

**TEACHER EDUCATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHER
PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF
STUDENT TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES IN GERMANY, FRANCE AND
ENGLAND**

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DECLARATION

I, Lindsey Waine confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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Lindsey Waine, July 2021.

ABSTRACT

Student teachers today must be equipped with a wide repertoire of skills to meet the challenges of increasingly complex, diverse and inclusive classrooms. At a time when many countries in Europe are facing teacher shortages, it is vital that student teachers develop a strong teacher professional identity. This study examines how student teachers in Germany, France and England construct this identity and provides fresh insights into the powerful influence that the social and cultural context has on teacher education and conceptions of the teacher's role. As such, the study addresses a gap in empirical comparative research looking in depth at student teachers' experiences in these countries.

Professional identity formation is understood as a fluid and dynamic process, developed through events, experiences and interactions and firmly rooted in the historical and sociocultural context. Compelling narratives produced from interviews with student teachers in each of these countries are analysed comparatively to identify key themes. A new, original analytical model is applied that charts student teachers' professional journeys in three distinct but interconnected stages that begin at school and incorporate theoretical and practical elements of teacher education.

The research found that all the participants recognised the didactical and pedagogical skills needed for today's classroom and all prioritised the practicum over academic elements of their programmes. Both structural and perceptual barriers resulted in a disconnection of theory and practice experienced by all participants. Divergences were found in the motives for becoming a teacher and in the intentional use of pre-teacher education experiences as a testing ground for career choice. The recourse to rubrics of competences to assess teaching was common to all participants, however, whilst this constrained the practice of English student teachers, it was perceived very differently in Germany and France. This perception led to significant differences in the level of professional autonomy student teachers expected to have in their future role and how this was reflected in teachers' status in society.

IMPACT STATEMENT

Initial teacher education has been at the top of the education reform agenda for over two decades and equipping student teachers to be effective classroom practitioners is seen as vital for the quality of an education system. This thesis provides fresh insights into the process of becoming a teacher, by eliciting in-depth perceptions of student teachers on the development of their professional teacher identity and how teacher education fosters or hinders this development. It adopts a hitherto underutilised methodology that blends comparative and ethnographic research which has allowed me to give voice to student teachers in Germany, France and England regarding their experiences.

The parameters of this thesis are cross-disciplinary and extend academic knowledge and understanding in the specific fields of comparative education and teacher education. Early findings from the empirical research have already been disseminated to academics in comparative education through presentations and lectures in the UK and in Europe (France, Germany and Scandinavia) and the response indicated the strong impact the full findings will have in the future.

The timing of the research is important because it follows an intensive period of reforms in all three countries and its findings therefore contribute to the ongoing international debate into the connection between teacher education and the quality of teaching and learning in schools. This is highly relevant for the teacher education community, since it opens a wider discourse into the content of the curriculum and the way in which student teachers are supported in their professional identity development. This, in turn, can lead to improvements to teaching and learning within teacher education and to the fostering of shared cross-cultural communication on what student teachers need for their future professional roles, especially the role of theories and making explicit connections with practice.

One key challenge facing education in the three comparison countries is teacher recruitment and teacher attrition or retention and is evidenced in the findings of the OECD's TALIS studies that about a fifth of teachers intend to leave the profession within five years. The results of this research study can provide education policy-

makers in all three countries with direct evidence from the student teacher community that would enable them to enhance recruitment by increasing the attractiveness and status of a career in teaching, by improving the process of teacher preparation. Furthermore, policy-makers would benefit from closer scrutiny and mutual evaluation of other models of teacher education in order to review and hone their own curricula.

Finally, the introduction of teaching standards in the three countries over the past decade have been utilised differently, constraining the professional autonomy of teachers to varying degrees. Since the challenges new teachers face are similar in all cases, it would seem pertinent to co-evaluate the purpose and content of these standards, to ensure that they are fit for purpose and acknowledge the complexity of the teacher's work today. Improving the status of teachers in society by promoting teachers as highly qualified professionals would empower them to practice with an appropriate level of professional autonomy in their day-to-day practice.

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GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS

Concours	The competitive entrance exam to the French civil service
DES	Department for Education and Science
DEUG	Diplôme d'Études Universitaires Générales (primary school teaching qualification (prior to 1989)
DFE	Department for Education
ESPE	Écoles Supérieures du Professorat et de l'Éducation : Higher Education Institutes of Teacher Education
HRK	Hochschulrektorenkonferenz – committee of university rectors
INSPE	Institut National Supérieur du Professorat et de l'Éducation (National Higher Education Institute of Teacher Education)
IUFM	Institut Universitaire de Formation de Maîtres (Teacher Education Institutes from 1989-
KMK	Kultusministerkonferenz (Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education)
MEEF	Master Métiers de l'Enseignement, de l'Éducation et de la Formation (Masters in Education and Training)
MEN	Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale (Ministry of Education)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate in Education
TALIS	Teaching and Learning in Schools
Teacher Education	In this thesis, the term refers to initial or pre-service teacher education, the first teaching qualification for entry to the profession.
LANGUAGE NOTE:	all translations of citations originally in German or French are my own.

CHAPTER 1.

AM I A TEACHER NOW? TEACHER PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

1.1 Common challenges – uncommon responses?

Becoming a teacher in the twenty-first century is not an easy path to tread and the stakes for those entering the teaching profession today are high in all European countries. According to the latest Teaching and Learning in Schools data (OECD, 2018) only 26% of teachers, on average, agree that the profession is valued in society, 25% say they experience stress at work and 15% want to leave the profession within five years. Teachers' performance is increasingly scrutinised, criticised and standardised, as is teacher education, the quality of which has been considered 'deficient' by a number of powerful international organisations (OECD, 2005; European Commission, 2007; see also Werler and Tahirsylaj, 2020). In this context, surely it is pertinent to ask why would anyone choose a career in teaching, when the above statistics suggest that there are clearly huge challenges to be faced?

It is the development and maintenance of a strong teacher professional identity that equips both nascent and experienced teachers with the confidence and competence to cope with these challenges. Yet this strong sense of professional identity is continually buffeted by the demands of increased accountability and centralised monitoring, meeting government-set teaching standards and pupil attainment targets and the compromises required with respect to teachers' professional autonomy as a consequence. The development of teacher professional identity is the focus of this thesis and the focal group is student teachers currently on university-based teacher education programmes in Germany, France and England. Their experiences of becoming a teacher are expressed through the compelling narratives that form the analytical basis for this research study.

Given the many challenges of becoming a teacher, are there particular issues that student teachers in all three countries share? By way of a response to this question, three common challenges will be presented in this section: firstly, the changes to

classroom practice and the complexities of working as a teacher today, secondly, the influence of the PISA studies on education through the introduction of competence-based assessment and lastly, the increased monitoring of teachers' performance by governments, as well as the steady rise in the number of government actions aimed at exercising control over teacher education.

a) Teaching – a complex occupation

Gone are the days when a secondary school teacher was first and foremost a subject expert who used didactical tools to engage pupils in the subject. There has been a paradigm shift in the practice of teachers, which is now less about the mechanisms of teaching and more about pedagogical approaches and pupils' learning. This can be attributed, at least in part, to the more complex pupil demographic in schools, together with international legislation concerning the rights of the child and the emphasis on inclusion and integration (UNCRC, 1989). Thus, today's student teachers must be trained for a far more complex classroom environment and they will be expected to apply an 'increasingly large repertoire' of skills in their role (Mattson et al, 2011), including coping with a growing diversity in the profile of learners. The heterogeneous classroom typically comprises not only a mix of ability levels and learners from different cultures and first languages, but also learners with identified special educational needs. The student teacher therefore needs to be adept at managing this diverse classroom, by learning how to use differentiated and inclusive teaching strategies, and planning for a range of different activities and resources.

The growth in awareness of the role physical and mental wellbeing plays in learning means that there is an emphasis on the pastoral aspect of teaching and consequently, the student teacher will need to be prepared to collaborate with professionals in various roles that support children and young people. Familiarity with a range of different auditable documents and tracking records is, of course, a key part of this professional collaboration. In terms of the general classroom environment, student teachers must also learn to deal with increasing violence and challenging behaviour in the classroom and beyond it (Stephens and Kyriacou, 2005; Kokkinos and Panayiotou, 2004), and endeavour to manage local and national attainment targets and parental

expectations concerning their children's school experience. The improved access of parents to information about schools and understanding of the requirements of the curriculum and expected attainment at each educational stage means that pressure from parents and tacit accountability to them adds to the complexities of the teacher's work and risks compromises to professional autonomy.

“Teaching is full of dilemmas and paradoxes, and students are vulnerable when their expectations for teaching fail to take its complex and contradictory nature into account.” (O'Brien and Schillaci, 2002:25)

The vulnerability referred to in the above citation highlights the important role the teacher education curriculum plays in allowing student teachers to explore the 'complex and contradictory nature' of the teacher's work in an authentic and transparent way that enables them to develop realistic expectations about their future role. This curriculum is heavily influenced by the cultural scripts of the country, including beliefs about the purpose of education, the teacher's role and what it involves, and underpinning ideological concepts about how best to help pupils learn (Watson, 2009). These cultural scripts therefore play a key role in how teachers see themselves, in other words, their teacher professional identity, since this comprises not only the personal elements of individual identity, but also their teacher professionalism – how they approach classroom practice, how they can apply professional knowledge and whether their identity is also contingent upon having a sense of belonging or allegiance to a school or the wider community of practice (Wenger, 1998; Beijaard et al, 2004; Sachs, 2011). These cultural scripts determine how teacher education is organised, which aspects of professional knowledge are taught and how links between theory and practice are fostered. As Robin Alexander summarises: “Culture both drives and is everywhere manifested in what goes on in classrooms.” (2000:266).

The process of becoming a teacher is therefore one of navigating the teacher education curriculum from within the cultural context and achieving synthesis between three key elements: building subject and pedagogical knowledge, developing effective classroom practice and being socialised in the ethos of a school and the broader professional community.

b) PISA and the advent of international competition

The education system of a country and how it performs is no longer solely a national matter, since policy making is influenced to a greater or lesser extent by the wider global economic and political arena. The ramifications of viewing education in a globalised context and the recognition that the quality of education influences economic growth has been accompanied by greater access to data on how well education systems in other countries perform, resulting in a kind of mutual scrutiny. Large scale international comparative studies such as the OECD's triennial Programme of International Student Assessment (PISA) have, unwittingly or deliberately, fostered a culture of educational competitiveness that has, in turn, created a global education league table. Through its international comparative studies, the OECD has become: "an accepted part of the contemporary educational lexicon across the globe" (Martens, 2010:3). The influence of the PISA results on education policymaking can be difficult to judge, since it has to be seen in combination with internal reform drivers and policy priorities which reflect a much longer political trajectory. Suffice it to say that it represents a catalyst in the reform process and that the response of the three comparison countries reflects this.

Wiseman (2013) suggests that policymakers use the results of such international comparative studies as 'soft power', giving them leverage to pursue education reforms, for example, the poor performance of Germany in the inaugural PISA study provoked sweeping reforms that were unprecedented in its history (Ertl, 2006). Although France and England had a more measured or even detached response by comparison, in all cases, PISA was one of several factors that prompted reform to both education generally and teacher education more specifically. It certainly re-focused the policy lens on the outcomes of education and on the performance of teachers and how to monitor their practice. In terms of the effect on classroom practice, a refocussing from the input or curricular content to measuring the output of education via attainment targets was seen as a more reliable way of judging the quality of teaching. In teacher education the measurement of output or outcomes was through the medium of rubrics of competences or teaching standards. These standards also represented one of the ways in which governments sought to exercise greater control

over teacher education. This theme is continued in the next section.

c) Autonomy and accountability: government interference in teacher education

The professional identity of teachers and the professionalism with which they approach their work is predicated on them being granted some level of professional autonomy, which means being trusted to make judgements about how to be and how to act as practitioners, based on knowledge, understanding and skills developed as part of the qualification process (Sachs, 2005; Heilbronn, 2008). It is important to recognise that accountability and autonomy in professional terms are not mutually exclusive. If full professional autonomy is at one end of a continuum between autonomy and accountability, at the opposite end is the requirement that teachers make themselves accountable to different stakeholders, notably governments, employers, parents, and the pupils themselves. Within the context of increasing the scrutiny of teachers' work, the balance has shifted towards greater accountability in all three comparison countries and this inevitably results in a degree of compromise to their professional autonomy.

One key weapon in the armour of the governments in Germany, France and England for monitoring performance and securing improvements to educational attainment is the competence-based assessment of teachers and student teachers, together with tighter quality assurance mechanisms, such as inspections or institutional self-evaluations. There is clear evidence of tighter centralised control in all three comparison countries through the introduction of rubrics of competence statements, called either teaching 'standards' (Germany and England) or teaching 'competences' (France).

A further vehicle used by governments to exercise control over education is the centralised prescription of the school curriculum, since this enables them, concurrently, to set attainment targets at each stage of education. In this respect teacher education has not been overlooked and teacher educators at universities in the three countries are now required to work to a set curriculum, as well as to the teaching standards. As the standards focus on practical competence, this has resulted in an emphasis on the teaching practicum and the rebalancing of the theoretical and

practical elements of the curriculum. This has clear implications for the development of teacher professional identity in student teachers, because their perception of what it means to be a teacher, and their expectations of themselves as future professionals are inevitably conditioned and compromised by the need to demonstrate the competences required for them to become qualified. It may be hard for them to avoid the dissonance between their values, beliefs and tacit theories and the expectations placed on them by stakeholders in education, not least parents, who are also aware of the need for their children to meet the attainment targets that have been set. Student teachers therefore experience what Britzman calls the 'tension between being and becoming' (1991:32).

To summarise, it is in this complex national and international context that student teachers in Germany, France and England begin their journey towards becoming a teacher. They have much in common in terms of the challenges they will face. At a national level, the increased heterogeneity of pupils in the classroom makes it a more complex environment than ever before and one that demands specific professional knowledge and skills in the teacher. Nationally, there is also increased intervention and monitoring by governments, greater accountability and standardisation. Internationally, the work of supra-national organisations such as the OECD have resulted in the development of competence-based assessment in all sectors of education. Comparisons of pupil attainment and individual country reports evaluating the quality of education have been extended to studies of teachers' working conditions, pedagogical practices and sense of value to society (TALIS). How student teachers cope with these challenges is not simply a matter of being confident or gaining sufficient experience, it concerns their very identity as teachers – how they see themselves as professionals and how they approach their practice.

1.2 The purpose of this research study and its location within previous research literature in the field

Teacher professional identity starts its development before student teachers enter formal teacher education and gains momentum during the process of training, as they gain knowledge and understanding of teaching and learning through theory and

practice and hone a conception of what good teaching inheres. For all the commonalities in the current classroom environment, the development of this identity is profoundly influenced by the educational and cultural context in the individual country, including the structure of the school system, the beliefs and values concerning the purpose of education and the perception of the teacher's role and what it involves.

My purpose in undertaking this research study is therefore to investigate the experiences of student teachers through a close-up, comparative lens, in order to discover how the specific cultural and educational context in which they are prepared for their future role as teachers influences the development of their teacher professional identity. I will do so by interviewing student teachers in Germany, France and England and asking them to narrate their professional journey. What motivated them to become teachers and how does their experience of teacher education help them to achieve their goal? Given the shared challenges of the classroom, why are these experiences so different in the three countries? The narratives articulated by student teachers represent data that is 'intensive rather than extensive' (Landman, 2008), 'rich and thick' and contextualised to the cultural scripts of each country (Geertz, 1973). This in-depth and nuanced account of professional teacher identity development within teacher education, solely from the perspective of student teachers, and compared across these three countries, represents a significant gap in existing research literature in the field, as demonstrated below.

Research into professional teacher identity is a relatively new field, having gained attention from the mid-1990s onwards, and there have been both theoretical and empirical studies on the topic. In Anglo-American research, the use of qualitative, empirical methods is well established, however, the empirical tradition in education is more recent in Germany and has been gaining momentum since the first PISA study. The inclusion of France in the study offers an insight into an under-researched country, especially in comparative studies of teacher education.

Among generic texts published in the past fifteen to twenty years, there have been studies of teacher identity and student teacher identity formation (Atkinson, 2004;

Schepens et al, 2009; Sutherland et al, 2010; Trent, 2011), however these have tended to be small scale, one country studies. Although there are both theoretical and empirical studies of teacher professional identity, Schepens et al (ibid) suggest that there is little empirical evidence of the role of *teacher education* in the construction of professional identity. Furthermore, comparative studies on topics related to teacher education are rare, most frequently focusing on a comparison between one of the Scandinavian countries and one other (Czerniawski, 2011; Stephens et al, 2004) and those including France are particularly scarce (exceptions are: Asher & Malet, 1999; Foster, 1999; Pepin, 1999). A review of original language literature on teacher professional identity has confirmed that, in contrast to the UK, France and Germany do not have a long tradition of empirical research in education and empirical studies of teacher education are a more recent phenomenon. Two examples are a study by Danner (2018), who asked student teachers in France to evaluate their teacher education programmes and research by Rothland (2010) comparing student teachers' motivation with those of law and medical students. At the time of writing, However, there have been no comparative studies on the formation of teacher professional identity among student teachers in Germany, France and England and therefore this research study will make an original contribution to an under-researched field.

To summarise, there are two aspects to previous research in this field that are worthy of note: most of the empirical studies have been with teachers, rather than student teachers, and there is a dearth of comparative studies, particularly with student teachers. The three comparison countries feature individually in combination with other countries, however, the question of how student teachers develop their professional identity during their initial teacher education programme, seen through their eyes, in these specific three countries has not been undertaken before. It is of particular interest to me to explore this under-researched area, because as a teacher educator for many years, the question of the role teacher education plays in ensuring that student teachers do not merely become competent professionals but develop a strong teacher identity as a foundation for the challenges ahead has largely remained answered. By taking a comparative approach I will be able to identify the key features that account for the differences in the experiences of student teachers in each country

as they talk about their developing identity and evaluate their teacher education programme and how well they believe it has prepared them for the teaching role. Thus, I will endeavour to “[view] events, actions, norms and values through the eyes of the people being studied” and in line with the cultural scripts determining education in their respective countries (Hantrais, 2009:98).

