Rethinking research in teacher education

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ABSTRACT

The expansion of school-based teacher training is impacting on the practice of universities, schools and trainees. University tutors and managers were interviewed on how they experienced working in partnership with schools and how this impacted on the composition of their work. They variously reported on how their sense of professional purpose had been challenged as a result of changing expectations. Their involvement in research is used as a barometer of these changes. The teacher educators are depicted as wavering between governmental regulation (master discourse) and professional imperatives (university discourse), where the latter comprise an uneasy alliance of expertise in school and academic rigour. Through depicting the unsettlement of practice and accounts of it (hysteric discourse) the study points to possible resolutions that might be achieved through more systematic resistance to external demands (analytic discourse). That is, the university teacher educator identity results from attempted resolution of these conflicting demands.

Keywords: university teacher education, Lacan, research, discourse

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The expansion of school-based teacher training is impacting on the practice of universities, schools and trainees. University tutors and managers were interviewed on how they experienced working in partnership with schools and how this impacted on the composition of their work. They variously reported on how their sense of professional purpose had been challenged as a result of changing expectations. Their involvement in research is used as a barometer of these changes. The teacher educators are depicted as wavering between governmental regulation (master discourse) and professional imperatives (university discourse), where the latter comprise an uneasy alliance of expertise in school and academic rigour. Through depicting the unsettlement of practice and accounts of it (hysteric discourse) the study points to possible resolutions that might be achieved through more systematic resistance to external demands (analytic discourse). That is, the university teacher educator identity results from attempted resolution of these conflicting demands.

1. Introduction

Partnerships between English schools and universities in support of teacher education are long established having been developed in response to successive policies increasing the proportion and influence of teacher education taking place in schools. Recent policy changes in England have resulted in teacher education becoming school-led as well as school-based. Initiatives such as School Direct (SD) and TeachFirst have fitted the academic element of training more snugly around the demands of immediate practice in schools. Here trainee teachers spend most of their training period in schools under their direction with universities providing accreditation but a relatively small component of training. Recruitment patterns for those entering a career in university teacher education favour candidates with recent or extensive school experience. Given the ambivalent circumstances that they face these newer entrants to the profession may continue to define their practice with reference to their own expertise in schools rather than feel obliged to develop the more traditional academic capabilities mentioned in their new job descriptions. Meanwhile, this policy climate has led to some turbulence in the lives of longer serving university teacher educators adjusting to ever-changing conditions and new job descriptions. From the other side, the new models of training also substantially change the requirements of their students aspiring to join the teaching profession and the demands that they make on their tutors. Ironically, however, university tutors, both new and old, are now less able to compete with school-based teacher educators in meeting the demands of immediate practice. This redistribution of teacher education has eroded key elements that had previously distinguished the university contribution. Moreover, the new priorities of practice in universities have been supportive of schools in reducing their need for a university input as they expand their own provision of teacher education.

This paper is centred on describing how conceptions of the "university teacher educator" are coming to be defined in this new environment and how individuals conceptualise themselves within that designation. The paper shows how teacher education subjectivities are produced within a changing professional landscape characterised by demands from a number agencies that occasionally conflict with each other, and with the individual's own personal histories and aspirations. By focusing more on those who have been in teacher education for longer we seek to comment on how notions of teacher education are evolving and how that evolution

impacts on professional identifications. Ultimately, we are concerned with how universities might maintain an analytical edge in teacher education processes and how individuals locate that aspiration in their practice.

We commence with a brief review of some of the literature that has addressed recent tensions in teacher education. The second section outlines the methodological approach taken and how the project relates to earlier work by the authors. We then outline the theoretical research perspective to be followed. Lacan's (2007) schemata of the four discourses is used to theorise the ways in which language exercises both formative and transformative power as shifting professional or administrative arrangements open or close specific modes of practice. Finally, we will look at how changing patterns of teacher education have impacted on four teacher educators. We focus particularly on their participation in research, which has been widely included in the job descriptions of teacher educators and is sometimes seen as a distinctive component of a university teacher educator's professional identity.

