study. Such teaching beyond teacher education had immediate connections with, and starting points for, research, to which we now turn.

## Researchers

Clear landmarks in research development were again identified by the teacher educators and were very similar in both contexts. As with teaching, all categories of

Akerlind's (2008) model were represented (see Figure 2). However, unlike teaching, a much more varied picture emerged from the interviews and living graphs, with more negative or interrupted aspects. The teacher educators were starting from a less confident base and therefore the transition to researcher was more of a steep learning curve. As one put it, 'Research is the most rewarding because I have to work at it ... but I like it because I feel it makes a difference' (female, new university).

Early *stepping stones* were gaining a doctorate, presenting a first conference paper or gaining one's first publication. Each of these represented significant milestones in themselves. However, these were often represented as negative duties, terrifying ordeals or significant hurdles; for instance, one of the new university teacher educators described the difficulties in getting his doctorate with impassioned detail as his 'dark night of the soul'. In several cases, teaching and management demands affected or interfered with a growing research trajectory, as illustrated in the following interview quote:

The research was very positive. I saw myself moving forward, being recognised as a lecturer rather than an ITE [initial teacher education] tutor ... Where I work there is incredible pressure to be research active, so not to be involved is seen as negative – an outsider ... Then I stopped doing research ... other roles dominated my time. (Male, old university)

In this teacher educator's trajectory, research was becoming more prominent and he was beginning to develop a research identity, although his transition to researcher was interrupted when he took on leadership positions in teacher education. There was extrinsic as well as intrinsic motivation, although the strong pressure from the institutional culture at the old university to develop a research identity was described as rather a negative compulsion, with severe sanctions for non-compliance. This was in contrast to a teacher educator at the new university, who saw research as generally well supported, as she described: 'An organisation that puts research high up as priorities and is much more committed to developing its workforce is crucial. This has had a big effect on me.'

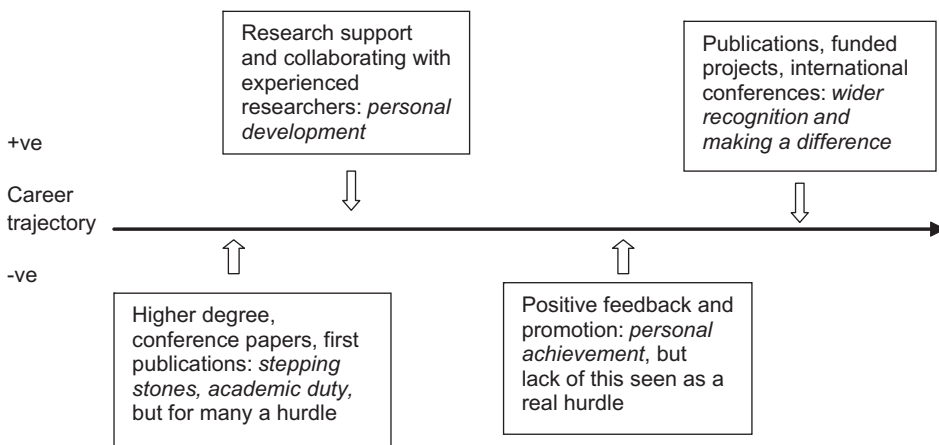


Figure 2. Landmarks in research, in relation to Akerlind's (2008) categories.

One of the most striking, positive aspects of research cited by the teacher educators was collaborative research and support, which gave rise to *personal development* and *achievement*, and an increased confidence in research, as the following example illustrates:

Michael has been absolutely brilliant, supportive. He mentored me and was my PhD supervisor ... I've been making the transition from initial researcher to a more established one since completing my PhD ... I've had three journal articles, book chapters and two books [accepted]. (Male, new university)

In this case, the transition to more experienced researcher is clearly highlighted, with strong support from a mentor and supervisor. As in an earlier example, the personal and academic development of this teacher educator after previous supervision and subsequent mentoring was marked. Particular landmarks are identified here: gaining a doctorate and building up publications. This teacher educator was highly motivated and ambitious in terms of career, promotion and external recognition; these characteristics were more evident (though not exclusively) among the male interviewees overall.

As research experience grew and publications increased, some teacher educators noted supportive feedback from senior academics and promotion as positive aspects, though the lack of this in some cases gave rise to feelings of being devalued in both contexts. Later landmarks included international conferences and funded research, where teacher educators also felt that they were able to *make a difference* as well as gain *wider recognition* for their research. For example, one interviewee (male, new university) told us about the 'positive feedback' and sense of achievement he gained from giving his first international conference paper 'with professors from all over the world'; while another (female, new university) described the rewards of a recently completed study: 'The study made a big difference to policy ... we've made a real difference.' These teacher educators had moved into very full academic careers, though in both cases their core teaching was still within teacher education. However, there were often considerable barriers to these and others' research development, which are dealt with in the next section.