Germany, France and England offer the educational researcher rich and interesting territories to compare, as they respond individually to national and international pressures to improve the quality of education and seek to reform teacher education. The three countries have adopted very different approaches and have introduced reforms at very different points in recent history. How this has affected the experiences of student teachers in each country is of particular interest for this research study. The cultural scripts referred to above not only inform the teacher education curriculum, but also the pedagogical practices of teachers, their professional status and autonomy, and how much they are valued within their respective societies, which in turn shapes their professional identity. A literature search using ERIC has confirmed that previous comparative studies of teacher education involving Germany, France and England are small in number and generally focus on programme structures, policies or teachers’ practices (see for example: Page, 2015; Pepin, 1999; Norman, 1995). The scarcity of empirical studies that include France as a comparison country makes its inclusion here particularly important. I have therefore identified a gap in the literature in terms of comparative empirical research involving student teachers, specifically in these three countries, which will be addressed by this study.

The clear academic rationale for the selection of countries to compare is complemented by my professional background as a teacher educator in two of the three countries. This professional experience constitutes a valuable additional research tool, because it offers an understanding of the field from the practitioner’s perspective, which I believe will enhance the depth of the research. A high level of proficiency in German and French has given me much wider access to both participants and first language literature than would have been possible were I monolingual, and enriches the study, by providing an indigenous perspective from

authors and researchers in the field.

Comparative education research has the dual purpose of using a wide-angle lens to analyse a topic from an international perspective, but in tandem with this wider view, to provide a sharp focus on each country in the comparison. Landman (2008) proposes that comparisons of a small number of countries benefit from a much deeper analysis within and between countries. Comparative research promotes a greater understanding of other countries and the establishment of 'classifications' of empirical findings that ultimately facilitate predictions of similar outcomes in further countries. As such, it is the most dynamic way of investigating the outcome of interest in the three research countries: the development of teacher professional identity among student teachers. Clearly comparative research is not without its challenges, particularly when it is empirical and involves participants across three countries, however, I believe the benefits outweigh the challenges. In his seminal comparative work on culture and pedagogy, Alexander is convinced that that the rewards of comparative education research are considerable and argues that: "comparison is actually essential to educational progress" (2000:27). Following the logic of Alexander's argument, this in-depth study will compare teacher education across the three countries from the students' perspective, in order to add to the existing discourse on teacher professional identity, so that mutual progress can be made.

1.3 Am I a teacher now? The research question

At the beginning of the chapter, the common challenges of being a teacher today were presented, both in terms of the heterogeneity of the current pupil demographic and increasing control over teachers' work by governments. The anchor provided by developing a firm sense of teacher professional identity was proposed as a critical factor in being able to face these challenges. Given the commonalities, I will ask to what extent student teachers' experiences of initial teacher education in the three comparison countries equip them with a strong sense of teacher identity. More specifically, what roles do the content and organisation of the programmes, theoretical and practical, and the support available for student teachers, contribute to the development of their professional teacher identity in each country? The content

of the curriculum and how it is structured places under the spotlight the balance of theoretical and practical knowledge and the organisation of practicum experiences, as well as the academics and school mentors and their dual (and sometimes conflictual) role as supporting tutors and assessors of student teachers.

The key research question is therefore:

To what extent do student teachers develop a teacher professional identity during their teacher education studies and what are the specific aspects of the programme that contribute to this development?

In order to answer the research question, the following aspects will be studied:

1. **Context:** What is the role and status (including location and qualification level) of teacher education in each country?
2. **Content:** who or what influences the content of the teacher education curriculum, especially the balance between the theoretical and practical elements?
3. **Connection:** to what extent do student teachers connect theory and practice during their studies?
4. **Comparison:** what are the similarities and differences in the experiences of teacher education among student teachers in the three comparison countries and what factors might account for these?

If it is true that: “what teachers and students do in classrooms both reflects and enacts the values of the wider society” (Alexander, 2001:511), adopting a comparative approach to the research question will elicit the differences in student teachers’ experiences that reflect these wider values – a product of the historical, cultural and ideological legacy of each country – and how these societal values influence the sense of teacher professional identity as it develops during initial teacher education.

1.4 Summary: convergence or divergence in the comparison countries?

It has been established that there are commonalities between the three countries in the challenges teachers face in the classroom and beyond. The brief contextualisation above has also indicated that there is some convergence with respect to greater state control of teachers' work and the consequences for professional autonomy.

The comparison countries diverge in the way that their education systems are structured, the values and ideological foundations of education and the socio-historical factors and how these build the cultural scripts that influence teacher education. In many areas, the three comparison countries can be placed on a spectrum. For example, France operates a wholly secular comprehensive education system, whereas Germany maintains selective secondary education. England can be located somewhere between the two, with both comprehensive and selective schools and a plethora of different school types. France and Germany have enjoyed extended periods of stability in education historically and have been resistant to reform. Both have relatively unified models of initial teacher education, which is located in the universities or higher education institutions. England has had a more chequered past, reforming teacher education earlier than the others and having a much more fragmented system of initial teacher education, with universities offering only one route into teaching.

The title of this introductory chapter suggests that the three comparison countries do not have common responses to the common challenges outlined above. For student teachers, how this response influences the teacher education curriculum is key to the development of their teacher professional identity. The professional identity of future teachers is shaped by initial teacher education, in as far as it imbues a sense of what it means to be a teacher and how nascent teachers should approach their work. The extent to which they will be able to work as autonomous professionals or be subject to centralised, normative prescriptions of their work and judgements of their competence is of key interest in this study. If the professional identity of teachers can be defined as "how teachers see themselves and their work", this will be determined

in part by the role initial teacher education plays in nurturing a strong professional teacher identity, and in part by “historically and culturally informed constructions” and how these are interpreted by policy makers (Menter, 2010:29).

The following chapter will explore these ‘constructions’ and how they play out in terms of teacher education, by offering a detailed exploration of the context of teacher education in Germany, France and England. This contextualisation will provide important background information to the narratives of student teachers who participated in this study and is therefore essential to understanding and analysing their narratives in context, and how this in turn influences the development of their teacher professional identity.

1.5 Organisation of the thesis

This introductory chapter is the first of nine chapters. Chapter Two provides a detailed contextualisation of the education systems in Germany, France and England in terms of the historical development of schools and the institutional setting, organisation and curriculum of initial teacher education. It also reviews the wider community of practice and the policy initiatives driving reform. This will not be followed by a literature review chapter in the traditional sense, as is often customary, for two reasons. Firstly, any pertinent literature covers many different themes from several chapters and is published in three languages, which would result in a long and unwieldy chapter and secondly, the gap already identified in the research area means that there is no literature on many aspects of this topic. My alternative strategy is therefore to preface each chapter by referring to the relevant literature from the three comparison countries Chapter Three examines the different theories of identity, personal and professional, and establishes the epistemological framework in which this empirical study locates itself. The central focus will be on professional identity as it relates to teachers and the role of teacher education in the development of this identity.

Chapter Four sets out the comparative and empirical research methods and the reasons for their selection. It positions the research within the comparative paradigm and blends the comparative contrast method with an analysis of interview texts. The

rationale for this decision is explored in the context of the role of interview narratives in researching the experiences of participants. The following four chapters are dedicated to an analysis of the data and a presentation of the findings. This analytical section begins with an introductory chapter that presents the analytical tool to be used, which is a model I have designed to examine in depth the formation of teacher professional identity in three distinct phases: emergent, evolving and epistemic. Within each phase, interview data from participants in each of the three comparison countries is analysed and the results presented in a way that highlights key differences and seeks explanations for unexpected findings. The final chapter concludes the research study by synthesising and summarising the research findings, as well as evaluating the research process and reflecting on what challenges this presented and how these were overcome. The implications of the research findings for all the actors and stakeholders: future student teachers, teacher educators and policymakers are explored, and recommendations offered. Finally, the contribution of this research to the field of comparative education and suggestions for future research projects are outlined.

CHAPTER 2.

HETEROGENEITY OR HOMOGENEITY? A CONTEXTUALISATION OF INITIALTEACHER EDUCATION IN GERMANY, FRANCE AND ENGLAND.

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research study is to conduct an in-depth exploration of initial teacher education in Germany, France and England, through the eyes of student teachers and their narration of first-hand experiences of teacher education. An analysis of these narratives will highlight the effectiveness of different models of initial teacher education in promoting a strong sense of teacher identity. It has already been established that there is common ground for student teachers in terms of the challenges they will face in today's classroom, including the diversity of learners, the need to practise differentiation, to embrace inclusive practice and handle difficult behaviour. Now, more than ever, teacher education is tasked with producing new teachers who are confident in their identity as teachers and who are well equipped to face up to these challenges.

In Chapter 1, a clear link was made between teacher professional identity and the cultural scripts of the country in which teachers work. It was shown that this identity is not simply occupational, but reflects the wider education context and culture in which student teachers have grown up and the value they believe their society places on education and the teaching community, resulting in: "culturally embedded archetypes of teaching, which influence their (student teachers') construction of personal identities around teaching" (Furlong, 2013:70). These cultural scripts are also of importance to initial teacher education because they reflect the dominant discourses of teaching and learning, particularly the tension between traditional, knowledge transmission approaches and newer pedagogical approaches that emphasise the importance of the relationship between teacher and pupils and the use of learner-centred teaching methods.

The concept of teacher professional identity has been captured succinctly by Sachs

(2005) as comprising 'how to be, how to act and how to understand'. For teacher educators, this speaks to the development of this identity in student teachers by providing appropriate practical experiences that offer genuine insight into the work of a teacher, and connecting it with the relevant underpinning theoretical knowledge that informs this work. This chapter will explain how theory and practice are organised in the teacher education curriculum in each country, the importance attributed to each aspect, and how they are assessed.

Lastly, teachers and their work cannot be divorced from the social and political climate that influences their professional practice. Reforms to both education generally, and teacher education more specifically, have accelerated since 2000 in all three comparison countries, resulting in tighter governmental control and a growing belief that standardising teachers' work through rubrics of competences will ensure improved quality. The focus of the chapter will therefore be on the post-2000 period and the reforms to teacher education during this time.

This chapter will review each comparison country in turn, beginning with a brief summary of teacher education leading up to 2000 and the drivers of the reform. It will then offer an in-depth account of the elements of initial teacher education that should foster the development of professional identity, namely, the institutional location of teacher education, the taught curriculum and the place of theory, the role of the practicum and the assessment of student teachers.

2.2 Germany

2.2.1 Teacher education before 2000: stability and the reform gridlock

The trajectory of teacher education in Germany has been one of stability, weathering the vagaries of history, including the turbulence of two world wars, the division of Germany in 1949 and reunification in 1990. By the outbreak of the Second World War, the German school system was already well established, consisting of a four-year primary phase and a tripartite organisation of lower secondary schooling. At the point of division, and again at reunification, there had been an opportunity to overhaul the

whole education system. The responsibility for education and culture had been devolved to the federal states, however, the established system endured. Federal autonomy extended to the school curriculum, assessment patterns and duration of study. The universities enjoyed considerable autonomy in how they organised their curricula, including teacher education (Viebahn,2003; Keuffer, 2010).

The organisation of teacher education reflected the school system, with grammar school teachers trained at universities, with a heavy emphasis on subject knowledge, and teachers for other types of schools trained at Higher Education Institutes of Teacher Education (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*). Between 1960 and 1990 these institutes were integrated into the universities in all federal states except the south-western state of Baden-Württemberg, where they have been retained to the present day. Despite this overall stability, the federal system compounded some of the problems that existed in teacher education until 2000. It produced a plethora of different models of teacher education, meaning that the lack of equivalence in the curriculum became an obstacle to the mobility of teachers, since some states refused to accept teachers trained elsewhere.

“Not only does each state have its own structures, but furthermore, each university organises teacher education in its own way.” Keuffer (2010:55)

Although there existed what Keuffer (2010) calls a ‘*Flickenteppich*’ (patchwork) of models of teacher education within and between the federal states, one consistent feature has been the division of teacher preparation into two distinct phases. The first phase is located at a university and comprises the study of two subject disciplines, the didactics of these subjects, and courses in education science, including pedagogy. The second phase (*Referendariat*) was introduced in 1972 and is located at a centre managed by the local education authority and taught by experienced teachers rather than academics, and offers a more practically-oriented training of between 18 months and two years. Thus, the German model of teacher education was traditionally considered as a consecutive one, whereby academic study is followed by largely school-based training. At the end of each phase students sit a national examination (*Staatsexamen*) and are then qualified to teach.

By 2000, criticisms of the existing system of teacher education were mounting and the 'reform bottleneck' (*Reformstau*) was to be unblocked. The Standing Conference of University Rectors (*Hochschulrektorenkonferenz*) had previously stated that teacher education was both 'useful' and 'problematic'. The latter refers to two key problems: the lack of cohesion between university courses and between the first and second phase, and the long duration of university study (Ostinelli, 2009). University study typically lasted six or seven years, however, the structure of teacher education meant that student teachers were enrolled in a number of different university departments concurrently and coordinating a timetable with all the required courses was a complex affair. The lack of cohesion and communication between departments resulted in an overloaded system and there were calls for a better integrated teacher education curriculum (Oelkers, 2004). Furthermore, the prioritising of the subject disciplines over the education sciences meant that student teachers were unable to connect theory and practice and experienced a 'Praxisschock' (practice shock) when they eventually stepped into a classroom (Sander, 1995; Jones, 2000). Blömeke defines this abdication of responsibility by universities towards creating a workable system organised irresponsibility' (2006:321).

One outcome of the duration of university study and the requirement to study subject didactics and education science alongside the subject disciplines was that students considering teaching were effectively forced into an early career decision. This in turn resulted in a high dropout rate, at a time when teacher recruitment was a priority (Mause, 2013).

2.2.2 PISA and Bologna: the final pieces of the reform puzzle

At a time when internal criticisms had been gaining momentum, two external events tipped the scales in hastening major structural reforms to teacher education in Germany: the signing of the Bologna Agreement in 1999, followed a year later by the first international study of secondary students' performance to be carried out by the OECD – the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). The objective of Bologna was to create a unified European Education Area by standardising the levels and duration of university programmes, in order to increase student mobility and

foster cooperation between higher education institutions across Europe. This proved to be a considerable challenge for Germany, where universities operated largely autonomously and for whom the notion of delineated undergraduate and postgraduate study was anathema (Ash, 2006; Blömeke, 2004; Keuffer, 2010). A transition period of ten years was agreed by the Standing Conference of Education Ministers (KMK), however progress was slow and ultimately it was the threat of a reduction or withdrawal of central funding that forced compliance (Blömeke, 2006).

The modularised structure of Bachelor and Masters programmes were introduced in all but one federal state by 2010, however, there was still diversity in the way the curriculum was organised. The State regulates entry to the profession for doctors, lawyers and teachers via the State Examination (*Staatsexamen*), since these confer civil servant status. As such, the associated university disciplines of medicine, law and teacher education were exempted from using the new qualification titles, the outcome of which was that six federal states retained the old State Examination title and the others renamed their qualifications, with student teachers being awarded a Masters in Education at the end of their studies.

The cultural script in Germany affords academic study a high value and the perception of the Germans, and other nationalities, was that it was a country with a long tradition of academic excellence:

“The country that prided itself on its education system, on its contribution to Western science and philosophy – that had produced Einstein, Goethe and Marx[-] had always tacitly assumed that they led the world in education.” (Wiseman, 2013:2)

This attitude explains the humiliation that Germany experienced as a result of the poor performance when the results of the inaugural PISA study were published in 2001. This brutal challenge to the infallibility of their education system led to the expression ‘PISA shock’ entering common parlance (Martens and Niemann, 2013; Waldow, 2009). The impact of PISA was an immediate review of how the school curriculum is organised, teachers’ professional practice and how new teachers are trained. For

schools, the Klieme Report (2003)¹ prompted the introduction of national standards for achievement throughout secondary education, agreed by the sixteen federal states, ratified by the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education in 2008 (KMK, 2008). Teachers would be responsible for ensuring pupils met these new standards and by implication, teacher educators needed to train a new generation of teachers to operate in this new outcome-driven education culture:

“The paradigmatic shift from input to outcome orientation which is at the heart of the reforms in Germany, continues to be a challenge to the entire system [-] German Higher Education is currently undergoing the largest structural reform process in decades. It is a defining character of each process that the only constant variable is constant change.” (Bienefeld, 2008:6-7)

The Federal Ministry for Education and Research produced a report on teacher education, in which it identified a number of key areas for improvement including optimisation of the structure of teacher education during the university phase, improvement of the connection between theory and practice, the development of professional knowledge and the mutual recognition of teaching qualifications across the federal states to promote greater teacher mobility. The next section focuses on teacher education in the wake of the reforms, exploring the academic curriculum, the practicum and how student teachers are assessed.

2.2.3 The Education Sciences and the teacher education curriculum

In order to understand why the academic tradition in Germany has been so strong and why the teaching of theory in teacher education occupies such a dominant place, it is important to explain how education has remained anchored in the philosophical notion of *Bildung*. Growing out of liberal humanist philosophy, *Bildung* considers learning as “the process of unfolding individuality by learning” (Hopmann, 2007:115) and emphasises the importance of critical thinking and interpreting knowledge, implicitly linked to the hermeneutic tradition. In teacher education this suggests there

¹ Eckehard Klieme, a renowned education expert, chaired a committee of experts, commissioned by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research.

is an emphasis on self-reflection and the application of knowledge to practice, in order to produce an autonomous professional:

“*Bildung* indicates something positive that transcends mere utility [-] it signifies the ideal of the autonomous, self-determined, and self-reflected personality in its full realization” (Horlacher, 2016:1).

It is against this backdrop that the field of education science gradually developed early in the 20th century, separating itself from other social sciences; yet despite the clear link to the practice of teaching and learning, Schriewer (2017) suggests the academic discipline struggled with the concept of connecting theory and practice. He explains that the reference to past educators and their work constituted a type of academic ‘naval gazing’ by those in the field, resulting in the absence of empirical educational research before the 1990s:

“These lines of thinking ended up, then, in a largely self-centred and field-specific theoretical orientation, whose historic-cum-reflective style of theorising and overload of epistemological justifications were to be characteristic of the dominant discourse in German educational theory up to the recent past” (ibid,p.85).