2. Literature review

The categories "teacher educator", "teacher" and "trainee" have been subject to significant redefinition in recent years as teacher education activity has moved progressively into schools. The path of this redefinition has been variously traced (e.g. Browne and Reid, 2012; Childs, 2013). Ellis, McNicholl and Pendry (2012) identify the teacher educator as a somewhat schizophrenic figure caught between job descriptions crafted to traditional assumptions as to the role of an academic teacher educator and the actuality of the work that follows appointment. For example, any former expectations to carry out research have, for many, been rather superseded by "relationship maintenance" between university and school staff as they share the challenge of training in contested space (Ellis et al, Glackin, Heighes, Norman, Nicol, Norris, Spencer and McNicholl, 2013, p. 270). Brown and McNamara (2011) have outlined how demands on teacher educators have changed as a result of initial teacher training shifting from earlier notions of promoting teacher autonomy for "student" teachers to be *educated* to supporting "trainee" teachers in being *trained* to comply with externally imposed teaching and assessment regimes. This echoes the situation of teachers described by Passy (2012, p. 1) where primary teachers had earlier been isolated but where their individualised "substantial self" had been encouraged. Now a "situational self" is more apparent, governed by externally defined competencies. She reports how teachers have mixed views as to whether the authoritarian apparatus thwarts individual professionalism or provides a much-needed structure to follow amidst rapid changes that are difficult to assimilate. See also Stevenson (2011) and Deem and Vuilliamy (2006). In teacher education, personnel have changed as universities progressively meet new demands provoking an on-going displacement from familiar activity for teachers and teacher educators alike, challenging notions both of what it is to be a teacher but also of what it is to educate them. The designation "teacher

educator" relates to a function that has now primarily been split between either former school-based practitioners now working within a university setting, or, increasingly, by those still employed in schools with an expanded teacher education role. Reynolds, Ferguson-Patrick and McCormack (2013, p. 307) rather optimistically argue that these adjustments require "both groups to get out of their comfortable spaces and engage with each other in constantly moving situations". Various authors have discussed the challenge faced by new entrants to the profession of teacher education (White, 2014; Williams and Ritter; van Velzen, van der Klink, Swennwen and Yaffe, 2010; Shagrir, 2010; McKeon and Harrison, 2010; Harrison and McKeon 2009). Boyd and Harris (2010, p. 10) report on how uncertainties in "the workplace context encourage the new lecturers to hold on to their identity and credibility as school teachers rather than to pro-actively seek new identities as academics within the professional field of teacher education". This paper is motivated by an interest in understanding longer-term change as experienced by members of staff who are encountering the new policy and practice environment having previously worked according to a succession of earlier models.

3. Method

At time of writing the on-going project has been in progress for one year. Its purpose was to better understand the implications of SD for university teacher education, towards rethinking the distinctive role of universities in teacher education. The work builds on earlier practitioner research studies by the authors, carried out over three years, which were concerned with how conceptions of theory had changed for tutor and trainees as a result of participation in an earlier school-based model (Smith and Hodson, 2010; Hodson, Smith and Brown, 2012; Smith, Hodson and Brown, 2013). Here knowledge was seen as relating to particular states of knowing that ultimately failed to meet the needs of new situations, provoking a break with earlier guiding principles towards creating something new through constantly revising the narratives that guided subjective connections to the world. Conceptions of "theory" were used as an indicator of the trainees developing more generic conceptions of teaching as they gained experience of schools. A supplementary element focused on trainee conceptions of mathematics within this model as an alternative gauge (Smith, Hodson and Brown, 2013; Brown, Hodson and Smith, 2013).