### **Contextual factors: enablers and barriers**

We now discuss our findings further in relation to contextual factors. Some contextual differences between the two institutions had a significant impact on teacher educators' academic development and sense of self-worth. As already seen, the main institutional difference was that, whereas in the new university, teaching and teacher education were of central importance and highly rewarded, in the old university these activities were less rewarded than research. However, in the new university all staff were allocated, at least notionally, some research hours, whereas in the old university research time had to be applied for, which tended to disadvantage teacher educators who did not already have a research profile.

Eraut (2007) identified expectations, relationships and work-life balance or overload as key contextual factors. Of these, relationships were often foregrounded in the interviews as particularly important, as in the next example:

I'm lucky to have worked with many inspiring people, colleagues ... Jane was great – she had a strategic vision ... Karen too – she encouraged me to go for the national teaching fellowship and then promotion ... Those kind of Heads of ITE have all been very good to me – they were supportive and as I said encouraged. Higher up though ... (Male, old university)

Positive support and encouragement from senior managers were marked here, enabling this teacher educator to go for promotion and a national award, although support elsewhere in the department and higher in the institution was lacking: an example of the micro-community of teacher education differing from the wider culture (cf. Murray 2008). In contrast, lack of support and work overload are illustrated in the following quote from the new university:

I was director of a *big* [research] project, and as well as that ... I taught virtually most days, every day. And at the same time in the evenings and weekends I directed this very, very large programme all by myself, with no administrative help at all. So that was my balance then – I taught most of the time and then I did the project. (Female, new university)

Unlike an earlier example from the new university, this teacher educator felt isolated and overwhelmed as she endeavoured to combine research and teaching. She was new to research at the time and it had put her off trying to take on the leadership of a large, funded project again. The teaching loads in the new university were certainly enormous; dedicated research time disappeared and research was often 'dumped', as another teacher educator put it: 'It's very difficult to ring fence the time.' In other cases, however, teacher educators at the new university described being able to buy themselves out of teaching if they obtained external research funding, so there was quite varied experience, perhaps reflecting departmental differences.

### **Learning factors: enablers and barriers**

Eraut (2007) identified major learning factors as a mix of individual and workplace elements, including personal agency and commitment, but also feedback and support. In the next example, the personal agency and ambition of this teacher educator is clear:

Being on the EdD is really important. It is hard though – the late Fridays and Saturday mornings it can be hard to get motivated ... but once you are there you get so much. I think it is really important to step back from your teaching, and be ready to learn from others ... It is unsettling to be challenged but in a constructive way. (Male, old university)

The challenge of doing a professional doctorate was hard but highly valued in terms of personal development. Similar characteristics are evident in a different way in the next case:

In the last three years I have made conscious decisions about what I chose to pursue, so I chose not to take a programme management role that I was offered ... and therefore I have become much more tactical ... I accepted that, in choosing to pursue research I'd necessarily limited my progression in my career and excluded myself from a possibility for promotion. (Male, new university)

An interesting point is that, in the new university, it was perceived that research success would hinder promotion – the opposite of the old university, where research was seen as the prerequisite for advancement. This teacher educator's views may have been affected by the review of promotional criteria that was being undertaken at the time; research achievement is now an important promotional criterion in the new university.

As seen earlier, overall, the male teacher educators in our sample were more obviously ambitious than the women, as can be seen in this contrasting quote from a female teacher educator at the new university: 'I've developed a more pragmatic approach to my career. I have three kids, the youngest is six ... I've no expectation of getting PL [principal lectureship] or Reader.' Family commitments were a key factor in women's choices and this could limit their decisions (Maguire 2000).

However different the planned or expected outcome, all these teacher educators were being strategic and exercising agency in their choices, building on their learning from experience and knowledge of the institutional culture. As another teacher educator told us: 'I know the levers and drivers now, so – and I'm more confident ... I feel more experienced now. I've learnt lessons, hard lessons ... it's just learning isn't it?' (female, new university).

### Concluding discussion

Akerlind's (2008) model of an academic identity has been valuable in helping to identify aspects such as personal development and achievement in relation to the teacher educators' experiences in this study, with clear landmarks and milestones in teaching and research trajectories in both institutions. Positive aspects of individual and collective practices were identified, as well as barriers to development arising from teacher educators' professional and academic roles.

Teaching in higher and teacher education was largely seen as positive, although perceived as being valued more in the new than the old university; teacher educators drew positively on their previous identities as schoolteachers, were confident in their teaching abilities and found it inherently rewarding. They were less confident in research and some experienced considerable difficulties in balancing research with teaching, owing to lack of support and/or time. However, there was a great commitment to research within the sample, both to inform teaching, as personal transformation and to make a difference, and teacher educators often undertook research at great personal cost. Those teacher educators who were further on in their careers saw research development as a bonus in terms of developing new perspectives, which were transformative personally as well as academically.