The quest for answers to Germany’s poor performance in PISA 2000 and mounting dissatisfaction with the status quo of the education system saw a sharp rise in the number of empirical studies focused on teaching and learning and on the quality of teacher education (see for example: Krüger, 2010; Rothland, 2010; Treptow, 2006; Ulich, 2004). The perceptions of student teachers on the usefulness of the education science elements of their university programme will be explored closely in Chapter 8 on Epistemic Identity.

In addition to education science, student teachers must also take courses in didactics, which is wholly related to the subjects they intend to teach – two subjects are the norm for most types of secondary school in most states. The German term is *Fachdidaktik*, which highlights that it is always connected to a specific subject and is taught by academics from the discipline. It connects knowledge of the subject to the school curriculum and concerns the content of the lesson and the learning goals to be achieved. Although the traditional approach to didactics has tended towards the theoretical, a review of the most recent publications in Germany indicates that there is a shift towards the application of didactical approaches in heterogeneous and

inclusive classrooms (see, for example: Rödel, 2020; Brodesser et al, 2020; Patzer et al, 2020). This new focus of research occurs at the same time as literature evaluating the practicum and those responsible for supporting and mentoring student teachers. The practicum is the focus of attention in the next section.

2.2.4 The practicum – connecting knowledge with the real world

The delineation of teacher education into two distinct phases and the clear practical orientation of the second, post-university phase has meant that the development of classroom skills during the first phase has been neglected historically and time allocated to any sort of practicum somewhat brief. It has been seen that student teachers take courses in many different university departments, making organising their studies a complex, incohesive process and the pressure of a modular system with more frequent examinations detracts from the practical, professional skills they need to develop, and hinders them making effective connections between theory and practice. It is not surprising, therefore that student teachers have valued the second phase more highly than the university phase, because the focus has direct relevance for their future profession (Terhart, 2004).

In the past five years progress has been made in creating a better balance between the theory and practice elements of the teacher education curriculum in two respects. Firstly, in all federal states the main practicum has been extended to a full semester and moved to the Masters phase of the programme. This longer practicum is supported with accompanying modules at the university, designed to prepare student teachers for the classroom and support practical skills of lesson planning, choice of teaching methods and use of resources. There are additional, earlier practical experiences in the school, although there are variations in the name and timing of these among the federal states. The *Orientierungspraktikum* (orientation practicum) is common during the undergraduate phase, lasting about a month and giving would-be teachers experience of the school environment by observing teachers in the classroom. The purpose of this practicum is also to help students ascertain whether teaching is the right career choice. In some states (Nord-Rhein-Westfalen for example) there is a *Eignungspraktikum* (suitability practicum) to be completed before studies

begin, in order to test motivation towards becoming a teacher, and later on a *Berufsfeldpraktikum* (professional practicum) to gain experience of other agencies working with teachers, such as social workers or youth workers. In many states, the combination of the urgency of recruitment to fill shortages in the teaching workforce and the extended practicum during the university phase has resulted in the second phase being shortened from two years to 18 months or even shorter.

A review of recent literature indicates that the effectiveness of the extended practicum and how it is supported has become one focal point for empirical research (see for example the study edited by Rheinländer and Scholl, 2020, on the relationship between theory and practice in the extended practicum). In 2015, Gröschner et al identified a lack of research into the role of the university supervising tutor in supporting student teachers on practicum, in contrast to that of the school-based mentor. A recent study commissioned by the BMBF (National Ministry for Education Research) is one of the first to consider all those supporting the practicum and how professional learning is promoted, including the role of peer-to-peer evaluation of teaching (Hesse and Lütgert, 2020).

The practicum experience and student teachers' accounts of the support they receive and how effectively they connect theory and practice will be discussed in detail in Chapter 7, on the evolving identity.

2.2.5 Assessment: state examinations and teaching standards

The State regulates examinations for teachers, since they are civil servants and are afforded generous, lifelong packages of private health care and pensions. These examinations take place at the end of each phase of teacher education. Although they represent the ultimate goal for student teachers, they are assessed during the university phase by a combination of written assignments, oral examinations and observations of their teaching practice.

One major outcome of education policy in the years immediately following the first PISA study was the shift to a competence-based model of teacher education, as well as the introduction of quality assurance mechanisms in the education system as a whole.

Grek (2009: 30) summarises the changes implemented in the German response to PISA:

“School inspections, self-evaluations, assessment tests and teacher professionalization have turned the German education system into a peculiar mixture of centralisation and decentralisation.”

In so far as ‘teacher professionalization’ is integral to teacher education, the decentralisation to which Grek refers is reflected in the autonomy university academics retain for the content and assessment criteria of their modular programmes, however, it is the State that prescribes the standards for assessing teaching competence. In December 2004 the education ministers of the sixteen federal states passed a resolution which saw the introduction of a rubric of eleven competences², organised as a hierarchy and to be achieved over the whole period of teacher education (KMK, 2004). These standards adhered to the fundamental principles of *Bildung* and were grouped in four key areas, each setting out both the underpinning theory and the associated practical skills: teaching and learning, assessment and innovation, and moral and social education. The inclusion of the theory connected to each skill reinforces the belief that student teachers should be equipped with professional knowledge and understanding, in order to inform their classroom practice. In 2008 a further resolution introduced a centralised curriculum for the discipline of education Science.

In many respects the use of competence-based assessment in teacher education is countercultural in terms of the individual student and the academic freedom associated with *Bildung*. The introduction of the teaching standards is therefore seen as a milestone in teacher education:

“The development and implementation of standards for teacher education [-] is one of the most remarkable reforms of teacher education in Germany” (Kotthoff and Terhart, 2013:6).

² Standards für die Lehrerbildung, Kultusministerkonferenz 16.12.2004.

2.2.6 Summary of key issues

The external catalysts of Bologna and PISA triggered educational reforms that moved at unprecedented speed in a country known for its 'reform gridlock'. Returning to the question of heterogeneity or homogeneity, it could be argued that compliance with the standardisation of university qualifications required by Bologna has resulted in a more homogeneous higher education sector. Similarly, the introduction of teaching standards means that student teachers across Germany are assessed against these same competences.

Certainly, university academics are afforded a high status in German society and mobilise themselves to be a strong, critical voice through the Conference of German University Rectors (HRK)³ and the Professional Association of Higher Education Lecturers⁴. There has been criticism from academics and students alike to the new two-tier framework of teacher education, which has resulted in an increased workload and the added stress of frequent exams in the new modular structure, rather than one summative exam at the end of studies, as previously. The lack of cohesion across the country in terms of the teacher education curriculum persists, including the practicum. A 2015 study of teacher education in twelve universities found that the purpose, number and duration of practica varied across these universities, together with diversity in the frequency of observations by the supporting university tutor (Gröschner et al, 2015).

Some progress has been made in improving coordination between the two institutions responsible for the first and second phases of teacher education. *Zentren für Lehrerbildung* (Centres for Teacher Education) have been established in universities across the sixteen federal states, with the purpose of facilitating improved communication between universities and local authority teacher training centres. Although this improves the experience of student teachers within their university, these Centres for Teacher Education operate independently of one another, even at

³ Hochschulrektorenkonferenz.

⁴ Hochschullehrerverband.

state level, through working groups.

In a comprehensive review of the issues faced by teacher education in the light of the recent reforms, Kersten Reich (2014) has identified the areas in which teacher education must progress from traditional to contemporary practice and makes a number of recommendations. Firstly, it must emphasise practice and the rift between theory and practice must be removed; secondly, learning how to build a positive relationship with pupils must stand alongside the learning of subject content, using teaching strategies to reflect the diversity of learning situations. Thirdly, individual teaching and learning should be more closely linked to team working, so that where there is a lack of resources, this can be balanced out with input and creativity. Lastly, learners at all levels should participate much earlier in the selection of targets, content and methods, as well as in evaluating teaching and learning. There are signs that things are changing. Student teachers today have a very different experience from their predecessors and face the challenges of teaching in heterogeneous and inclusive classrooms with more practical experience and skills than before and a better chance of connecting theory and practice. Nevertheless, the model of teacher education in Germany remains one of heterogeneity and the encouragement for student teachers to develop a strong professional identity will inevitably vary from one university to another.

In the next section, it will be shown that France, like Germany, has had a very stable education system, however, the reasons for this stability and the catalysts for the reform process contrast with those of its near neighbour.

2.3 France

2.3.1 Teacher Education before 2000 – divided identity

Where the German education system has evolved according to the philosophical foundations of *Bildung*, education in France has long been rooted in Republican values and the concept of *laïcité*⁵. This secular identity for the French education system was established in 1909, although it was not until the Haby Law in 1975 that a single, comprehensive lower secondary school for all was introduced.

Teacher education was organised as a dual system, between two institutions that reflected the clear division in professional identity between primary and secondary teachers, which Hollyoake describes as “self-enclosed and self-perpetuating” (1993:218). The former were known as ‘*instituteurs*’ and were trained at ‘*Ecoles Normales*’, drawing students from all sectors of society and developing a strong sense of teacher identity. The duration of study was two years and students were awarded a diploma (DEUG). In the secondary sector teachers were called ‘*professeurs*’ and were university graduates in one discipline. In this sector professional identity was firmly anchored in the transmission of academic knowledge. Pedagogic practices in schools mirrored this traditional approach and were “essentially authoritarian, restrictive and repressive” (Troger and Ruano-Borbalan, 2019:43). Although teacher education has been influenced by various pedagogic movements since the end of the nineteenth century that advocated a more radical approach to pedagogy, there are currently still many teachers who resist such new approaches:

“the inertia of the system and the resolute opposition by one section of teachers until now have blocked the dissemination of a new, consensual pedagogic model” (ibid. p55-56).

The first wave of reforms affecting teacher education were introduced in 1989 and were to change the professional identity of the different members of the teaching community significantly. By this point the socialist government had set itself the

⁵ *Laïcité* refers to the idea that educators are lay people and therefore not connected with the Church.

ambitious goal of increasing the number of students progressing from lower to upper secondary school and taking the school leaving examination⁶ to 80% of the student population. The subsequent increase in student numbers staying at school meant that in order to achieve this goal, it was imperative to boost recruitment to the teaching profession.

The 1989 Loi d'Orientation passed by the government of Lionel Jospin established new higher education institutions called IUFMs⁷ (University Institutes of Teacher Education) at which teachers for both primary and secondary sectors would be trained together, under the motto 'recruit more, train better' (Cornu, 2015) The specific aim of the reforms was to increase recruitment and improve the quality of teaching in schools. Furthermore, '*instituteurs*' were re-named '*professeurs des écoles*'⁸ and would enjoy equal status and remuneration with secondary teachers. Following the piloting of the new institutions in three regions, the new system was introduced nationally for the start of the 1991/92 academic year.

The traditional division between the pedagogical approaches of primary schools and the academic, subject-focused stance of secondary schools was also targeted for change:

"A new objective was also highlighted: namely to provide equal standards of quality for both academic and professional training for primary and secondary school teachers." (Bonnet, 1996: 251)

This objective was expressed emphatically by Bancel, the Minister for Education, who said that teacher education must offer would-be teachers:

"solid, university-level academic knowledge [-]and competencies that truly correspond to the concrete activities of teachers that they will adopt." (Lapostolle et al, 2007:386)

The IUFMs were autonomous institutions with university status, although required to comply with the guidelines set by the Minister for Higher Education. General

⁶ The school leaving examination in France is the 'Baccalauréat'.

⁷ IUFM Institut Universitaire de Formation de Maitres.

⁸ Primary school teacher.

pedagogical training was to be a shared experience for students training for both school sectors, whilst subject didactics for secondary student teachers was taught separately. Even if this shared part amounted to no more than 10% of the programme, both sectors felt that they had effectively lost some of their previous professional identity and Bancel's goal of establishing a common professional culture for all teachers was thwarted at the outset. Asher and Malet (1996) refer to a history of 'latent anti-pedagogism' in French secondary education and the consequent tension that remained between the two educational cultures:

“The principle of a common identity across the whole of the teaching profession was impossible and unthinkable in view of the different natures and functions of the two sectors.” (p.276)

2.3.2 Bologna and PISA: a mixed reception

In her empirical study of four countries' responses to international influences such as Bologna, Caena says that the response constitutes either 'compliance for uniformity' or 'resistance for local autonomy' (2014: 107). Any immediate effect of the Bologna process on teacher education in France is not evident, possibly because it followed only ten years after the radical and far-reaching reforms of teacher education in 1989, as explained above. Whilst there was no evidence of 'compliance for uniformity' there was one key issue concerning teaching qualifications that remained unresolved, namely that the five-year duration of teacher education was only rewarded with a Bachelor level qualification. In 2008, therefore, the two years at the IUFM were redesignated at Masters level, with the new qualification MEEF (Masters in Education and Training) ensuring that all new teachers, primary and secondary, were educated to Masters level. This had important implications for student teachers, since the French constitution ensures that undergraduate study is free, however, postgraduate study involves tuition fees that must be sourced by the individual. Some consolation is offered by the fact that student teachers receive some remuneration for their practicum in the second year of the MEEF, similar to German student teachers during the second phase of teacher education.

France has had what Dobbins and Martens (2012) term a 'rocky relationship' with international comparative studies such as PISA and has been one of the most critical

and sceptical of the participating countries of the results. It is pertinent to teacher education that in 1994, prior to the first PISA study in 2000, the French government commissioned the OECD to review its education system. One area of classroom practice targeted for criticism was the lack of individuality in teaching and pedagogical methods. This suggests that four years after the unified teacher education institutions were established, there was still some way to go in terms of shedding the historical mantle of teacher-led exposition of knowledge, in favour of a more differentiated and relational approach to learners and learning. France's performance in PISA declined after the first study and in 2009 was still below the OECD average. Pupils participating in the study also gave a poor evaluation of the quality of teaching they had received.

Although Bologna and PISA had some similar outcomes in France as they had in Germany, one outcome of the poor performance in PISA was a renewed attention to improving the quality of teaching in schools. This placed teacher education in the spotlight once again and teacher educators were expected to ensure that student teachers became well-qualified and competent teachers. In the next two sections, the university teacher education curriculum will be explored, beginning with the taught academic modules and then reviewing the effectiveness of the practicum.

2.3.3 The academic curriculum and the tension between subject and pedagogical knowledge

It has been shown that the content of the teacher education curriculum was the subject of some tension initially, between the traditional pre-eminence of subject knowledge for secondary teachers and the more pedagogical approaches within primary teacher education. The vision for the IUFM was to teach general pedagogy at joint sessions between student teachers of both sectors and to teach subject knowledge separately. This integration of subject discipline and more learner-centred approaches ran contrary to the traditional model of the secondary teacher as 'maître' (master), whose role was to pass on expert knowledge of the subject. Academics and secondary school teachers protested about being required to study pedagogy and consider the relational side of teaching, which they felt was detrimental to their academic reputation. Malet describes this difficult transition to a more integrated

teacher education curriculum:

“This integration cannot be taken for granted, especially as the culture within secondary education is hardly predisposed to let subject knowledge be diluted in knowledge that integrates disciplinary knowledge and pedagogical competence.” (2008:96)

The discipline of the education sciences as a field in its own right, divorced from other social or human sciences, had gradually established itself from the late 1960s, but the connection to the practice of education professionals was resisted and it was detached from initial teacher education, “focusing instead on the pursuit of an autonomous academic field based on scientific research” (Malet, 2017:67).

In 2014 new institutions were created, called ESPE⁹- Higher Education Institutes for teaching and education. Despite their location in universities, the chance to give a greater role to faculties of Education in Teacher Education programmes did not materialise.

The current teacher education curriculum for secondary school teachers demonstrates that study of the subject discipline dominates the M1 year, with a combination of pure subject knowledge and didactics related to how the subject can be taught in schools. In addition, there is some teaching on the values associated with the education system and some pedagogy of the process of learning and the diversity of pupils. Although there are some variations, this part of the programme is generally called ‘professional contextualisation’ and also includes Republican values and principles of education, safeguarding, legal responsibilities of the teacher, and authority and behaviour policies. This weighting in favour of the subject discipline can be explained by the need to prepare student teachers for the competitive examination, which is currently taken at the end of the M1 year (see the section on assessment below.) The M2 year comprises a more integrated approach to subject knowledge, didactics, research methods and practice. The criticism that theory and practice are disconnected in teacher education that has already been identified in Germany, is equally in evidence in France. Together with the lack of differentiation in

⁹ Écoles Supérieures du Professorat et de l’Éducation.

the classroom by French teachers, Collas (2014) criticised teacher education for producing trainee teachers who were 'more expert in theory than in practice' (cited in Page, 2015:195). The next section will investigate the evidence for this claim, by explaining how the practicum is organised and the role of those tasked with supporting it.

2.3.4 The practicum

The ethos and purpose of the practicum in teacher education in France sets it apart from its near neighbours in Europe. The demands of the competitive examination in the M1 year means that there is little time devoted to practical classroom experience. There is a short practicum of about 30 hours, intended to introduce student teachers to the classroom environment and the work of the teacher, similar in length and purpose to the Orientation Practicum in Germany. It generally takes the form of observation, however, there may be some opportunity to take part of a lesson or assist with a group of pupils within the lesson. This will depend on the confidence of the student teacher and the willingness of the class teacher to encourage the active participation of the student.

In the M2 year, the status of the student teachers plays a key role in how the practicum functions. This is a year-long practicum, in which the student teacher spends half of the week at school and half continuing his or her university studies. Those who have passed the competitive examination for entry into the civil service are known as 'training teachers' (*professeurs stagiaires*) or 'trainee civil servants' (*fonctionnaires stagiaires*) and have full responsibility for the class they are teaching. They are supported by a cooperating teacher in the school, who is an experienced teacher of their subject. They are also accompanied by a university tutor who carries out formal observations of their teaching, measured against a rubric of competences, and prepares them for the visit of the inspector who examines their practice at the end of the year.