Within the current project the team members have conducted over one hundredover sixty hour-long interviews/meetings with university teacher education managers (3218) and tutors (1832), school managers and mentors (2218) as well as a selection of SD trainees during school placements (2415). Additionally, a number of planning meetings were recorded and a few trainee lessons were observed. The interviews span 15 universities and 109 associated schools. The interviews were designed to assess the impact of SD on a range of individuals variously implicated in the initiative. The 5042 university-based interviews addressed questions such as; length of involvement/ responsibilities in initial teacher training, involvement in SD and how it was different to earlier models, changes to job definition, changing role/composition of theory and subject knowledge (e.g. compression of training, influence of inspectorate, school requirements), distinctive role of universities, threat resulting from the increasingly marginalised position, how partnership work with schools is changing, involvement in research or masters/doctoral studies, the role of

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research in their practice, main challenges ahead for university training, affect of this on them personally and how they think the role of universities needs to change. The three members of the team have each listened to all of the recordings and discussed their observations. Transcripts have been produced for closer scrutiny and NVivo coding has taken place in connection with the listed areas of interest. Specific themes in our analysis have included; the effects of privatisation on teacher education provision, the evolution of teacher educator subjectivities as job definitions or personnel change, the shift to more operational conceptions of the training process. For the present paper interviews were inspected from the point of view of how they directly or indirectly pointed to conceptions of research as a part of their practice. Evidence of these conceptions was considered as a gauge of how the evolving analytical or academic dimensions of teacher education were being understood. The four case studies were selected to indicate the variety of participation in research.

4. Lacan's schemata of the four discourses

The theoretical ambitions of this paper are aimed at building a sense of how alternative discursive priorities variously work through teacher educator practice. It takes the premise that motives are harnessed by identification with particular discourses (retention of university values, the need to support practice, the promotion of research, the need to comply with directives to retain "outstanding" status, etc). Analysis of the data to be presented in the next section will examine how these identifications link to particular modes of practice, e.g. the assertion of the academic dimensions of training, the development or retention of humanistically defined pedagogical processes, the smooth operation of administrative frameworks, etc. Meanwhile, policy documents define the parameters of teacher practice to the extent that participation in teaching and teacher education becomes a form of bureaucratic compliance monitored by an inspection regime that insists upon this taking place. Such identifications and compliances, however, may result in some emotional cost to the individual with associated awkwardness. Yet, there is some chance that the individual may succeed in regaining some personal composure through formulating a more systematically considered response to these conflicting demands.

Lacanian psychoanalytic theory portrays a subject divided between what she is doing and what she says she is doing. This division is located differently for different people, and the type of division determines who you are, who *we* are, and how power and dis/pleasure function to secure alignment or non-alignment with particular discursive formulations. The individual is constituted according to the composition and mode of their identifications. Lacan's (2007) conception of society is dominated by the practice *or use* of language, where "when I say use of language I do not mean we use it - it is language that uses us" (p. 66). Further, "discourse can clearly subsist without words. It subsists in certain fundamental relations which would literally, not be able to be maintained without language" (p. 13). He continues: "nothing has been abstracted from any reality. On the contrary it's already inscribed in what functions as this reality" (p. 14). Žižek (1989, p. 175) contrasts Lacan's notion of a divided human subject with Foucault's late work, which was concerned with articulating the different modes by which individuals assume their

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subject positions. In Foucault's analysis, the subject creatively surfs from one subject position within a discourse to another to produce different effects, to craft a *technology of self*. Whereas, Žižek suggests, Lacan focuses on a subject who exceeds discourses, "the failure of its representation is its positive condition". That is, the human subject thrives though not being pinned down in a clear definitive statement leaving personal space to resist regulative impositions.

Lacan's schemata of the four discourses are referenced to 1) systems of knowledge (university), 2) discourses of control or governance (master) 3) the alienated or divided subject split between alternative discursive modes (hysteric), and 4) systematic resistance to oppressive power structures (analytic). For this paper the schemata is drawn on in conceptualising how teacher educators craft their sense of being with reference to the discursive orders that determine their subjectivities. It provides a helpful model in depicting the "schizophrenic" subject positions that university teacher educators are obliged to confront. For example, the individual will form identifications with political, academic or administrative discourses that shape that individual's thought, affect, enjoyment and the meanings that he or she assigns to different situations. It is through this route that the paper will theorise how the changing policy environment variously impacts on individuals and how they understand their mode of professional participation. We shall take these discourses in turn.