Swennen, Jones, and Volman's (2010) discussion of teacher educators' sub-identities has also been useful in reviewing the teacher educators' perspectives in this study. The research has demonstrated gradual and complex transitions among mid-career teacher educators as teachers of teachers, teachers in higher education and researchers, or a mix of these identities, as in Swennen, Jones, and Volman (2010). These multiple identities and the links between them are depicted in Figure 3. As well as those making links between these multiple identities, we also found some teacher educators who were moving from one identity to another and leaving the previous ones behind, i.e. moving from teacher to teacher educator to researcher, especially those who were aiming at traditional, academic careers. Others were somewhere between, in terms of which identity was dominant, or were trying to find a balance between them. Compared to the new teacher educators in our previous

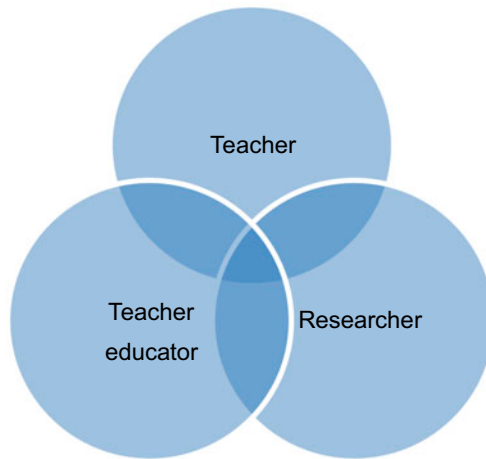


Figure 3. Teacher educators' multiple identities.

study (Griffiths, Thompson and Hryniewicz 2010), research featured more strongly and was more embedded in the identities of all the mid-career teacher educators in this sample.

Because of the different university contexts, cultures, organisational frameworks and practices, there were differing individual needs and experiences, institutional demands, strategies and forms of professional development (Eraut 2007), both between and within each institution. Nevertheless, some common features of successful development and learning also emerged, with important implications for teacher education policy and practice internationally.

Firstly, the value of further academic study, learning from an experienced researcher in terms of direct supervision on a PhD or professional doctorate (EdD), or more general research induction and support from a mentor, was emphasised by a number of teacher educators in both universities. This was also a finding from our earlier research with new teacher educators (Griffiths, Thompson and Hryniewicz 2010); but in this study we could see the positive results of such supervision and mentoring in terms of conference papers and publications, as well as more established research profiles. A clear recommendation for good practice therefore has to be not only to encourage teacher educators to undertake doctorates, in which confidence will be developed through supervision (as in McPherson et al. 2010), but also to provide a research mentor who will enable teacher educators' research development to be sustained and enhanced. This is linked to our next key finding and recommendation.

Secondly, the value of collaborative research emerged as another strong finding across both university contexts, as in several international studies of teacher educators (e.g. McGee and Lawrence 2009; Lunenberg, Korthagen, and Zwart 2011). Many examples were cited of learning through working alongside experienced researchers; the most experienced teacher educator in our sample worked with a long-standing research partner. However, examples of the kind of group collaborative project or action research noted by others (see Houston et al. 2010; Draper et al. 2011) were lacking in both institutions at the time of the research, perhaps because of the barriers the teacher educators identified, such as heavy administrative and



teaching loads and, in some cases, insufficient institutional support. Given a proven need for continuing professional development in this study and the strength of findings from international studies, a further strong recommendation is to ensure that collaborative projects are introduced, preferably initiated by the participants. Since this study was undertaken, research theme groups have been set up in both institutions through which a range of collaborative self-study projects with teacher educators are taking place. These are proving effective in linking research with teaching, and embedding research more firmly in teacher education, as well as creating active learning communities.

Thirdly, the importance of time and opportunities to carry out research was clear in the teacher educators' trajectories, as well as the need for institutional flexibility and support which enabled teacher educators to develop their teaching and move into different roles, such as taking on masters-level teaching and doctoral supervision. Lack of time had already emerged as an important factor in our previous research and was preventing some new teacher educators from developing a research profile (as in Dinkelman, Margolis, and Sikkenga 2006; Murray 2008). Negative examples given in this study illustrate the continued demotivating effect that can result from an over-full teaching load and lack of opportunities to study or develop research. In some cases, teacher educators could only escape from this by moving to another institution; in others, research had to be put on hold while teaching or administrative loads were particularly heavy. More experienced teacher educators found it easier to demarcate time for research, either by refusal to take on heavy administrative roles or by carving out dedicated space within their teaching timetables. A recommendation for institutional policy and practice is therefore to provide a balanced workload, dedicated research time and institutional support, whatever the type of institution, recognising the particular needs of teacher educators at different stages. At the new university, where there had been a long-standing tradition of teacher education as the dominant activity, this was particularly challenging.

We end on a warning note. Current government policy in England and Wales, which is moving the control of initial teacher education firmly into schools and away from universities poses a threat, not only to the importance of research within teacher education, which could be 'dramatically weakened' (Furlong 2013, 9), but also to the identities and job security of teacher educators themselves. European and wider global teacher education providers (OECD 2011) must ensure the continuation of their successful practices and avoid following in England's footsteps. Continuing research into teacher educators' work and identities is needed to chart future developments and reinforce the importance of such research as a field within the larger sphere of education in higher education.

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