The dual partnership between the university tutor and the cooperating teacher has often been a source of tension, in what Page terms a 'clash of cultures' (2015) resulting in 43% of student teachers expressing that their training did not meet their

needs. Escalié and Chaliès insist that even if the two do not agree, they must endeavour to 'share a common teaching culture' so as to provide effective support for the student teacher (2016:314). In order to facilitate a better connection between theory and practice they advocate moving away from the common reflexive questioning approach to discussing the student's practice, in favour of a more direct style of mentoring from both sides. This would involve establishing together a rule related to classroom practice that would represent a focal point for the student teacher at any given time, and then providing an explanation of why and how it should be approached, and then observe the student teacher putting this into practice.

Malet considers the role of those responsible for supporting the practicum to be mediators between the student teacher and the working culture of the teacher and questions the traditional approach to teaching theory, when the heterogeneous demographic of pupils means teacher education should prioritise:

“pupil-teacher interaction, discursive lessons and learning teaching methods that promote the construction of knowledge by pupils” (2008:95).

Assessment of the professional skills observable during the practicum is by means of a rubric of competences. In the next section the reasons for the introduction of competence-based assessment will be discussed, together with a review of how all aspects of the MEEF are assessed.

2.3.5 Assessment in teacher education and the enduring battle over the Concours

Two key issues to be resolved in education in France is public lack of confidence in schools and the difficulties of recruiting new teachers. In 2012 the newly elected government of François Hollande sought to address these issues by promising 40,000 new teachers and creating a new teacher education institution to replace the heavily criticised IUFM. In each education district (Académie) the new ESPE was located within the universities and tasked with training highly qualified teachers. The notion of competence-based assessment, first introduced by Daniel Bancel, former Education Minister in the Jospin government (1988-1991), was crystallised in the form of fourteen professional competences, accompanied by a national framework for the

MEEF qualification. According to Bancel, the role of teacher education should be to equip future teachers with:

“solid university knowledge [-] and competences that actually correspond to the concrete activities of the teachers that they should develop” (Lapostolle et al, 2007:386).

Most of the modules of the teacher education curriculum are formally assessed by a combination of written assignments and oral and written tests. In the case of the M2 practicum, student teachers write an extended assignment called a Professional Report (*Mémoire Professionnel*), to be based around an aspect of teaching and supported by research, with reference to appropriate literature. There are academic and practical criticisms of the Professional Report. Some academics and students saw it as a necessary evil to get through in order to qualify, and not as an opportunity to reflect on professional practice and develop their understanding. In practical terms, students were concerned that there was insufficient time to write a meaningful analysis of teaching, when they were also struggling with planning lessons and teaching in the placement school, as well as continuing their university studies. After initial teething troubles, however, there was a more positive evaluation from students of the Professional Report and of the tutors who support them in its writing. At its best it can be considered as part of the process of developing a teacher professional identity:

“The completion of a (professional) report is envisaged, in addition, as a process of ‘identity development’” (Lapostolle et al, 2007:395).

The competitive examination (Concours) has been a traditional tour de force with a history that began in the eighteenth century and ‘constitutes a French specificity’ (van Zanten, 2002). As employees of the State and therefore civil servants, would-be teachers are also subject to the rigours of this selection process. The number of new posts needed for the forthcoming school year are regulated by the competitive exam and its pass rate (Bonnet, 1996). The exams are set regionally for primary school teachers, who then remain within the region in which they qualify. The Concours for secondary teachers is set nationally and newly qualified teachers can be posted anywhere in the country. The exams are currently conducted in two phases, the

written exams confirm ‘admissibility’ and, for successful candidates, the oral exams lead to ‘admission’ to the status of ‘trainee civil servant’¹⁰.

The timing and content of the competitive exam, or even its continuation, is a source of contention for all the actors involved. The State administers the exam, but the universities, in particular teacher educators, carry the responsibility for preparing the students. The universities favour a more theoretical style of examination, placing subject knowledge in the foreground and remaining sceptical of the pedagogical elements (traditionally reserved for the oral exams.) The timing of the exam has moved forward from its place at the end of the two years of teacher education, to the end of the M1 year. Thus, such is the importance of the Concours, that other elements of the course take second place. The system therefore works against a meaningful connection between theory and practice in this first year.

In a longitudinal, qualitative study of student teachers across three different Masters programmes, Danner (2018) explored the goal of the (then) IUFMs to prioritise greater professionalisation¹¹ throughout the two-year Masters programme, including the preparation for the competitive exam. The findings illustrated not only the general dissatisfaction of student teachers with their training but also the lack of connection to the reality of classroom teaching. Asked to prioritise elements of the programme, the majority of those in the M1 year believed that preparation for the Concours and the chance to see mock exam papers was paramount, however, they saw no connection between the exam and their future professional role. The latter was found by the majority to be the domain of the practicum:

“this university-based knowledge, perceived as theoretical teaching by the students, [-] appears to have little to do with professionalisation, compared to the teaching that the practicum or the mentors in the school bring to them.” (p.16)

In the wake of continued criticism about the teacher education curriculum, and the

¹⁰ Fonctionnaire-stagiaire.

¹¹ Professionalisation in the French literature refers to the process of professional preparation, not the policies aimed at increasing state control through standardisation.

Concours in particular, the government passed a new law on 6th August 2019¹² which would move the Concours back to the end of the M2 year and final qualification moved to the post-M2 year.

2.3.6 Summary of key issues

It has been shown above that the current issues in French teacher education, in common with many European countries, revolve around boosting recruitment by making the profession more attractive to graduates and raising the quality of teaching and learning in schools to boost overall pupil attainment. In conjunction with these aims, the state has increased control over teacher education, by introducing more prescriptive curricula and rubrics of professional competences.

The law passed in August 2019 envisages greater homogeneity of initial teacher education across all institutions:

“The text of the law emphasises the importance of the homogeneity of initial teacher training, an essential criterion for raising the general educational level of pupils” (education.gouv.fr accessed 9th June 2020).

In order to implement the new, homogeneous curriculum, the ESPE institutions were re-branded the INSPE¹³ (National Higher Education Institute for Teacher Education). The goal of increasing recruitment and making teaching a more attractive profession is to be achieved by creating a ‘pre-professionalisation’ course over three years, beginning in the second undergraduate year. The new approach will enable students to experience teaching at a much earlier stage, progressing from observing in the classroom to co-teaching and finally, to taking full responsibility for a class, with mentor support, in the M1 year. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds are to be paid as ‘education assistants’ and those intending to teach shortage subjects in secondary education will also be offered financial incentives.

Additional measures included in the reform are increased quality assurance, the possibility of comparing data and outcomes between INSPEs, and that a third of the

¹² La loi de la transformation de la fonction publique (Law to transform the civil service).

¹³ Institut National Supérieur du Professorat et de l'Éducation.

time devoted to practical skills will be with teachers who are current practitioners. The competitive examination will take place at the end of the M2 year from the 2021/22 academic year. This reform could be considered as the most radical transformation of teacher education since the creation of the IUFMs in 1990. It remains to be seen if it achieves its aims, particularly with regard to making the profession more attractive, especially since the salaries of teachers in France are among the lowest in Europe and morale is also low (see for example, OECD TALIS,2013).

In tandem with the reforms to teacher education in the last decade, French scholars have observed a transition in the professional identity of the teacher. Lessard and Tardif (2004) describe this transition as a progression from a 'vocation' to an 'occupation' and now to an 'expert practitioner', able to apply reflective professional judgement. Maroy views the transition as a shift in identity from the traditional, authoritarian 'master¹⁴', particularly in secondary education, to a 'pedagogue', using constructivist and differentiated approaches:

“the professionalism of the teacher has been redefined by insisting on pedagogic competences, reflectivity, the capacity to engage in professional development, as well as the capacity to work as part of a team.” (2006:119)

There exists a dichotomy in the teaching community between the professional identity of older teachers, who adhere to the traditional teaching methods and approaches, and that of more recently qualified teachers (Van Zanten, 2002). The latter have been exposed during their teacher education programmes to newer pedagogical ideas and strategies for working with the challenges of the modern classroom. As explained above, the most recent reforms place a greater emphasis on classroom practice and for some undergraduates, at a much earlier stage in their studies. Whether these reforms succeed in boosting recruitment and producing a new type of teacher, confident in their career choice and in their professional identity will doubtless be the subject of future research and evaluation.

¹⁴ Maître, the traditional term for a teacher, occurs in the name IUFM and refers to teacher training as the 'training of masters' (Formation de Maîtres). It is interesting that with the advent of the ESPE, this traditional nomenclature has been replaced by the more neutral Higher Education Institute for Teachers in Education.

2.4 England

2.4.1 Teacher Education before 2000: from halcyon days to audit culture

If the education systems in Germany and France have been characterised by enduring stability and a relative reluctance to radical reform, the hallmarks of the English education system are fragmentation, diversification and frequency of reform. Teacher education has rarely been awarded 'pride of place' academically, although the 1950s and 1960s represent the halcyon days, when the teacher education curriculum was broad and rooted in the social sciences, and included psychology, sociology and philosophy, as well as subject pedagogy. By the 1970s, teaching was an all-graduate profession and the universities offered both undergraduate and postgraduate teaching qualifications.

The halcyon days were soon over, however, and in the 1980s the neoliberal approach of successive governments had created a dual perspective of centralisation and decentralisation in schools, with devolved management of resources on the one hand and greater accountability through the mechanisms of state control, such as a prescribed national curriculum and the judgements of the Inspectorate on the other. This 'audit culture' has resulted in teachers' work becoming increasingly accountable with the measuring and monitoring of their performance and the attainment of their pupils.

Teacher education has moved from the halcyon days of a broad academic, university-based curriculum to a plethora of different routes into teaching, with school-based initial teacher education heavily promoted by successive governments who have been determined that teacher preparation should be, first and foremost, 'functional' and 'sharply focused'¹⁵. In 1995, the first SCITT (School-centred Initial Teacher Training) programmes were established, taking place in training schools that were fully funded by the state. School-based routes have continued to expand, with Schools Direct

¹⁵ These terms were first used in the James Report of 1972.

(salaried and non-salaried) and Teach First. University-based teacher education has had to struggle against the prevailing view of policy-makers that teaching is essentially a craft that is best learnt 'on the job', without the need for theoretical knowledge:

“Teaching was positioned as a basic ‘craft’, involving limited knowledge beyond a subject-specialist degree [-] These are worrying trends, leading to less critical, theoretically relevant forms of teacher education” (Murray et al, 2017:13,21).

Thirty years previously Brian Simon (1985) had bemoaned the lack of pedagogy in teacher education, which he attributed in part to the field never having been established as an academic field in its own right.

Given this ideology, the following sections will reflect initially on whether the external pressures that have prompted reform to teacher education in Germany and France have had a similar influence in England. The focus will then shift to the academic curriculum and the practicum.

2.4.2 Bologna and PISA: main or subsidiary roles in policymaking?

The interventionist policies of successive governments from the 1980s onwards, who saw teacher education as a 'policy problem' (Cochran-Smith, 2005; Maguire & George, 2017; McIntyre, 2018), meant that international comparative studies, such as the OECD PISA study, have had a limited or indirect effect on teacher education in England (Grek, 2009). The data from the PISA studies is seen internationally as synonymous with the quality and competitiveness of an education system. There was extensive media reporting on the first three PISA studies, owing to the declining performance of the UK against the other participating countries, however, the government took a more guarded view and there were no new policies that can be directly attributed to PISA. One possible explanation is that by the time of the initial PISA study, an audit culture within education was already well established, in which extensive testing and the compilation of attainment-related data were the norm. Similarly, although education policymakers in England joined the many countries seeking to learn from the success of Finland in PISA, they resolutely ignored the role that the high status of teachers plays in Finland and the high level of university qualification in teacher education that they must achieve (Gilroy, 2014).

As a signatory of the Bologna agreement, the effect on higher education in England was much less dynamic than in France or Germany. These European neighbours were pre-occupied with modularisation, student learning and staff teaching hours (Furlong, 2005) and their review of teacher education resulted in new Masters programmes being introduced between 2005 and 2010. In England, the strong quality assurance culture and the regular inspection of higher education meant that the duration of undergraduate and postgraduate study was not dissimilar to the model proposed by Bologna. For teacher education, the idea of raising the level to a full Masters qualification was planned by New Labour, as part of the drive to improve the quality recruitment of teachers (Page, 2015). This goal was never fulfilled, however, as the subsequent Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government rejected it. Currently half of the PGCE credits are at Masters level.

2.4.3 The academic curriculum

By today's standards, the 1944 Education Act did not set out to exercise central control over the school curriculum or the pedagogic approaches of teachers. This had paved the way for teachers to work autonomously as professionals, tasked with developing pupils into: "rationally autonomous individuals" (Hirst, 1996:167) and had also resulted in the expansive teacher education curriculum of the mid-twentieth century as described above. By contrast, the current teacher education curriculum is centrally directed, and the theoretical component has been compromised or constrained as a result. The one-year PGCE programme is divided into approximately 12 weeks of university-based teaching and personal research interspersed with blocks of teaching practicum. This inevitably means that the theory element of the curriculum is intensive and reductive, needing to cover the prescribed topics set out in the national teacher education curriculum introduced in 1998, and subject to inspection by OFSTED. The programme comprises three or four modules, two of which are at M level and a third links to the practicum, with associated evidence of planning and reflection. In general, these are entitled Subject Pedagogy or Didactics, General Professional Studies and Research and Enquiry in Professional Education Practice. In

terms of the structure of the PGCE programme, student teachers start the academic year with an intensive block of university study, prior to the first practicum placement and return to the university for a further intensive study block before embarking on the second.

Subject Pedagogy or Didactics includes study of the subject as it relates to the national curriculum for schools and what learners should know at each Key Stage and teaching methods specific to the subject and this module is most often taught by subject specialists who have been teachers. Professional Studies seems to represent some of the same content as Education Science in Germany, particularly the legal responsibilities of the teacher and theories of learning. Although the rest of the content might vary between universities, it frequently includes topics such as developing effective teacher-pupil relationships, diversity and inclusion, behaviour management, special educational needs and personalised learning or differentiation strategies. In line with the current policy agenda, there may also be content related to literacy and numeracy development in children, pastoral care and children's mental well-being, and the understanding of the government's Prevent strategy for reducing radicalisation among young people. The scope of this module offers many different possibilities for further research by student teachers preparing the written assignment attached to the module. The M level modules are designed to encourage the development of research skills and the completion of a dissertation-style assignment that evidences research, yet is still connected to the practice of teaching in some way. Despite the prescriptive nature of the teacher education curriculum, university teacher educators have endeavoured to retain some autonomy in the way that they design and structure programme content. Furlong believes that this can be attributed to the values teacher educators have about preparing future teachers:

“[They] have remained wedded to the view that prospective teachers need to be educated in ways that will allow them to work as autonomous professionals, capable of combining expert knowledge and values in order to make their own independent judgements as to what is effective practice.” (2005:24)

The theme of professional autonomy as an integral part of teacher professional identity is a key focus of this study and will be explored in depth in interviews with student teachers.

2.4.4 The Practicum: the locus of professional learning?

The chart below (Figure 1) illustrates the primacy given to the practicum in the PGCE curriculum and the challenge of fitting the other, theoretical elements into the academic year. Student teachers completing a PGCE in England spend a total of twenty-four weeks in schools on practicum. They are placed in at least two different schools, with a shorter first placement that usually begins with observing experienced subject teachers before embarking on classroom teaching themselves.

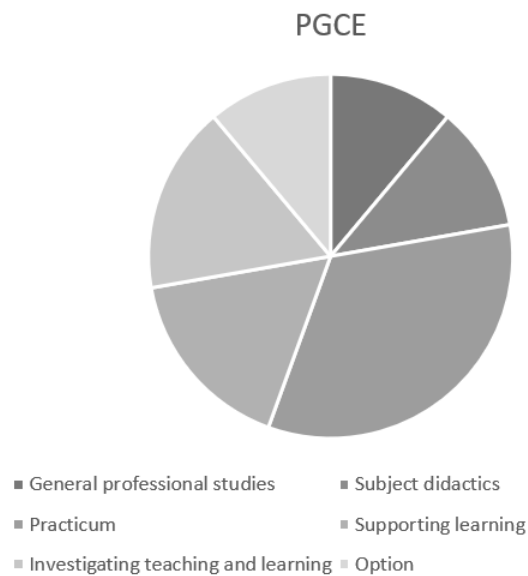


Figure 1. The PGCE Curriculum¹⁶

The first placement is often organised so that one day a week is still spent at the university, discussing or troubleshooting teaching issues that have arisen in the practicum that week. This sharing of experiences with peers is similar to the seminars that accompany the semester practicum in Germany.

The second placement is longer and student teachers are expected to teach eight to ten hours per week and are in the school full-time. Some universities organise other short practical experiences, for example, at a primary school, which gives student teachers insight into the environment that prepares pupils for secondary education or

¹⁶ Source: St .Mary's University, Twickenham, London: www.stmarys.ac.uk. Accessed on 8/09/2020.

another educational field, such as educational psychology or youth offender learning. In this respect the PGCE route offers student teachers a more holistic view of how education works, particularly school cultures and ethos, than their counterparts on school-based routes, who are generally based in one school throughout their training.

Support for student teachers on practicum comes principally from the designated subject mentor and the university tutor. The latter visits the school periodically to carry out formal lesson observations, however, it is the mentor in the school who supports the student teacher on a daily basis. The development of confidence and a strong teacher identity rests to a large extent on the success of this relationship. The data from this study will show that mentor guidance, support and the opportunity to experiment with different approaches play a crucial role in student teachers developing their individual sense of professional identity and their own teaching style.

2.4.5 Assessment of student teachers: promoting autonomy or ensuring accountability?

The assessment of student teachers completing a university-based teaching qualification is the dual responsibility of the academic environment of the higher education institution and the placement school. Taught modules are assessed in the traditional way by written assignments, and the two M level assignments of the PGCE are designed to provide students with the opportunity to engage in research and develop the relevant skills to do so. It is also these written assignments that ask student teachers to make the connection between aspects of their practice and the procedural knowledge associated with it, and the theories or propositional knowledge that underpin it. This presupposes an ability and willingness to reflect on classroom events and experiences and seek to understand them, an action often termed 'reflective practice'; however, the ability to reflect on practice and make a connection with relevant theories from the teacher education curriculum is often assumed, rather than taught specifically:

“The concept of the ‘reflective practitioner’ has gained wide currency, but the role of theory in guiding or informing the process of reflection has yet to receive the attention it deserves” (Eraut, 1994:69).