University discourse.

The university discourse comprises systematic knowledge. For individuals to understand this discourse they need to be receptive to the idea of pre-constituted knowledge. This requires that the individual empties "themselves of any knowledge that might interfere with the knowledge in the discourse becoming an amorphous, non-articulated substance ... to be articulated by discourse" (Bracher, p. 109). That is, they are produced as a divided subject as a result of this interpellation that captures part of them, for example, a teacher educator appreciated merely to the degree that their practice complies with inspectorial criteria. It "is admissible only insofar as you already participate in a certain structured discourse" (Lacan, p. 37) but part of their selves is left out in this encounter, a gap, marking the divide. In turn, others may gauge the degree of this individual's submission according to particular criteria and judge their performance according to their degree of alignment. For instance, a trainee mathematics teacher may be assessed in their ability to teach fractions in a step-by-step fashion according to a curriculum schema that specifies particular developmental stages of a child's learning. Other aspects of their teaching, such as their humanist mode of interaction may not register on this scale. A new entrant to the profession of teacher education, meanwhile, might be able to play one version of university discourse off against another (e.g. practical versus academic expertise) as teacher education boundaries lose definition. One of our interviewees specifically criticised a new policy of staff needing PhDs. She favoured a more school-based expertise in universities: "the vast majority of people in schools don't have a masters never mind a doctorate and so it worries me that we will not get experienced teachers in. ... I think there are some great people in the

schools that we should headhunt but none of them will meet that criteria". This production of the divided subject, however, is not the whole story as Lacan portrays systems of knowledge as being in the service of alternative master discourses shaping the situation in question: "the master's discourse can be said to be congruent with, or equivalent to, what comes and functions ... in the university discourse" (p. 102). That is, the subjective production results from participation in a form of knowledge that is motivated by some underlying interest (mode of sponsorship, pedagogical preference, kinship, etc).

Master discourse

Alternatively, we could centre our attention on master discourses directly. Neo-liberal trends have resulted in governments around the world shaping education according to economic conditions (Zeichner, 2010). The British government might be seen as operating particular master discourses in the service of its policy ambitions to reshape education according to market parameters. This discourse works through demanding compliance to certain operational or administrative protocols in the name of customary or desired practices. In Lacan's framework, which draws on the Hegelian master-slave dialectic, master discourses are selectively linked to particular elements of wider (mythical) knowledge. The "master's knowledge is entirely autonomous with respect to mythical knowledge" (p. 90). The master merely asserts a particular version of reality, as though it is supported by systematic knowledge, "master-ized" discourse as opposed to "mastered" (p. 103). "It is all about finding the position that makes it possible for knowledge to become the master's knowledge" (p. 22). Recently, BBC TV news (3/2/14) featured a headline comprising a minister's seemingly uncontroversial statement that "standards in state school must improve". Further interrogation, however, revealed that by this he meant that state schools should be more like private schools. His assertion was seen in some quarters as producing a mismatch with reality where things aren't quite how we are being told to see them, releasing space for questioning or resistance. Moreover, behind this notional master is a split subject suppressing aspects of reality in the name of asserting a clear instruction. Politicians sometimes place great importance on being seen as "very clear" to avoid any charge of weakness or confusion, perhaps through fear that it might undermine their capacity for governance. They are obliged to suspend doubt and make decisions to select one form of systematic knowledge rather than another, which by "virtue of its very structure, masked the division of the subject" (p. 103). In doing this, however, "he does not know what he wants" (p. 32) or what he will get in return. There is a gap between demand and response.

Hysterics discourse

Meanwhile, the individual may successfully act according to the master discourse. Yet there is a similar gap between performance and the awareness or articulation of that performance. Žižek (2006) argues that ideology operates through the maintenance of this gap between alternative identificatory modes. For example, Brown (2008) depicts a headteacher exploring her own complicity in policy rollout as she moved between resisting policy intellectually and implementing it faithfully in a material sense. Similarly, "relationship maintenance" might be viewed as an insidious way of getting tutors to act in line with the required behaviour *en route* to teacher education having a lower university input. The tutors may protest vocally but nevertheless materialise their own oppression through their very actions in supporting schools. The actions in turn equip schools with the wherewithal to replace universities whilst disenabling university tutors from protecting their patch through their more traditionally defined skill base. It may however be that the individual begins to sense this gap. The hysterics discourse might be seen as being provoked in the subject by a confusing element intrinsic to the demand being expressed in the master

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discourse. The respondent may be troubled by the demand, a niggling feeling maybe. *What do you want of me? I must protest as this does not seem right!* "Why am I what you ... are saying that I am" (Žižek, 1989, p. 113). The subject addresses the master, and the mismatch between demand and response hints at an aspect of knowledge that the master discourse has concealed. The subject had been spurred on by the niggle marking a gap that had provoked unease with being completely compliant with the demand being made.

Analytic discourse

Lacan's (p. 70) notion of the analytic discourse is modelled on a Freudian psychoanalytic encounter, where the "subject of discourse does not know himself as the subject holding the discourse". Analysis is directed at disrupting or resisting master discourses enacted in the service of oppressive regimes: "this master's discourse has only one counterpoint, the analytic discourse" (p. 87). One goes into analysis with the intention of discovering the unconscious forces that interfere with conscious actions, or the gap between them. For example, alternative systems of knowledge may conflict with each other and cause disturbance to the subject. The analyst addresses the subject with view to identifying the master discourses working through them. Through this process a master discourse can be revolutionalised, turned over, as the analytic resolution works itself through. "Knowledge then, is placed in the center, in the dock, by psychoanalytic experience" (p. 30). The analyst address is underpinned by systematic knowledge, which is ultimately referenced to new coordinates, that is, held in place by new highlighted features that Lacan calls *master signifiers* (p. 92), e.g. "standards ... must improve".

In the next section we will encounter tutors variously utilising research as an analytical technique to bridge the gap between the immediate practical, administrative or regulative insistences of policy and a more academic or analytical dimension. Our own analysis is designed to explore some of the discursive formations that shape conceptions of teacher education.

5. School Direct and teacher education

We view the evolving parameters of teacher education from the perspective of four longer-term university based teacher educators confronting changes to their practice as a result of the SD model being introduced alongside existing courses. We shall look at how their conceptions of research activity might variously be seen as providing an analytical instrument to counter resulting displacements. For this group the new option had been an insignificant step on a much longer journey within teacher education. Yes, there was a slight difference in course duration, more days were spent in schools, and one taught unit had been adjusted. Overall, however, the new route was reported as very similar to the old and this vestige of familiarity appeared to provide some comfort. Where common discomfort was noted, this was concerned with role confusion between the university and the school during the implementation of the new route. This impacted on university, schools and trainees alike. For example, whether SD students should prioritise attendance at the university or a school trip; whether the school or the university should organise school-based training; whether the university tutor visiting students in SD schools had a quality assurance role in relation to school-based training. One of our group member's uncertainty seemed to meet Lacan's criteria for hysteric: " I found it confusing actually. I think what I'm finding confusing is ... that the training is the school's responsibility … with the PGCE it's our responsibility and the schools do their bit, whereas what I would expect with the School Direct is it's the schools' responsibility and we do that academic side of it, but I'm not convinced that's true". The ambiguity of the new imposed arrangements displaced the tutor from a more familiar pathway but without a clear understanding of her new professional domain.

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The government demand for more school-led training was largely symbolic in terms of its immediate impact on the tutors that we interviewed. However, the "truth of the master's discourse is masked" (p. 102). The symbolism proved rather unsettling all the same since the 'new' arrangements provoked fears about on-going job security as a result of challenges to their professional territory, intensified maybe as some universities shed staff as they withdrew from teacher education: "Don't think that the master is always there. It's the command that remains ... There is no longer any need for anybody to be present" (p. 106). She also reported how "the school was moaning about 'we don't know what we're doing'". The majority of our interviews with trainees reported a lack of coordination between school and university demands and a tendency to bond according to the symbolic lead institution. From a managerial point of view planning problems arose from allocations not being met and recruitment being devolved across multiple sites. Significantly, for tutors, reference to the introduction of SD appeared to be underlain by a much deeper and broader narrative concerned with beliefs governing practice, which had been constrained over time; the introduction of SD was simply another variant of more school-based initial teacher training and its relationship to changes in practice imposed on schools. The way in which ingrained principles played out in their accounts of and for practice, however, was markedly different between tutors.