In addition to the written assignments, the practicum element has a portfolio attached to it, in which student teachers are expected to engage further in reflective practice, evaluating lessons they have taught and using portfolio entries as a springboard for discussion with tutors and mentors.

Practical classroom skills are assessed by both the subject mentor in the school and the university tutor and for this purpose they are required to use the rubric of competences produced by the Department for Education: The Teachers' Standards. Thus, the role of mentor or tutor is a dual role with that of assessor and in this respect, they act as agents of the state. There is an incongruence here, since the state does not employ teachers directly, neither do they become civil servants upon qualification as in Germany and France. The current Teachers' Standards (2011) are divided into two parts: the first part comprises eight standards that focus on practical knowledge and skill and define the 'minimum level of practice' expected (DfE, 2011). The second part outlines the personal and professional conduct expected of teachers and though not expressed as competences per se, the introductory statement defines 'the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct' (ibid.) Some authors have questioned the validity of assessing the personal traits and values of a teacher and who might be qualified to make such a judgement (see, for example, André, 2013; Page, 2015; Mohammed et al, 2017).

The assessment of both student teachers and experienced teachers against standards in this way has been termed a compliance culture or what Ball (2003) calls a 'performativity' culture. Criticisms abound of the compliance that has permeated teacher education through the introduction of competence-based assessment and the requirement to provide evidence (Gilroy, 2014; Ellis, 2010; Furlong, 2005; Wilkins, 2011). Gilroy suggests that the success of teacher education providers is now dependent on their willingness to produce 'compliant' teachers. Wilkins considers the teaching standards as moving beyond the assessment of practical skills to the heart of who a teacher is:

"Professional standards attempt to define not simply what a teacher does, but what/who a teacher is: to provide a framework for assessing not just their skills, competency and knowledge, but their values and attitudes" (Wilkins, 2011:395).

The drive to make teachers more accountable for their work, together with the demands of a prescriptive national curriculum and its attainment targets, has eroded the professional autonomy once associated with the teacher's role. This has implications for teacher education and how student teachers are prepared for the ongoing central scrutiny of their practice, and whether they are encouraged to develop autonomy and professional judgement, or, as Wilkins suggests, merely be 'compliant'.

At this point it is pertinent to note that official documents relating to teaching standards only mentions teachers with Qualified Teacher Status and student teachers working towards it, but omits unqualified teachers. One outcome of the marketisation and deregulation of the schools' sector has been the autonomy academies and free schools are given to employ unqualified teachers, who by default, are not governed by the Teachers' Standards. What implications this could have for the standardisation agenda, for recruitment at a time of teacher shortage, and for the status of teachers generally will doubtless be monitored closely by both the government and teacher educators in the short-term.

Within the context of performativity and accountability and the associated loss of professional autonomy for teachers, it might be hoped that teacher education offers some mitigation, by training critically reflective practitioners who are still able to exercise professional judgement, however, Bates et al fear that the current system merely produces:

"A generation of young teachers who have been told what to do, how to download lesson plans and how to follow national guidance on behaviour management" and who "may be incapable of defining their own role and may, in fact, accept their new status as merely that of 'technician'" (2011:142).

This is certainly a pessimistic view of the outlook for student teachers embarking on their career and will need to be explored in more depth during the interviews with participants from all three countries.

2.4.6 Summary of key issues

The schools' sector and initial teacher education in England have both been subject to a reform-heavy political environment since the 1980s. The combination of deregulation, on the one hand, and increased monitoring and accountability on the other, have been the hallmarks of neoliberal approaches by successive governments of both political persuasions. The result for teacher education has been the predominance of practical skills and a scepticism towards pedagogy, to the detriment of the academic elements of the curriculum. The move to competence-based assessment of classroom practice, that has eroded professional autonomy to a greater or lesser extent and has compromised the freedom of the teacher to exercise professional judgement, has given rise to a culture of 'performativity' in which the new generation of teachers are expected to be compliant:

“Inside classrooms teachers are caught between the imperatives of prescription and the disciplines of performance. Their practice is both ‘steered’ and ‘rowed’. It is still the case that teachers are not trusted.” (Ball, 2013:173).

Furlong (2005:127) is concerned that teacher education has now become ‘narrowly functional’ producing new teachers who accept a professional identity as ‘technicians’ (Bates et al, 2011:142). The historical legacy of anti-pedagogism has prevailed and university teacher educators responsible for the PGCE programme struggle to fit the theoretical elements of the curriculum into a short time frame. MacBeath (2012:74) summarises the issues facing university-based teacher education as:

“a focus on government strategies, less theory and more practice, implementation rather than reading and reflection, less challenge and more compliance”.

The notion of teaching being a craft that can be learned on the job has prompted the growth of a wide range of teacher education options for student teachers, with the current government promoting school-based routes over university study. In the latter case, the extension of the practicum duration has resulted in theory being taught in short, intensive blocks which risk becoming functional and narrow, rather than critically reflective and expansive.

2.5 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to explore the context within which initial teacher education is located in the three comparison countries. It has been shown that the cultural scripts of each country are determined by its socio-historical development and informed by the prevailing ideologies about the purpose of education. This is important for a study of teacher education, as it highlights the early divergence of England from the other two countries, and how the notion of teaching as a craft has steered it away from the academic and towards the practical. In Germany and France, teacher education has retained its conviction that student teachers should have a firm theoretical foundation that informs their practice.

The pace of reform has varied considerably in the three countries, as has their response to international catalysts, such as the OECD's PISA studies and the Bologna Declaration. The latter has resulted in the introduction of a tighter, modular teacher education curriculum that required more far-reaching, structural changes in Germany and France than in England. The new Master of Education qualification of its neighbours was never introduced in England, although some concession was made in the M level modules that currently form half of the PGCE qualification. The German response to PISA resulted in a swift and radical overhaul of teacher education, however, this was not mirrored in France or England. One response common to all three countries to the international competition arising from PISA has been an emphasis on the outcomes of education and how these can be guaranteed. This shift in focus towards attainment and target-setting in schools has, in turn, resulted in competence-based assessment and this applies equally to teacher education. Thus, one theme common to all three comparison countries has been greater state intervention in teacher education in terms of both the curriculum and the assessment of future teachers. Prompted by the belief that a competence-based approach to teacher education is needed to assess practical teaching skills, national teaching standards or rubrics of competences are now present in all countries. England was well ahead of the game in this respect, introducing standards almost two decades ahead of the other two countries and this coincided with the diversification of routes

into teaching and the promotion of schools-based initial teacher education.

In addition to the teaching standards, the practicum has also increased in importance and duration in all countries, with a greater emphasis on providing student teachers with a realistic experience of teaching. Supported is offered by experienced practitioners in the school and the practicum is the main focus for the assessment of teaching skills. The main practicum takes place in the Masters phase in France and Germany and in both cases is linked to the State Examination that confers civil servant status on teachers. An important difference is that this M level phase of university teacher education is two years in these two countries, but only one year in England¹⁷. The number of teaching hours on practicum is now similar in each country, however, the shorter duration of the PGCE has had the greatest impact on the theory aspect of the curriculum.

Teacher professional identity is connected to ideas about professionalism and professionalisation and is tempered by the demands of the state, which dictates, albeit implicitly, how much autonomy teachers have to do their work and to what extent they are constrained by prescriptions of curriculum and regular auditing of their work. The juxtaposition of accountability and autonomy are reflected in the content and purpose of reforms in the three countries, and to what extent teacher professional identity is influenced by the decisions made by politicians who are often not educators themselves (Beck, 2008).

In Germany and France, professional autonomy of the teacher is considered to be at the heart of teacher professionalism, and despite increased standardisation in terms of the teacher education curriculum and how student teachers are assessed, much of this autonomy remains post-qualification. Interestingly, although teachers are employees of the state and have the status of civil servants, they seem to be entrusted with a level of autonomy not evident in England. Here, accountability appears to take precedence over autonomy and Stephen Ball's 'imperatives of

¹⁷ It should be noted that post-university qualification, there is some sort of further training or probationary period in all countries.

prescription' and 'disciplines of performance'(2003) referred to earlier in the chapter are the daily experience of the teaching community in England.

This contextualisation of teacher education in Germany, France and England will provide a framework of reference for interpreting and analysing the narratives of student teachers in chapters six, seven and eight, in order to answer the research question. This concerns the extent to which the cultural scripts of the three countries, as expressed in the teacher education curriculum, determine the development of teacher professional identity. Exactly what is to be understood by the concept of professional identity is the subject of the next chapter, which uses relevant literature published in all three countries to build a theoretical framework that will highlight the similarities and differences in how teacher professional identity is conceptualised in each country.

CHAPTER 3.

WHAT IS IDENTITY? THEORIES OF PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

3.1 Introduction

The research question has as its focal point the connection between the teacher education curriculum and the development of professional identity in student teachers. As such, it is predicated on theories of personal and social identity and how these intersect with the specifically 'professional' elements of the 'self'.

Student teachers have to navigate between the academic environment of the university, the school community in which they undertake their practicum (teaching practice) and the ever-changing external policy arena that determines the standards and curricula for schools and universities. Their motivation for becoming a teacher and ideas of what a teacher does, or is expected to do, are underpinned by the past narrative of the student teacher and comprises diverse elements such as family background and experiences of school, both positive and negative, personal values and beliefs, and the individual's perception of the purpose of education. This individual narrative is located within a social, cultural and historical context that acts as a template (Watson, 2009) as they seek to make sense of who they are and what their place is. Writing to teachers, Olsen (2016) summarises teacher identity as:

“the place where all your personal and professional, social and individual, past and present experiences combine into a productive tangle of beliefs, values, practices and predictions for your teaching work” (p.136-7).

This definition highlights the fact that teacher professional identity is informed by other facets of identity and for student teachers the process of developing this professional identity should be 'productive', as they work out what being a teacher means for them.

The epistemological approach to theorising identity is defined by Furlong (2013) as one of 'conceptual pluralism', differentiated by the fields of psychology, sociology, philosophy and newer fields, such as psychosocial studies. Nevertheless, in its simplest

form, identity can be formulated as a question: 'Who am I?' or more specifically: 'Who am I at this moment?' (see among others, Dunne, 2011; Sachs, 2005).

The beginning of the chapter will contextualise teacher professional identity in terms of the discourses of professionalism and professionalization introduced in Chapters 1 and 2, emphasising the tensions that exist within the academic and political communities and their influence on the development of professional identity among student and beginning teachers. In the main part of the chapter a literature review of personal and social theories of identity and how these inform research with student teachers and will be followed by a focus on texts offering different perspectives on professional identity development. The final section of the chapter will explore similarities and differences in the conception of professional identity in the three comparison countries, focusing particularly on original language literature published in France and Germany.

3.2 The context of professional identity: professionalism or professionalisation?

In reviewing the literature on teacher professional identity, it becomes clear that the concept is set within wider discussions of professionalism and professionalization and how different authors articulate these discourses in the three comparison countries. The terms 'professionalism' and 'professionalisation' are sometimes used interchangeably, resulting in some crossover in definition. England, writing in Goodson and Hargreaves (1996) offers a succinct explanation, describing professionalism as a 'pedagogical project', concerned with the act and 'internal' quality of teaching at an individual level and professionalization as a 'sociological project', focusing on the status and agency of the occupational group.

The two 'projects' meet in teacher education. Professionalism develops as student teachers learn what it means to become confident and competent classroom practitioners, using their personal qualities, knowledge and skills effectively. Professionalisation concerns the power the teaching community has to maintain a status in society and to monitor its practice, usually through professional organisations or teaching unions. Where these representative organisations are weak, it is often the

state that controls the practice of teachers, through standards and increased quality monitoring.

Wermke and Hostfalt (2014) make an interesting distinction between Anglo-American and continental models of professionalisation, where the former subjugates teachers to state and societal control through accountability measures and teachers are perceived as 'service-deliverers'. Whitty (2008) sees professionalism as intrinsically linked to autonomy and cites Barber (2005), who charts the evolution of professionalism and state control in phases, moving from greater teacher autonomy ('uninformed professionalism') to greater standardisation of teaching and assessment ('informed prescription'). He proposes a final phase of 'informed professionalism', in which teachers are afforded the autonomy to apply their professional knowledge, skills and judgement to their work once more, however he suggests there is currently little evidence of this last phase, or indeed, of the state relinquishing its tight hold on education. Furlong (2005) suggests that as more and more stakeholders involve themselves in education, from school managers and parents, to policy-makers, the more teacher autonomy is restricted:

“decisions about what to teach, how to teach and how to assess students are made at school and national level, rather than by the individual teachers themselves” (p.29).

Increased state control of the teacher education curriculum and the day-to-day work of teachers has become a feature of many European countries. Under the auspices of guaranteeing the 'professionalism' of the way teachers work in schools, Menter (2010) suggests that they have become depoliticised and deskilled (see also, Sachs, 2003). In this research study the three comparison countries are at different points along a continuum of teacher autonomy and state control. In England, teachers are afforded little professional autonomy, as explained in the citation above.

Centralised lesson plans and prescriptions of what and how to teach are commonplace. In France and Germany teachers are still afforded autonomy over their classroom practice, although the taught curriculum is fully or partially centrally determined. This is largely due to the power of the professional organisations in both countries and collective resistance to reforms that are perceived as restricting

professional autonomy.

3.3 Theories of individual identity

“There is a universal basis of self, as both interdependent and independent, as a part of and apart from other selves [-] made of past memories and future anticipation linked to an ever-shifting present.” (Mathews, 2000:12)

Definitions of identity are multifarious and often ambiguous, although there is some synergy between the ideas of ‘self’ and ‘identity’. Thus the concepts of ‘I’, the ‘self’, ‘self-image’, ‘self-concept’, ‘self-perception’, ‘self-representation’, which are dependent to some extent on the social science field from which they originate, are synonymous with the concept of individual or personal identity (Deschamps and Devos, 1998). Following the Enlightenment, the primacy of the individual acting within a self-contained, united self, not contingent on others, was expressed in the thinking of philosophers such as Descartes (1596-1650) (‘I think, therefore I am’). In this view, the individual is unique and independent and identity is a relatively fixed and stable phenomenon.

Post-modernist thinkers challenged the notion that identity is fixed and independent of others and proposed that identity is fluid, ever-changing and dependent on the social contexts in which the individual operates. George Mead (1863-1931), an early thinker on identity formation, believed that the ‘I’ at the core of how a person conceives of her/himself, though relatively stable in itself, is formed in interaction with others through the use shared symbols, including language in different social situations (symbolic interactionism). Atkinson (2004) cites Cooley (1902), a contemporary of Mead, who developed the notion of the ‘looking glass self’, in which individuals develop an identity by seeing themselves as they believe others see them. The individual may adopt different roles in different social contexts. Thus, identity can be described as possessing concurrently individual or personal elements, as well as social or collective dimensions, dependent on the ‘others’, individuals and groups, with whom we interact. The groups or ‘significant others’ in the context of student teachers include teacher education tutors, mentors and other colleagues in a teaching placement school and their peers on the university course.

Membership of, or association with, different groups influences how we perceive ourselves and this social identity can help us maintain a positive self-concept or self-esteem (Tajfel, 1974). This suggests that if student teachers establish positive relationships with the significant others with whom they interact, the benefits to their self-concept may also strengthen the development of their teacher professional identity. Inherent in this theory of identity being constructed as we interact with others and the membership of different groups is a sense of 'belonging'. In his qualitative study of teacher educators, Davey (2013) lists 'belonging' as an essential element of professional identity development, as teachers and teacher educators establish affiliations with professional groups within, and external to, their communities of practice. This might include professional bodies or unions that represent the teaching community and give them some agency to negotiate working conditions, as in Germany and France.

Akkerman and Meijer (2011) put forward the idea that the self is in fact a 'negotiated space', which suggests that there is an element of agency within identity, as our 'I' and 'me' encounter different situations, experience different contexts and establish or maintain relationships with others. To suggest that we are passive recipients of the outworking of the social environment on us is to deny that we have some choice in how we respond in each situation. There are authors who suggest that the individual is comprised of multiple 'I's, dependent on context and experience (Cooper et al, 1996). In this context, Anspal et al (2012) develop ideas proposed by Sachs (2005) that the "reciprocal nature of identity as negotiation between experiences and the meaning-making of those experiences" (p.198).

Bourdieu's (1930-2002) original concept of 'habitus' has relevance for the development of professional identity, when the 'substantive' identity that is at the core of how individuals see themselves and rooted in their previous experiences or 'prior habitus' meets the 'vocational habitus' of the teaching profession (Braun, 2012). This may not be an easy process, as student teachers seek to orient themselves in a new context and professional culture. Postlethwaite and Haggarty (2012) endorse Braun's view that student teachers bring with them differences in habitus, including tacit theories of what teaching should be, based on their previous experiences as

pupils, their values and beliefs, and that they then have to reconcile these with a new 'collective habitus' when entering teaching and becoming part of the professional group. There is a clear link here with the 'institutional' and 'affinity' identities proposed by Gee (2000). Student teachers have to locate themselves in the institutions of the university and the placement school. A positive practicum experience might result in a stronger affinity with the school environment than with the academic department in which they study.

In addition, the two institutions may well promote differing discourses, often between espoused educational theories and practical encounters in the classroom. Gee (*ibid.*) suggests that a 'discourse' identity exists, which can be a site of conflict, as the individual seeks to resolve dissonance between accepted or acculturated discourses and new discourses encountered in different contexts. Within teacher education, student teachers may be faced with discourses related to education which conflict with their established beliefs. Similarly, the practice discourse promoted by teachers or mentors in the placement school may conflict with discourses proposed by university academics. As student teachers negotiate these discourses they also develop conceptions of how they believe they ought to act as a teacher, based on explicit competences on which they will be assessed. This may conflict with their ideal professional self, which evolves from their lay theories or tacit understanding of what makes a good teacher (Lauriala and Kukkonen, 2005; Sugrue, 1997). Thus student teachers represent: 'an unfinished product of discourse' (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006:30).