For Lucy, a poignant moment was recalled in relation to her observations of trainees teaching of in schools:

> Nothing they seem to be doing bears any relation to any kind of research or ideas about learning or how kids learn…I think it's really sad. [A really good student]… said something like, 'what I've learned is that if you're doing an investigation, it can't last more than twenty minutes'… I've seen some really lovely ideas I would have spent hours on with kids. He allowed three minutes for it…and they did it! I'm a bit cynical really. Even my younger colleagues, they think that's as it is now really - some, but not all...

Research is pointed to in two contrasting ways here. Firstly, the explicit reference to external research that might underpin the teaching being conducted by trainees, an appeal to systematic knowledge to shore up the deficit of the basic command of working to an imposed model of practice. Secondly, there is an implicit assumption that research could be carried out by the pupils as part of a shared enterprise with the teacher to fill out an impoverished learning experience. She went on to explain what this shift in pedagogical attitude has meant for her relationship with school-based mentors. In relation to critical judgements she made about the quality of the student's lesson, the tutor had this to say: "It is really difficult and means that there are conflicts between what the subject mentor is saying and what I'm saying…He kind of agreed but said, 'I don't think it's as bad as you think' ".

Clearly, this situation illustrates a difference in concerns between players at university and school about what is significant in teaching. That is, school and university representatives are appealing to different versions of systematic knowledge in assessing the trainee, where one version has the master's favour. Moreover, the tutor acknowledges that this difference may not be recognised by those university teacher educators more recently recruited. Lucy holds dear principles about learning drawn from the academy. She continues to enact these through her practice and does so even though this leads to frustration, sadness, and sometimes conflict with school mentors and the views of some colleagues. Her revolutionary spirit had been somewhat quashed in the process:

> I get very frustrated by it. I hate it. I hate the way teacher education is going at the moment. On the one hand I find it quite stressful. On the

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other hand I'm not that far off retiring and I don't care. I sort of have this feeling of when it gets too much I'll just retire. I mean, when I look back to when I started here and how things were, I just think it's so sad how things have changed.

Ralph had completed a PhD in education whilst working as a teacher educator a number of years before but he was no longer active in his own research. He felt being responsive to the changing agenda was the way to survive it, even if this meant explicitly suppressing professionally held principles held. He had initially asserted that 'it was important not to lose your principles', but, later on in the interview: "In the end', he declared, principles 'don't pay the bills':

> [Tutors and student teachers are] not expected to focus on one thing for very long any more. There isn't the time nor the space for addressing whole piles of texts. We often give people readers and things, which are potted distillations of key ideas. Papers, which are shortish, they can get their heads around …get to the crux of the arguments people are making.

What Ralph did not explicitly acknowledge, however, was the dilemma, which this purported squeeze on time and his rationalisation of the use of research evidence presented for the distinctive role of the university and its reference to research, a role he merited earlier in the interview:

> [On school-based routes, trainees] have not got any significant time space or resource points to make hardly any significant connections between theory and practice… For example, …Kagan… you can't guarantee that on a school-based route because the people who are doing the training haven't got the theoretical base that they need, often, to be able to do that. So it's low-level training producing people who can operate in that one context.

His 'solution' to the problem was to ensure that theory was not peddled for its own sake, as he saw it, but extracted to inform practice points made as efficiently as possible and in terms of what the UK quality regulator, Ofsted, would expect:

> what we mean by theory is useful stuff and information, useful stuff to inform their practice… If it's not going to impact on their practice, they won't want to know about it and Ofsted will think it's completely unimportant because they've never been able to use it.

This rational capitulation to the external drivers that locate the master discourse is a means to ends other than those envisaged elsewhere. Ralph acknowledges a closing down akin to Lucy's proposal: "in your mid to late 50s that you don't feel as threatened about things because there's always the retirement option in the end".

Two other colleagues, Sarah and Richard, had also elected to complete doctoral studies alongside their teacher education duties. Sarah was studying for her doctorate as a strategy to help her navigate the constantly changing landscape of teacher education, which she had witnessed for the past twenty years. Crucially, she felt that skills she had acquired through the PhD process were providing her with analytical "tools to question and think through the changes" to enable her to identify which external demands were a tick box exercise which "can almost be forgotten because you have done them" as opposed to ones which provided an opportunity for development "that take us in a direction because that is where we want to go not because we are being made too." In this sense, engagement in research was a key part of maintaining integrity in teacher education, allowing adjustment to external demands whilst engaging in a process, which, seemingly, made strategic sense in terms of developing the university contribution. Within a professional landscape that has been subject to constant external regulation and conflicting demands from

internal and external players, she felt that acquiring these tools was important to maintaining the health of the institution.

Sarah also talked at length about the contribution the doctorate has made to the development of her own intellectual capabilities. Within a system under-going constant turbulence where individual emancipation has been limited, she recognised how studying for her PhD gave her "me time". Thus, having 'a space for me' assisted her in navigating the changes happening around her by "pushing me out of my comfort zone and who I was", enabling her to "exercise her brain in more than one way" and feel "more alive and able to go anywhere" with her thinking.

Managing this process with the more functional demands of being a teacher educator, however, had also been unsettling. For example, she described how coming into contact with a range of theoretical lenses had "opened up everything that I do". In departmental meetings, this had meant that whilst she operated at a functional level she was also able to pay attention to "who is saying what and why". Furthermore, she had become more conscious of how different spaces limited what was said and how different actors were influenced to occupy particular positions. This had meant that not only had she increasingly questioned her own practice but also that of people around her. Within an environment which had been subject to high degree of external interference and regulation, one can see how becoming more aware of the role and positions that different people occupy in complying and resisting these demands could be both empowering and disabling and thus disturbing.

Richard talked about the difficulties of balancing teaching and research activities. A few years after completing his PhD part time he successfully made the transition from mainstream teacher education to a more research-oriented position. He saw the difficulty of making this shift as being indicative of the split between staff engaged in research or teaching activities, how there is a trend to specialise in one and how it is unusual to find members of staff with the necessary skills to do both. Interestingly, he had initially joined the institution as an expert practitioner, coinciding with the institution's change of status to a university in the early 1990's he had been encouraged to engage in research. However, sustaining "a foot in each camp" had been challenging and involved considerable determination and effort, leading, he claimed, for many colleagues "to just give up in trying because it is often just not sustainable".

For him, engaging in research however was key in maintaining integrity in being a teacher educator and in developing the distinctive contribution that universities can make to initial teacher training. He saw a crucial difference between research-informed as opposed to research-led teaching, for him the former was a simple expectation of all university level teaching but the latter is where "teaching sessions are deliberately planned to get research data for a particular purpose, research it and share with the students".

Such a process was recognised as crucial for the development of student teacher's subject pedagogy skills. Thus, in his subject-specific sessions he does not try to

replicate primary practice, we try and model good practice, good pedagogy. The two things are not the same so I don't treat my students like they are 10 or 11, or 8 or 9, we talk to them about them and their level, to shift their thinking around one way, the whole point of that is to, recognise parallels between them and their thinking.

For example, his research in equipping student teachers with the necessary skills for teaching profoundly complex skills in is not about getting them to

explain [that] principle or the theory … [it] is not a knowledge thing that we have to simply give to people… what we are trying to say is having

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gone through the learning process yourself, you are much more equipped
to make necessary judgements in context.