Recent theories of identity have introduced the notion of a 'global supermarket' of cultural discourses, made accessible by the rapid growth of social media. Mathews (2000) emphasises the role that 'imagined communities', or virtual communities, have on the social identity of the individual, offering a 'buffet' of ideas from an ever-wider marketplace. He acknowledges that free choice in this market is a misperception, since the individual is constrained by many other factors, including age, gender, background and national cultural influences. For student teachers, these factors are supplemented by the need to embrace the professional culture of teachers and the practicum is perhaps the first opportunity to become socialised in this culture.

In conclusion, the aim of this section has been to review some of the theoretical perspectives of personal and social identity and how they develop. Identity in itself is not a unitary concept and the individual experiences multiple identities, largely dependent upon the social contexts and relationships in which he or she lives and works. There is a clear congruence between the personal and professional facets of the teacher's identity. The personality, cultural and social background, previous educational experience, values and beliefs influence and inform the approach to classroom practice and the understanding of learners and learning. The focal point of the next section will be literature pertaining to research on teacher professional identity in the comparison countries.

3.4 Teacher professional Identity

“Teacher identity – what beginning teachers believe about teaching and learning as self-as-teacher – is of vital concern to teacher education; it is the basis for meaning making and decision making” (Bullough, 1997:21).

There is no shortage of criticism of teacher education or teacher educators in literature related to the three comparison countries, or indeed, many other countries globally. The above citation alludes to the responsibility of teacher education for helping student teachers to build a strong sense of professional identity, in order for them to be able to negotiate and make sense of the complex and changeable profession they are entering. The objective of this section is to explore what is meant by the term ‘teacher professional identity’ and then to consider any divergence in the understanding of the term in the three countries under scrutiny.

Those facets of identity that concern the self in the workplace can be termed ‘professional identity’ and in the situational context of education, this is commonly termed ‘teacher identity’ or ‘teacher professional identity’. For the purposes of this study, the term ‘teacher professional identity’ best encapsulates the focus of the research. Literature on the development of teacher professional identity as an emerging field within educational research is evident from the early 1990s and there exists a consensus that professional identity is both dynamic and evolving, spanning the professional life course and inseparable from personal or individual identity, since both are influenced by factors such as family background, previous educational

experiences and personal metaphors for teaching, cultural scripts in relation to education and individual motivations and aspirations concerning teaching as a career. Thus teachers, including student teachers, might formulate their own identity development as two key questions 'Who am I?' and 'Who am I as a teacher?' Furthermore, identity development involves identifying what makes an individual different from others and in the context of education, for example, this might mean a more specific question, such as 'Who am I as a primary or secondary teacher?' (Dunne, 2011).

Studies of teacher professional identity development can be divided into those that provide an overview of relevant literature, or adopt a solely theoretical stance (for example, Atkinson, 2004; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard et al, 2004; Day et al, 2006), and empirical studies of student, novice or experienced teachers. Within the first category, studies with student teachers consider themes such as the influence of lay theories (Furlong, 2013; Sugrue, 1997), the perception of the 'ideal' teacher (Arnon & Reichel, 2007), trust and accountability (Czerniawski, 2011) and identity in activity, practice and discourse (Trent, 2011; Anh, 2013).

Teacher educators should consider the contribution that initial teacher education makes to this development, in terms of the curriculum (subject pedagogy or didactics, theories of learning and organisational or legal aspects of education), the structure and duration of the teaching practicum and the effectiveness of the links between the theoretical and the practical, in other words, between *episteme* and *phronesis* (Eisner, 2002).

Judith Sachs expresses the connection between professional identity formation and teacher education succinctly in three elements 'How to be, how to act and how to understand' (2005:15).

'How to be' focuses on the personal professional attributes of the teacher, including student teachers' perceptions of the qualities of a 'good' teacher and the type of teacher they wish to become. It will be shown that the sometimes altruistic perceptions of student teachers may well conflict with the reality of classroom practice, or the models of teaching promoted on teacher education programmes. The

importance of these perceptions scaffolds questions in the early part of the interviews conducted with student teachers for this study.

'How to act' highlights the importance of context in the development of teacher professional identity and juxtaposes the intimacy of the classroom environment, and the ethos and culture of the school with the demands of inspectors, policy makers and the expectations of society at large. Thus it incorporates not only the practical teaching and learning activities that form the backbone of the day-to-day work of teachers, but also how much autonomy is afforded to teachers and how empowered they feel to teach in accordance with their own values and beliefs about teaching.

'How to understand' considers the professional knowledge of teachers, comprising subject knowledge, didactic knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. Implicit in this division of knowledge into three component parts is the extent to which student teachers are supported in making connections between theoretical knowledge (*episteme*) and practical knowledge (*phronesis*).

Therefore, in order to facilitate an in-depth review of theories of professional identity, Sachs' three aspects of teacher professional identity will provide a flexible framework for the evaluation and discussion of the key ideas presented in recent literature.

3.4.1 Teacher Professional identity: how to be

'Personality, character and commitment are as important as the specific knowledge and skills that are used in the day to day tasks of teaching.' (DES, 1983:26)

There is, of course, some irony reflected in the above citation in the current climate of performance indicators and competence-led approaches to teacher education and the increased state control of the teaching profession. Nevertheless, as student teachers work out 'how to be', it is often the personal qualities of the teacher that form their initial image of what a teacher is, based on their previous experiences of teachers and teaching. Moore (2004) agrees that at the start of teacher education, students refer to positive experiences of teachers who have stayed in their memories and he proposes that the 'spectre of the charismatic teacher' (p.54) is uppermost in students' minds. Personal experiences and images of teachers portrayed in film and other media create

a mythical image, to which students aspire and this charismatic teacher discourse will be revisited in the analysis of interview data, when student teachers describe the qualities of a 'good' teacher.

In addition to Moore's model of the charismatic teacher, other authors have defined different types of teacher professional. Sockett (2008) has identified four distinct teacher 'orientations', beginning with the 'scholar' professional, a teacher who is focused on the academic perspective, sees themselves as responsible for the intellectual development of the students and for whom an in-depth subject knowledge is paramount. The 'nurturer' professional prioritises effective relationships with students and for whom a pastoral identity represents the most important aspect of the teacher's role. The 'clinician' professional uses knowledge and research to reflect on and modify their practice. Finally, the 'moral agent' professional sees teaching as an opportunity to change society through education and often uses the phrase 'making a difference' to describe their perception of the teacher.

In qualitative studies with student teachers (Bergmark et al, 2018; Löfström and Poom-Valikis, 2019; O'Brien & Schillaci, 2002) the 'nurturer' and 'moral agent' professional were the most frequently cited depictions of the teacher at the start of initial teacher education. Metaphors student teachers use to describe teacher identity reinforce this view, for example, considering learners as 'mouldable like clay' or being supported by the teacher on 'a learning journey' (Lasky, 2005). Student teachers' ideas of what being a teacher constitutes stem from their lay theories (Sugrue, 1997). Furlong (2013) suggests that student teachers come to their training with deeply held beliefs about what a teacher should be, as a result of their own experiences as pupils and students, which develop over time into lay theories. Sugrue (1997) highlights the tension that exists between these lay theories, the established educational culture and the development of professional identity:

"The personal experiences of student teachers, their apprenticeship of observation and the embedded cultural archetypes of teaching collectively yield both the form [-] and the content [-] of their teaching identities" (p.214).

The result of these lay theories and past experiences is often an idealised view of teaching and the creation of an 'ideal' self as teacher (Lauriala & Kukkonen, 2005).

Sumara & Luce-Kappler (1996) describe the tension student teachers experience as the 'un-becoming' of the teacher, when the student teacher journeys from the pre-teaching image of the teacher, to a 'fictive' image, described as the space within which student teachers are confronted with a plethora of learning theories and pedagogical strategies that are presented during their studies and may reinforce or contradict their pre-teaching images. Furlong (2013) suggests that since lay theories develop from students' previous experience of being taught, they may err towards a more traditional, teacher-centred approach to classroom practice, that possesses 'tenacity and pervasive power' (2013:79) to resist the more progressive, child-centred approaches they encounter during initial teacher education, and that these traditional approaches therefore become the default teaching strategies post-qualification. Sugrue (1997) concurs and adds that student teachers who have been model pupils themselves may identify 'good' teaching with a traditional, didactic approach that hinders them from considering less conservative ways of teaching, an attitude that is often reinforced in the culture of the placement school in which they complete their practicum.

Ultimately, the 'lived' image develops during the practicum, as students encounter the real classroom and evaluate their experience in the light of their previous images of teachers. These three images align with the idea of the retrospective, actual and prospective self (Boltz, 2011), emphasising the fluidity of identity development, as the student teacher moves from past experiences and ideas of teaching (how I was), to the challenges and conflicts they face at each stage of their development (how I am now), and looking forward to the teacher they would like to become in the future (how I want to be). In summary, student teachers' images of themselves as teachers and how they make the transition from their idealised teacher identity to that of a real practitioner provides the canvas for how they will 'act' as teachers.

3.4.2 Teacher professional identity: how to act

For the majority of student teachers the first experience of assuming responsibility for teaching a class takes place early in the practicum and is a seminal moment. In interviews with student teachers, Huberman (1989) explains that many used the

metaphor of a performer stepping on to the stage to express the nerves of their first experience of teaching. Early apprehensions may concentrate on the establishment of a positive relationship with students, of maintaining appropriate control within the classroom and demonstrating confidence in the subject discipline. Britzman (1986) speaks of the practicum as a 'ritual bridge' between the neophyte student teacher and the wider world of teaching (p.442), thus the practicum is perceived by student teachers as a rite of passage, an important connection between the theoretical and the practical. She offers a view of the practicum as a site of struggle, in which student teachers strive to forge a teacher professional identity in a constantly changing context that is: 'already overpopulated with the identities and discursive practices of others.' (p.221)

Interviews conducted as part of this research confirmed that students embarking on their teaching practicum prioritised lesson planning, classroom management skills, knowing their subject and having a positive relationship with their pupils. In other words, simply surviving in the classroom demands considerable time and physical and emotional energy, leaving little space to devote to wider educational issues (Pillen et al, 2013). As they progress in their practical experience, student teachers develop a greater awareness of their identity as members of a community, as represented by the placement school (Wenger, 1998). They develop sub-identities or 'situational' identities, for example, as classroom practitioner, teaching colleague, team member within the subject department, advisor at parents' evenings and many others. An analogy used by Mishler (cited in Beijaard et al, 2004) suggests that these sub-identities are like: 'a chorus of voices, not just [as] the tenor or soprano soloist' (p.8), however, pursuing this analogy, in the context of the wider teaching community the student teacher could be described as a member of a bigger choir that may not always sing in harmony. At its simplest, this may be the conflict between establishing their own teaching style or simply replicating that of their university tutor or teaching mentor in the placement school (Benson & Riches, 2009). At its more complex, the student teacher is about to enter a reform arena, where further discordance is present in the centralised control of teachers' work and the standardisation of their practice.

A review of literature on the development of teacher professional identity highlights

the importance of autonomy for the teacher and for the sense of satisfaction that comes from having the freedom to exercise classroom practice – ‘how to act’ – without undue constraint. As student teachers are acculturated into the realities of the teaching role, they are faced with the additional challenges of accountability, auditing and national standards in what Wermke and Höstfalt (2014) term a ‘constant trade-off’ between the individual and the institution. Thus, the freedom to plan, manage and resource their classroom practice may conflict with the expectations and requirements of a school leadership team focused on inspection grades and quality assurance mechanisms.

Britzman (1986) emphasises the influence of cultural myths on the perceptions of power and authority of student teachers, qualities that are often seen as a given when viewed in the light of previous experiences of the classroom as pupils. She proposes that learning to teach is actually ‘socially negotiated’ between a hierarchically organised school environment and other local and national stakeholders. Reynolds agrees that the workplace environment shapes student teachers, but attributes this to the broader cultural landscape in which the student has been educated and states that they:

“interpret and make sense of their world through the storylines of their culture. That culture can be argued to provide them with limited choices of appropriate ‘subject positions’ or ‘scripts” (1996:72).

Davies (2013) pursues this theme, going so far as to propose that teacher professional identity is formed within the fluid space between ‘narratives of subjectivity’ and ‘narratives of culture’ (p.85). These ‘narratives of culture’ will be explored in depth in the analysis of interview data for this research study, in particular with respect to the notion of professional autonomy as part of the teacher’s role.

In a study of teacher education in Belgium, Schepens et al (2009) applied a model to explore the development of professional identity among student teachers, which they termed CIPP: context, input, process and product. In this model, the context element refers not only to the location or institution in which teacher education takes place, but also the wider context of government reform and societal expectations of teachers. Their research findings suggest that the input and process, in other words,

the nature and content of teacher education offered to student teachers has the most significance for their confidence or self-efficacy as teachers. Although this is not surprising, it should be viewed within the broader context of an increasingly competence-led approach to assessing student teachers and the consequent narrowing of the teacher education curriculum as universities are asked to relinquish control to the state for the evaluation of student teachers' performance. In this case the evaluation is of the 'product' in Schepens' model, the assessment of the student teacher as measured against a prescribed set of competences.

Sachs (2003) is critical of the current emphasis on competences in the teacher education curriculum, which she argues produce 'designer teachers' who connect their professional identity with compliance, efficiency and accountability, rather than agency and professional autonomy. Lasky (2005) also reflects on recent reforms and the resultant managerialism in education and concludes that teachers can choose to 'adopt, adapt or ignore' education policies that directly impact their practice. In the light of Sachs' argument, student teachers would fall into the 'adopt' category and therefore it will be essential that qualitative data arising from this research seeks to compare the level of compliance and sense of professional autonomy as a facet of teacher professional identity in the three comparison countries.

3.4.3 Teacher professional identity: how to understand

What types of knowledge do student teachers need, in order to understand teaching and learning and to inform their professional decisions? In a study of professional competence and the development of professional identity among student teachers in Germany, Brovelli et al (2011) refer to the triangular model often cited in connection with Shulman (1986), in which subject knowledge, pedagogical subject knowledge (*Didaktik*) and pedagogical knowledge comprise the three types of knowledge within the teacher education curriculum. Nevertheless, qualitative studies of the place and relevance of theory for student teachers suggests that they have a narrow view of what theory is (Sjølie, 2014), that theory is remote from practice or generally abandoned or 'washed out' under the pressure of surviving in the classroom (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981; Allen, 2011 ; Feiman-Nemser, 2012; Cochran-Smith, 2005).

Moore (2004) alludes to the tacit transition in public discourse in England from the term teacher 'education' to teacher 'training' and argues that knowledge of the subject and practical classroom management skills now take precedence over pedagogical knowledge. Britzman (2012) claims that the status of pedagogical knowledge is low, compounded by the use of language in the teaching of theories at university which alienates students and renders theories 'more like speculative idealism than concrete realism' (p.447). Thus, the evidence seems to suggest that the teacher education curriculum has yet to resolve the issue of linking abstract knowledge and the knowledge gained from practical experience. Eisner (2002) terms these distinct paradigms *episteme* and *phronesis* respectively, whilst Korthagen (2004) calls them 'propositional' and 'situational' knowledge. Episteme describes a formal, testable, universal and 'value-neutral' knowledge and Eisner maintains that this has been the dominant paradigm in teacher education. Teacher educators within universities have endeavoured to establish teaching as a 'science', with associated theories that can be learnt and translated into practice:

"The assumption, at least the tacit assumption, was that theory would do it all and that the application from the theoretical to the practical would pretty much take care of itself" (Eisner, 2002:379).

He postulates that over time educational theories have evolved in recognition of the complexities of the classroom which cannot be tested, nor seen as value-neutral. Phronesis – the practical understanding developed through experience in a specific context (situational knowledge) – must be acknowledged as playing a key role in the learning of student teachers.

In interviews with new teachers, Allen (2009) noted that none of the participants articulated any notion of theory and practice being 'mutually informing', nor were they actively encouraged to see how theory underpins what they do as teachers. Authors considering how this problem might be resolved, propose an enquiry-led approach to the teaching practicum based around research and reflective practice (see, among others :Flores, 2018; Beauchamp and Thomas, 2011; Reid & O'Donoghue, 2004)so that the development of professional teacher identity will empower them to manage what is: "an inherently non-routine activity" (Reid & O'Donoghue, 2004:564)

Teacher educators might stimulate this process by using pedagogical questions, so that the outcomes of student teacher learning are open rather than pre-determined in the form of rubrics of competences to be evidenced (Pantic & Wubbels, 2012). Sjolie (2014) suggests that a distinction be made between ‘theories *of* practice’ and ‘theories *for* practice’, the latter creating a clear connection with classroom practice and enabling student teachers to engage in a dialogic relationship between the theoretical and practical in the classroom, as Britzman confirms:

“It is here that student teachers must not only make sense of theory, but attempt to experience practice theoretically” (1986:46).

A report published by the European Commission (2007) set out the objectives for improving the quality of teacher education in the member states and achieving greater cohesion in the type and structure of teaching qualifications. Among the five ‘broad orientations’ of the proposed reforms were specific references to the acquisition of an ‘appropriate knowledge base’ and the promotion of a ‘culture of reflective practice.’ Exactly what and how much ‘appropriate’ knowledge should feature in teacher education programmes, or what is meant by ‘reflective practice,’ were left open to interpretation, however, if the two elements continue to be seen as discrete aspects of initial teacher education, a disconnection between episteme and phronesis will persist and student teachers will continue to question the relevance of pedagogical knowledge on their journey to becoming teachers.

3.5 Teacher professional identity: the comparative perspective

In a review of literature relating to research into the professional identity of teachers, Beijaard et al (2004) propose that three ways of defining teacher professional identity emerge from the texts studied. Firstly, the individual’s self-concept will influence the approach to teaching and includes personal values and expectations of the teacher’s role and status. Secondly, teacher professional identity is closely linked to the roles of the teacher within the educational institution and how much professional autonomy is afforded to the practitioner on a day-to-day basis, as well as the mechanisms in place to regulate or standardise the teacher’s practice in terms of the professional community or the state. Lastly, the expectations of society and the state with respect

to the teaching profession and to what extent these are in harmony or in discord with the teacher education curriculum and the knowledge and understanding teachers use in professional decision-making. In this section the emphasis is on how understandings of teacher professional identity vary in the comparison countries and how this is articulated by academics in those countries.

The determinants of teacher professional identity proposed by Beijaard et al above align well with the three focal elements of Sachs' model (how to be, how to act and how to understand). Thus the review of original language literature will employ the same analytical framework to explore the qualities of the teaching 'self', the extent to which teachers enjoy professional autonomy in their work and how the content of their teacher education programmes contributes to their understanding of teaching and learning. Much of the anglophone literature in the preceding sections relates to the English context and for this reason, the section on England will be briefer than those on France and Germany, since many of the theoretical elements have been covered.

3.5.1 Teacher Professional identity in Germany

How to be: the teaching self

Traditionally there has existed a correlation between the type of school for which German teachers are trained and their status and identity. Thus grammar school teachers have tended to see themselves first and foremost as subject specialists and their university studies have prioritized in-depth study of two subject disciplines over pedagogical studies. Since entry to university is from the grammar school, grammar school teachers are, of course, former grammar pupils. Their view of 'how to be' is subject-centred, authoritarian, teacher-centred and status-aware (Czerniawski, 2011). The powerful voice of the *Philologenverband*, the teaching union for grammar school teachers, has done much to maintain the status quo.

In recent years, however, this traditional view has been challenged, as the tripartite school system in Germany has been reformed. In many federal states, the poor status of the *Hauptschule* as a school for 'leftovers' (Phillips, 1995) has meant that it has

been abolished in over half of the federal states, in favour of a two secondary school system. The coinciding increase in the number of grammar school places created in response to parental demand has resulted in more diverse classrooms generally and a need for a greater level of pedagogical skill overall. The civil servant status of teachers as an entitlement after three years' experience has also been abolished in some states.

Empirical studies carried out in German-speaking countries relating to teacher professional identity often explore the motives of students for pursuing teaching as a career (see, for example, two studies by Weiss, Braune and Kiel (2010) and research by Neugebauer (2013). In a large scale study by König, Rothland et al (2013) with student teachers in Germany, Switzerland and Austria, it was a desire to work with children and young people and the relational side of teaching, rather than subject expertise, that were the most cited reasons for wanting to be a teacher. Similar findings by Brovelli et al (2011) went beyond a unitary approach to motives and refuted the notion that the 'subject expert' and 'pedagogue' aspects of professional identity are mutually exclusive. Based on survey findings they concluded that student teachers no longer see themselves first and foremost as subject experts, particularly if they evaluate their classroom skills as a strength.

A further comparative study of student teacher identity has been undertaken by Czerniawski (2011), who explored the construction of professional identity in a small sample of students in England, Norway and Germany. Based on the premise that the globalisation of education has resulted in a convergence and standardisation of education systems, Czerniawski explores trust and accountability in beginning teachers, as aspects of emerging professional identity.

“Trust and accountability blend to form an uneasy nexus between teacher identity composition and the socially reproduced sites we know as ‘schools’”.
(2011:432)

His findings support the view of Fauser (1996), that teachers' professional identity is influenced by the public domain in which they practise. He reports on interviews with newly qualified grammar school teachers in Germany, who are cognisant of the power that external agents, and parents in particular, have in holding teachers accountable

for the achievements of the pupils. They are acutely aware that the school system is largely self-perpetuating, with most parents of grammar school pupils having been educated in grammar schools themselves and being quick to complain if grades are not as desired. Nevertheless, Czerniawski positions Germany between Norway and England on a trust-accountability axis, with teachers still able to exercise 'informed professional judgement' (Barber, 2005 cited in Czerniawski, p.433) and whose accountability is not yet subject to the rigours of a national school inspectorate, as in the case of England.

How to act: professional autonomy

In an often-cited model, Furlong (2002) says that a teacher's professionalism rests on the three elements of knowledge, autonomy and responsibility. We have seen that subject knowledge is central to the professional identity of German teachers, although no longer to the exclusion of other aspects, as evidenced by Brovelli et al (2011). The autonomy to make decisions with regard to teaching methods (pedagogical content knowledge) and classroom management (pedagogical knowledge) remains, but functions within an institutional context in which this freedom is bounded by the responsibility to parents, as well as pupils. The pressure from external agents constrains the agency and thus the professional identity development of new teachers.

Fausser (1996) explored the concept of 'professionalism' in teaching and noted that many professions rely on the exclusivity of the professional group, which acts as a type of protective or regulatory shield. Unlike these groups, teachers are subject to the scrutiny of external 'lay' groups such as parents and he suggests that the pressure of the expectations of these groups on the new teacher can be considerable and constitutes one element of the 'Praxis shock' experienced by many. In their practice, teachers have either a 'constitutive' professionalism, where they are able to act autonomously in their school setting or a 'reproductive' professionalism, where they reproduce what is expected of them by the school or others in society. This is at the heart of teacher professional identity in terms of the autonomy or agency of the teacher and Fausser says that beginning teachers often revert to a reproductive

approach in order to survive in a professional context in which they experience what Alsop (2006) terms 'narratives of tension.'

In the above sections, parental expectations and the power of parents as stakeholders in education has been highlighted, together with its impact on the accountability of German teachers. School inspections and the observation of teaching has been introduced in a limited way in some federal states (Berlin, for example), although it is a long way from the audit culture experienced by teachers in England.

Unlike England and France, Germany has yet to participate in the TALIS studies conducted by the OECD since 2008. The academic community in Germany has been vociferous in its criticism of international comparative studies and the way in which they are used for political leverage; perhaps the memory of the 'PISA-shock' and the reforms it brought in its wake is still fresh enough for there to be some reticence about engaging in further studies. It might equally suggest that teachers in Germany are secure enough in their status in society and the strength of their professional community to be ambivalent towards this new OECD study. The current research study will aim to address such issues in dialogue with student teachers in two federal states.

How to understand: academic education

Germany has in common with France that the professional identity of teachers is predicated on their academic status, and German teacher education has been influenced by pedagogical traditions which were more theoretical than practical (Schepens et al, 2009) and ineffective at giving student teachers a knowledge base which was linked to practice (Korthagen and Kessels,2001). Nevertheless, historically German teacher education has emphasised 'didactics' as a key element in classroom practice and a substantial part of the initial teacher education programme for secondary teaching is allocated to the didactics of the subject specialism (see Chapter 2 for a detailed explanation of the teacher education curriculum, past and present). Thus German authors considering the professional identity of teachers refer to the 'didactic triangle' comprising subject knowledge, didactic knowledge (referred to by Shulman as pedagogical content knowledge) and pedagogical knowledge. The teacher

is first and foremost a subject expert, who is able to implement subject-specific methods in order to convey knowledge of the subject to the learners.

The reforms in teacher education that have taken place over the past decade have included a greater emphasis on the teaching practicum and the requirement for all teachers to hold a Masters level qualification. The increasing criticism of teachers and teacher educators by government, and reinforced in the German media since the outcomes of PISA 2000 were published, has resulted in the introduction of a competence-based approach to assessing the practical skills of student teachers. This, in itself, has resulted in a focus on professional *competence* in recent literature, rather than on professional identity per se. It is noteworthy that there has been more empirical research carried out in Germany in the past five years than in France, however, a thorough review of the original language literature indicates that neither country has a long tradition of empirical qualitative research in the social sciences, particularly in education. A transition is clearly underway that will require student teachers in Germany to move beyond the academic and focus more on practice, however, this also requires teacher educators to acknowledge the importance of practical experience and ensure that connections are made between theory and practice. Initial signs are that there is some resistance in the academic community towards adopting a profession-oriented approach in their teaching (Schriewer, 2017).

3.5.2 Teacher professional identity in France

Une société qui ne s'enseigne pas est une société qui ne s'aime pas! (A society that does not educate itself, is a society that does not love itself) (Charles Péguy, 1904, cited in Guibert & Troger, 2012:10)

Introduction

The view espoused by Péguy above illustrates the centrality of education in French society, represented by a teaching profession which has remained firmly anchored in Republican and secularist values already established in the nineteenth century. It is fair to say that until the 1990s, the professional identity of teachers had remained stable and teacher education was clearly delineated between primary and secondary

sectors and had not undergone any significant reform.

A review of literature pertaining to initial teacher education and to teacher professional identity in France, using both English (Web of Science and ERIC) and French (Google Scholar France) language sources indicates that research in this field is recent and relatively limited, with only two empirical studies in English (Asher and Malet,1999; Foster, 2000) and no empirical studies in French, although writing in this field by academics in French-speaking Canada is growing (see for example, Maroy,2006; Jutras, Joly et al,2006) .

A collaborative empirical and comparative study was undertaken by Asher and Malet (1999) which sought to elicit the opinions of student teachers in the UK and France of their respective teacher education programmes, adopting a ‘broad brushstrokes’ approach; a similar comparative study on this theme was completed by Foster and published in 2000. Both studies reported a more negative response from the French student teachers, who commented on the lack of connection between theory and practice and the variable support offered during teaching practice.

In more recent times, francophone academics¹⁸ have begun to explore the idea of professional identity development in teachers (see, for example, Bourdoncle and Robert, 2000;Gohier et al, 2001;Brisard and Malet,2004;Maroy,2006) and this has undoubtedly been prompted by the most significant transformation in teacher education in France since the early 1800s. France has begun to engage in a culture of professionalization of teachers, although slow to do so in contrast to other European countries, including the comparative countries which are the focus of this research, and in the following section the transformation of teacher professional identity and the tensions arising from this transition are explored (a detailed account of the historical development of the teacher education curriculum in France is offered in Chapter 2).

¹⁸ Included here are academics from universities in French-speaking Canada.

How to be: the teaching self

The traditional identity of the secondary school teacher in France has been that of the *maître* or *magister* (Maroy, 2006), characterised by subject expertise and teaching methods chosen for the transmission of knowledge. Indeed, Maroy suggests that this subject expertise is ‘core to their professional identities’, and a recent qualitative study into the motivation for becoming a teacher found that a passion for the subject was far more important to French teachers than the passion to teach it (Moreau, 2014). In 2004, when the French government attempted to introduce a requirement for two teaching subjects¹⁹, it was therefore no surprise that the teachers resisted such a fundamental change to their professional identity and it failed to be implemented.

Despite the predominance of the subject discipline in the individual teacher’s professional identity, more recently societal and governmental expectations are that teachers in France will address the needs of a more diverse and challenging demography in schools. The teacher education centres (IUFMs) created in 1989 were to herald a new approach to the teacher education curriculum, acknowledging the complexities of the teaching role and the importance of appropriate pedagogical strategies to deal with the changing school population. Nevertheless, subject expertise continues to be the *clef de voûte* (cornerstone) of the identity of secondary school teachers and the competitive exam to access teacher education merely reinforces the perception of academic excellence as a key facet of professional identity.

If societal expectations of teachers are high and the ‘how to be’ as a teacher is shifting towards that of pedagogue, rather than transmitter of knowledge, how does the French teaching profession regard itself within French society? In the most recent Teaching and Learning in Schools study from the OECD (2014) it is notable that teachers in France responded negatively to questions related to their status in society. When asked to respond to the statement: *I think that the teaching profession is valued*

¹⁹ See the report published by the Thélot Commission in October 2004. It should also be noted that teachers in England and Germany are expected to teach two subjects.

in society, whilst the OECD average of (lower secondary) teachers who either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement was about a third, teachers in France gave a particularly negative response, with less than 6% believing that teachers are valued in society. The perceived lack of value in society must surely influence the professional identity of teachers, with possible repercussions for recruitment of new teachers.

How to act: professional autonomy

In the previous section it has been shown that the changes to the teacher education curriculum and the institutions tasked with implementing it were prompted by concurrent changes in the pupil population in secondary schools. Policies aimed at increasing the number of students taking the *Baccalauréat*²⁰ exams, together with increased heterogeneity in schools and the challenges of managing classroom behaviour necessitated a recalibration of practice from a 'transmission of knowledge' approach to a focus on teacher-pupil relationships and learner engagement. As a consequence, the professional identity of lower secondary teachers has had the farthest distance to travel, as they grapple with the dissonance between their status as an academic in a discipline to a *pedagogue*, expected to adopt differentiated teaching strategies and cope with challenging classroom behaviour.

Maroy (2006) explains that though the professional identity of teachers in France is no longer that of '*magister*', neither have they embraced a 'teacher-technician' identity, adopting prescribed protocols for how to teach. Instead they are developing as 'reflexive practitioners', who think beyond the classroom and are expected to relinquish individual autonomy in favour of a more collaborative attitude, in which identity as a member of a teaching team or institutional collegiate plays a key role. Gohier et al (2001) go further and suggest that teacher professional identity develops over the whole career path and comprises both '*l'identité visée*' (*perceived identity*), which represents how teachers see themselves individually, including their personal values, beliefs and desires outside the professional context and the norms it imposes, and '*l'identité héritée*' (*inherited identity*), which refers to how teachers see

²⁰ The school leaving certificate equivalent to A-Level in the UK.

themselves in relationship to other teachers and the wider profession. It includes how they see their work, their responsibilities to learners and colleagues, and to the institution in which they work.

Cattonar (2001) concurs with this view and explains that teachers belong to a professional sub-culture in which the school acts as a 'micro-society' into which new teachers are socialised and yet still retain autonomy, in the sense that individuals choose to what extent they follow or comply with the norms and values of the context. Jutras, Joly et al (2006) add that the teacher's agency, or power to act, is closely related to how much professional autonomy exists to exercise professional judgement. A transition is clearly underway in France, somewhat later than in England or Germany, and there is evidence of newer teachers having adopted a more pragmatic approach to their career choice, considering teaching as a professional occupation, rather than a vocation or 'calling'.

Teacher education has succumbed relatively recently to the competence-assessed curriculum implemented in other European countries and despite a growing managerialism in schools, professional autonomy continues to be a hallmark of professional identity among teachers, as summarised in a recent study by Wermke and Höstfält (2014):

"French teachers felt more secure in their roles, their reference framework was detailed, curricula-based content, the teaching profession was entrusted by the State [-] and regulated itself by a responsible handling of the guidelines" (p.70).

How to understand: academic education

Within the three-point framework proposed by Beijaard et al (2004), the teacher's role and the expectations of society are key factors in the construction of a professional identity in France. Both factors are also intrinsically linked to the title and status of the individual teacher within the school system. In Chapter 2, the historic division between primary 'instituteurs' and secondary 'professeurs' was explained in detail, highlighting the primacy of pedagogy in primary teacher education and subject knowledge in secondary. The equalising of status that took place in 1989 has had an impact on the academic education of all teachers which is located in one higher

education institution, currently called INSPEs.

The legacy of an education culture in which teachers were believed to be ‘born’ rather than trained resulted in a ‘latent anti-pedagogism’ within teacher education for the secondary sector (Asher & Malet, 1996:276). Secondary teachers were proud of their intellectual standing, seeing themselves first and foremost as ‘transmitters of knowledge’ and operating within an academic culture which rejected the acquisition of pedagogic skills and teaching methodology as superfluous to their role. The division between the roles of ‘*instituteurs*’ and ‘*professeurs*’ was reinforced by strong unionisation of each sector, with the secondary teachers’ union undergirded by university academics determined to preserve the status quo and prevent any loss of status. Thus professional identity for French teachers was wholly connected to their title and status and secondary teachers and French intellectuals mobilised to ensure the preservation of the academic culture (Brisard and Malet, 2004).

The democratisation of the teaching profession and the unification of teacher education in one institution²⁰ meant that teaching became an all-graduate profession and the specialised teacher education institutions were charged with preparing future teachers with both theoretical and practical skills needed to be effective in the classroom. Bourdoncle and Robert express this as a dual transition, with primary teachers being ‘universitised’ and secondary teachers ‘pedagogised’ (2000:79). Understandably, resistance from secondary teachers and university academics was fierce, as they saw the move as an attack on their professional identity:

“The principle of a common identity across the whole of the teaching profession was impossible and unthinkable in view of the different natures and functions of the two sectors” (Asher and Malet, 1996:276).

Teachers in France are civil servants and French students intending to enter the teaching profession are required to sit a competitive examination²¹ administered by the National Ministry of Education, a unique feature of the French system (*une spécificité française*, Van Zanten, 2002:86). This *Concours* exam is different for primary

²¹ This examination is known as the *Concours de Recrutement*.

and secondary teachers, with the former administered by the regional education authority and the latter nationally, and is a further reason for the resistance of secondary teachers to the introduction of a unified title. The number of teaching posts for secondary schools is agreed with the treasury and therefore the level of competitiveness varies from year to year. The prestige of having succeeded in the *Concours* makes an important contribution to the professional identity of the student teacher and the status attributed to it.

The twofold purpose of the new IUFMs (see Chapter 2) was to be the professional training of teachers, including a practical placement in a school, and the preparation for the competitive exam. In practice, Lapostolle and Chevallier (2011) suggest that the time devoted to preparing for the academic *Concours* resulted in little importance being given to pedagogic aspects of the initial teacher education curriculum and to the perpetuation of a long-standing scepticism towards the professional training element of teacher education programmes. The IUFMs continued to be criticised by both education sectors and also by students, who felt underprepared for their future role (Foster, 1999,2000; Asher & Malet, 1999).

Since 2010 teacher education has ceased to be located in independent higher education institutions and has been integrated into the universities as schools of education. Student teachers are now required to complete a Masters qualification, during which they also prepare for the competitive exam, and future evaluations of this new system will determine whether it has been successful in preparing teachers for the demands of the classroom in France. In common with other European countries, French policy-makers have sought to introduce measures aimed at the professionalization of the teaching profession. Bourdoncle and Robert highlight the central role of teacher education in this process:

“Professionalization implies developing a set of values, an ethic, an ideology disseminated first and foremost by those in charge of the initial training” (2000:75).

This will have a critical influence on the developing professional identity of new teachers who are navigating between the values and ideologies taught by academics as part of the theoretical element of teacher education, and the recognition that

developing skills as a pedagogue is essential in meeting the challenges of the classroom and the expectations of society. The role of academic education and how it is perceived by French student teachers will be an important question for participants in this study.