In this sense, engaging in the research process, reflecting about their learning transitions, enables them to use these skills to engage with their pupil's ideas, drawing parallel between their students' and their own learning allows them to move learning on in an appropriate manner.

Richard went onto explain how he felt this was the distinctive university contribution to initial teacher training. When compared to practice or school-based models, students are expected to learn from teachers meaning that knowledge is simply replicated and on occasion, poor knowledge can be reproduced again and again. In contrast, university subject pedagogy sessions which are research-led give student teachers the necessary tools to "extend practice and thinking" whilst giving them the confidence to be able to make these decisions in context. In this sense, they are therefore able to adjust their thinking in accordance to what different situations demand.

If we compare this explanation to current staffing models, however, it is possible to recognise some of the present challenges that face the university contribution to initial teacher training and the difficulties in retaining a distinctive contribution. As previously explored, few of the teacher educators that we interviewed were engaged in research whilst current staffing structures are not supportive to such efforts. Moreover, the divide between theory and practice became particularly tangible when viewed in terms of teacher educator activities. However, as Richard recognised, reviewing staffing structures and allocating time to different activities would involve major turbulence and discomfort for not only members of staff on predominantly teaching contacts but also research. Not to mention the possible implications for how the university is judged in terms of teaching or research outputs.

For both Sarah and Richard the level of support received from their institution for engaging in research was a point of contention. In terms of allocated time, Sarah, who was nearing the end of her part-time doctorate, had taken the decision three years ago to take a pay-cut and work four days a week and relieve herself of management duties to enable her to have one day a week to concentrate on her PhD. For her, the personal gains from pursuing her doctorate dwarfed the financial sacrifice. From an institutional perspective, however, where at least for economic reasons such activities make sense, it is hard to reconcile why this move was necessary.

6. Conclusion

Lacan's four discourses allow four locations for analysis to confront the divided subject. The four tutors that we have discussed each position themselves differently as to how they conceptualise the closing of their own divide following their displacement by new teacher education arrangements, where their involvement in, or relation to, research activity locates this analytical process. Their identifications however shift throughout as they variously educate or get educated, govern or get governed, or resist or get resisted. The analytical discourse variously provides a mediator that positivises the gap, an analytical process that ultimately shifts the parameters that define it. Lucy marks a space that she plans to vacate through retirement where student enquiry is a vehicle through which external research might be validated. Sadly, her troubled response does not provide the energy for radical change. Ralph has similarly, closed down the revolutionary space as research is conceptualised as complete, where his continued involvement does not depend on his own transformation except in response to external demands. The gap is masked by the personal cost of complying with these demands. Sarah depicts research as her own analytical process to create a gap for "me time" in the interstices of the multiple

demands that she encounters. Richard meanwhile focuses on his own research to analyse and validate a more enquiry-based approach to his own teaching comprising an attitude to learning where teaching sessions are deliberately planned to get research data for a particular purpose. His own evolving professional identity is more concerned with shifting the parameters of practice so that the edifices of master and university discourses are softened.

The four diverse attitudes to research in teacher education depicted here are consequential to a more turbulent understanding of the universities' contribution to teacher education. Perhaps ultimately the new role of universities is to provide a platform from where both tutors and trainees can critically analyse the issues arising in school practice. This new focus would be on building generic analytical capability that supports learning by the trainees in association with their school-based mentors. The challenge would entail supporting trainees in becoming more independent research-active teachers through building a productive critical relationship between university sessions and their developing practice in school. Here universities would assist trainees in developing practitioner-oriented research and connecting it with the broader body of research knowledge. That is, reflective practice would comprise a creative on-going process of practitioner research that progressively defined the parameters of teaching, whilst negotiating a path through the external demands that trainees will surely encounter. Collaborative, reflexive, practitioner-oriented action research would underpin successive re-conceptualisations of practice towards enhancing trainees' abilities to claim intellectual space in these regulative times. New priorities have shifted teacher education towards schools and may require aspirant teacher educators to remain in schools, or to change their practice to meet the new demands. For some, however, it seems these demands are too great such that it may result in them being changed themselves through retirement.

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