3.5.3 Teacher professional identity in England

Introduction

Thus far, the review of literature pertaining to professional identity and, more particularly, the development of professional identity in student teachers, has included generic texts from English-speaking countries, however, a closer review indicates that there is a gap in literature which focuses *specifically* on the experience of student teachers in England. In a literature search of relevant electronic databases using the search terms 'professional identity' and 'student teacher identity or professional identity', of the 283 studies published between 1999 and 2014, only seven empirical research studies concerned student teachers in England, of which five were small scale studies related to specific subject disciplines. This concurs with a review completed by Izadinia (2013), who found that in 29 empirical studies on student teacher professional identity, only one was from the United Kingdom (Farnsworth, 2010). When literature on teacher education in England is rich, it is pertinent to ask why there has been so little focus on the developing professional identity of student teachers?

How to be: the teacher self

The aspirations and expectations that student teachers bring with them to initial teacher education generally emphasise the caring, nurturing and sometimes transformational roles of the teacher and the wish to adopt a 'pastoral mode of pedagogy' (Moore, 2004:53) This mirrors the 'nurturer professional' and 'moral agent professional' in Sockett's model (2008) cited above.

The teacher as 'academic professional', imparting subject knowledge from a place of expertise, is noticeable by its absence in studies focusing on motives for becoming a teacher. In a comparative study of secondary school teachers in England and France,

Moreau (2014) found that working with children was the most cited reason for entering teaching among teachers in England and when the subject discipline was mentioned, it was in conjunction with motivating learners rather than simply passing on knowledge. If teachers are expected to harness this pastoral pedagogy to the differentiation required to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse classroom (Arnon and Reichel, 2007), there is a certain irony in the recent reforms to education that have seen the locus of control shift to school academy trusts, where teachers are under pressure to ensure the required level of achievement in standardised assessments.

How to act: professional autonomy

“An important issue for the professionalism of teachers is the nature of, and the limits to, teacher autonomy” (Whitty cited in Cunningham, 2008:28).

Whitty argues that the autonomy a teacher has to decide how to act in the classroom has been eroded over time and is now largely determined at local at national level in a climate of increased managerialism. Furlong (2013) suggests that teacher educators still believe that the purpose of initial teacher education is to equip student teachers with the knowledge and skills to act as autonomous professionals. This approach is contrary to the notion of ‘training’ in policy documents, which prioritises the acquisition of skills over knowledge, and the quality assurance or accountability built into rubrics of teaching standards many well constrain student teachers the development of individual autonomy in how they practise as a professional. If the student teacher is indeed entering a professional landscape where compliance is expected and performance is outcomes-based, what tensions arise for the future teacher whose beliefs, values and assumptions about teaching conflict with the culture of the placement school and the education community more widely and what resolution might there be to this conflict?

Darling-Hammond and Lieberman (2012) argue that teaching is no longer considered a desirable profession, due to the large number of voluntary hours expected outside the school day, the overloaded National Curriculum and its associated assessment structure, and the challenges of managing discipline in over-populated classes. The

transparent public arena in which teachers in England locate themselves means that they are judged on the outcomes of pupils and the inspection grades of Ofsted. Any decline in educational standards is generally blamed on teachers and Whitty (2008) argues that the repercussions of this are a public loss of trust in the teaching profession, resulting in teachers being more ‘victims of change’ rather than ‘agents of change’. In the current political climate and the crisis in teacher recruitment (Independent, 21st February 2017) it is difficult to see this view of teachers as transformational or anything other than altruism.

How to understand: academic education

Hoffman-Kipp (2008), defines a teacher’s professional identity as:

“The intersection of personal, pedagogical, and political participation and reflection within a larger socio-political context” (p.153).

A key aspect here is the idea of ‘political participation’ and the suggestion that teachers enjoy some agency in terms of their political reflections and actions within the institutional and national context in which they work. What are the implications of this for teachers and student teachers in England? One distinguishing feature of teacher education in England, when compared to the two other comparison countries in this study is that instead of one, university-based system of teacher education with a focus on the academic, a plethora of different modes of teacher preparation exists in England. There has been a rise in school-based routes into teaching (for example, SCITT²², School Direct and Teach First). From the early 1990s the time devoted to the teaching practicum increased and the outcomes of teacher education were reformulated in terms of ‘competences’ and ‘standards’ to be attained in all routes. Thus there was a gradual erosion of the theory paradigm and an emphasis on the acquisition of practical skills.

Gilroy (2014) and Ellis (2010) argue that this paradigm shift has resulted in a reductionist approach to academic education that has marginalised teacher education in higher education institutions.

²² School-centred initial teacher training.

Ellis is particularly critical of an 'acquisition' model of teacher education, in which the student teacher:

“becomes acculturated to the existing practices of the setting with an emphasis on the reproduction of routinized behaviours and the development of bureaucratic virtues such as compliance and the collection of evidence” (2010:106).

In the light of this citation, the most recent statistics relating to new entrants to initial teacher education or training in 2019-20 indicate that though the move away from university-based teacher education to schools-based routes has stabilised somewhat, less than half of new entrants (48.17%) chose to study in a university education faculty, with the remaining entrants training via School Direct or Teach First programmes. This will be of particular significance when comparing initial teacher education routes in France and Germany.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a theoretical foundation for identity construction that will inform the analysis of interview narratives gathered from Germany, France and England. This foundation is aligned with an epistemology that accepts that identity, whether personal or professional, is fluid and dynamic and changes and develops through interactions, events and experiences. As such, it is appropriate to speak of the multiple 'I's involved in the development of identity, contingent on social and professional contexts. The multiple 'I's of student teachers includes their role in the family, as a pupil at school, a peer and a student at university, and a teacher and colleague in the practicum school. Thus their individual narratives comprise retrospective identities and present identities, including the personal qualities they bring to teaching and the knowledge and skills they gain. They could also be said to inhabit a prospective identity, which includes the expectations of themselves and others as teachers, and whether what they believe is a good teacher matches what teacher educators, policymakers and other stakeholders believe.

It has been established, therefore, that within discourses of professionalism and professionalisation, student teachers enter into a negotiated space, where they must navigate between their professionalism, that is, how they carry out their professional

role, and the professionalisation agenda of governments seeking to monitor the quality of their work. In this respect it rejects a purely instrumentalist approach to professional identity, based on a teacher's job description, role, responsibilities and self-efficacy (Canrinus et al, 2017) and instead considers a broader perspective in which teacher education plays a key part.

“Identity formation is a process of practical knowledge-building characterized by an ongoing integration of what is individually and collectively seen as relevant to teaching” (Beijaard et al, 2004:123).

This definition of identity construction highlights the importance of the teacher education curriculum in this process and how effectively it nurtures this ‘practical knowledge-building’ by making connections between theory and practice. Furthermore, it suggests that teacher educators can support the development of a strong teacher professional identity in student teachers by promoting a meaningful dialogue that acts as a conduit between what they as individuals and the wider teaching community consider ‘relevant to teaching’.

The comparative discussion of this chapter has focused on the different interpretations of professional teacher identity in the three comparison countries by exploring the self-as-teacher (how to be), the professional autonomy with which teachers work (how to act) and the academic education they receive as student teachers (how to understand). In each case it has highlighted that there are tensions to be resolved for student teachers in the formation of a teacher professional identity.

In England, the professional identity of teachers is set within the boundaries of tight measures of state control exemplified by a national curriculum and teachers’ standards that place constraints on their professional autonomy. The role of academic education has been diminished by the growth of more practically-oriented, school-based teacher education routes. In France, the tension is between the traditional image of the secondary teacher as a subject expert and ‘maître’, and that of a pedagogue who is equipped to manage the increasing heterogeneity in the classroom. In Germany, the professional identity of grammar school teachers has been synonymous with their academic identity. Nevertheless recent reforms to secondary schooling have prompted grammar school teachers to reorientate their professional

identity to deal with a wider diversity of pupils in their classrooms. In so doing there is a convergence between secondary teachers as broader pedagogical approaches are required to manage pupil diversity in all school types.

To summarise, the themes of accountability, autonomy, theory and practical skills influence the development of teacher professional identity and will play a central role in the interviews and the analysis of the narrative data derived from them. In the following chapter the methodology for investigating the development of teacher professional identity in student teachers will be explained. The comparative nature of the research across three countries is central to this study and comparative methods will first be explored, before attention is focused on methods for collecting and analysing data.

CHAPTER 4.

RESEARCH METHODS

4.1 Introduction

The choice of research methods depends on the research question and how best to answer it, as well as reflecting the epistemological perspective of the researcher. At the heart of this research study is the professional identity of future teachers and how this develops during the university phase of their studies. The key objective is to explore how student teachers perceive themselves as future professionals and how personal, academic and professional experiences contribute to the development of teacher professional identity.

In the introduction to this thesis, the following research question and subsidiary questions were posed:

What factors may account for the professional identity development of student teachers in the three comparison countries?

What role does the teacher education curriculum play in this development, in particular the balance and timing of theoretical and practical elements?

What similarities and differences are evident between the three countries and what might account for this?

What implications could the findings have for student teachers and teacher educators?

In Chapter 3 the review of literature pertaining to identity, and specifically, professional identity, confirmed my epistemological perspective that an individual's personal and professional identity develops through interaction with others, and as a result of experiences, to which meaning is attributed. Although the focus is on the experiences of student teachers at university, the process of teacher identity development begins long before the commencement of their university studies and the individual's professional journey also encompasses family background and influences, experiences of learning, at school and beyond, and personal values and beliefs about teaching and learning.

As this research study is conducted within the comparative paradigm, the selected research methods must be applied to not one, but three countries, with the specific aim of comparing the responses to the research questions within the context of each country. In order to explore the unique features of each country from the perspective of the individual, I have selected a blended, qualitative approach, combining the comparative contrast of contexts method attributed to Skocpol and Somers, (1980) with an analysis of interview narratives (see for example: Riessman, 1993; Bathmaker et al, 2010; Elliott, Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). Data collection will be via in-depth, semi-structured interviews, conducted in the participant's first language and transcribed, so that key themes can be identified for comparison and analysis.

This chapter will be divided into two main sections, each with a number of sub-sections. Section one will explain and give a rationale for the chosen comparative method, beginning with a brief discussion of the benefits and constraints of quantitative and qualitative approaches more generally and moving on to discuss the advantages and challenges of the selected method, the contrast of contexts. The section concludes with reasons for the selection of a small number of countries for comparison.

Section two will commence by reviewing definitions of narrative and continue by explaining how interview narratives can be analysed, including how meaning is jointly constructed through the interaction of the interview. The following sections focus on the practical challenges of transcribing and coding data. The section concludes by exploring issues around validity and reliability in qualitative research, particularly in the cross-national context, and identifies some of the challenges faced by researchers working across languages and cultures.

4.2 Making comparisons in education

4.2.1 Quantitative or qualitative methods?

Making comparisons is a natural human phenomenon and the act of comparing enables us to evaluate and make sense of phenomena we encounter every day. Comparisons at this basic level are random and may be made consciously or unconsciously. Within the

context of scientific or social scientific research, however, making comparisons is both *intentional* and *systematic*²³ (Ragin, 1980; Mahoney & Rueschemeyer, 2003). It involves the identification of an area of interest, the selection of cases to compare and the levels and units of analysis (Landman, 2008). According to Landman, cases refer to the *countries* chosen for a research study, whereas the units of analysis may be organisations, institutions, or individuals and levels of analysis may concern, for example, local, regional, national or international systems. Mahoney and Rueschemeyer (2003) offer a more flexible approach, suggesting that although the nation-state might represent the most common form of 'case', other forms of 'case' might include those organised regionally or locally, such as federal states, as in Germany, or individual organisations or institutions.

Comparative Education scholars employ both quantitative and qualitative methods, which can be used separately or in combination in a 'mixed methods' approach. Large scale studies typical of the work of global organisations such as the OECD operate within the comparative education paradigm by adopting quantitative methods in order to analyse vast amounts of data from a large number of participating countries. This statistical approach has clear advantages for those seeking to compare educational phenomena across many countries, such as the achievement of specific competences at a given age, the percentage of GDP spending in different education sectors or the length, level and type of teaching qualifications. The publication of education data in this arena may act as a catalyst for reform, providing policy-makers with firm, numerical evidence that they use to justify policy changes. There is a risk, however, that in seeking solutions to home-grown problems from other countries, particularly those at the top of international 'league tables', the data may often become detached and decontextualized. Alexander (2000) commends the self-evaluation that may be prompted by international studies, but is critical of policy-makers who import educational solutions without heeding the socio-cultural factors underpinning a country's education system. In this study, the choice of a qualitative

²³ Italicised words are for my emphasis.

approach which foregrounds the social and cultural contexts acknowledges the importance of exploring each education system as a unique entity.

A further criticism of large quantitative studies is that an emphasis on broad spectrum data precludes any in-depth exploration of the research subject, for example, in this study, the experiences of individuals working or studying within education. Here it is the use of qualitative methods that provide the researcher with access to individual biographies, principally through interaction in the form of interviews or focus groups or using written sources such as journals or observation reports.

Qualitative methods align well with constructivist and interpretivist paradigms, which seek to understand the social world and how individuals make sense of social phenomena and relationships. They refute universalism and instead pursue an in-depth understanding of people as social beings. Furthermore, comparative qualitative methods are careful to explore individual meaning-making within the context of the cultural scripts of the countries researched. In this study these 'cultural scripts' refer to a multiplicity of facets of education culture in a country, both nationally and in relationship to the ever-widening international arena. In concrete terms they include historical aspects, such as the development of the school system, sociological aspects, such as the representation of social groups in different types of school or the value attributed to education and to teachers by society, as well as cultural aspects, such as preferred pedagogical approaches in the classroom. This demonstrates the way in which comparative education draws on and synthesises other comparative social sciences (Schriewer, 2009).

There are obvious advantages of qualitative, comparative methods over numerically focused methods. Firstly, the researcher has the freedom to establish the boundaries of the research (typically a small number of cases) and is therefore able to develop an intimate, in-depth knowledge of the cases studied (Ragin, 1981). Landman (2008) evaluates the selection of a small number of cases against a large number. He suggests that whereas the latter inevitably involve an element of superficiality, the former facilitates an 'intensive, rather than an extensive' approach. Hantrais summarises this difference:

“ – whereas qualitative researchers know more about less, quantitative researchers know less about more.” (2009:100)

Secondly, as the focus of qualitative comparative research is on a small number of cases, the analytical process involves constant movement between the cases, using the selected research methods as an ‘analytic lens’ through which to examine specific phenomena across countries. In this study these phenomena are the education and practice of student teachers and their relationship to professional identity (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009).

There are, of course, criticisms of qualitative methods, both comparative and non-comparative, focusing chiefly on the issue of the subjectivity of the researcher and the issue of generalising research findings from a small number of cases to a wider community. Where quantitative researchers set the parameters for the research by agreeing specific variables and aiming for objectivity through statistical data, qualitative researchers may work more inductively, so that unanticipated variables emerge as the research progresses. There is certainly a paradox for the qualitative researcher between the clear benefits of a deep understanding of the context and a relationship with participants that facilitates a detailed articulation of their experiences and perspectives, and maintaining professional objectivity. Holliday (2007) postulates that research participants are ‘mysterious’ and that qualitative researchers cannot access and interpret every aspect of a person. He argues that the interpretation of data should be acknowledged as a subjective process, however, the researcher can maintain rigour by providing a detailed account of the research context and participants, and how the chosen methods are linked to the themes of the research.

The chosen comparative method aligns most closely with the ‘contrast of contexts’ approach of Skocpol and Somers (1980) and in the following section, the rationale for the method and possible limitations are discussed.

4.2.2 The 'contrast of contexts' method: systematic and contextualised

The linchpin of this research study is the comparison of three countries, using a case-oriented approach, in which each of the comparison countries will be explored in terms of the uniqueness of their characteristics, not in order to test a particular hypothesis. Øyen (1990) suggests that comparative researchers have shifted their focus from: "seeking uniformity among variety to studying the preservation of enclaves of uniqueness among growing homogeneity and uniformity" (p.1). Thus, small-N qualitative studies such as this one offer a close-up perspective that seeks out the 'uniqueness' of each case. Furthermore, because qualitative comparative methods are concerned with context and culture, they enable the researcher to adopt a more 'holistic standpoint' and greater 'contextual understanding' (Hopkin, 1992).

The 'contrast of contexts' method is distinguished by such a holistic approach, resulting in a highly detailed, chronological account of the cases compared, but without explicit causal references. The method is one of a trilogy of methods within comparative historical research proposed by Skocpol and Somers (1980) in response to those who viewed comparative macrosocial research as limited to the testing of a hypothesis and linked to predominantly quantitative methods. They acknowledge that the first of the three methods 'macro-causal analysis' closely aligns with hypothesis-testing approaches, however they suggest two alternative methods: the 'parallel demonstration of theory' and the 'contrast of contexts'. The former seeks out countries which exemplify an identified theoretical model, whereas the latter is concerned with the differences between cases, using 'broad themes or orienting questions' to scaffold the research.

One key objective for the researcher using this method is to expose the 'unique features of each case' (Skocpol and Somers, 1980:178) and to 'increase the "visibility" of one structure by contrasting it with another' (p.180). A further objective is to preserve the sequential integrity of each case, recognising that each one is 'a complex and unique sociohistorical configuration in its own right' (p.178). Although this research study is not, first and foremost, a comparative historical one, it applies the

contrast of contexts method in the following ways.

Firstly, there are clear themes, or 'orienting questions' that provide a framework for the research and concern the ways in which student teachers experience their training and the contribution this makes to the development of their professional identity. There are unifying features or benchmarks ('ideal types') within the comparison countries, namely, university-based teacher education that has undergone recent reforms, and which has adopted an increasingly competence-oriented approach to assessing student teachers. Secondly, the sociohistorical sequence is of importance, because reforms to teacher education fit into a wider educational and social context and timeline. For example, it would be pertinent to ask why England introduced competence-based teacher education decades before France, or why the teacher education curriculum in England places little emphasis on the teaching of theory, whilst this plays a central role in the French and German teacher education curriculum respectively.

For a comparative method to be valid, the cases must be compared in a way that is 'systematic and contextualised' and they must 'exhibit sufficient similarity to be meaningfully compared with one another' (Mahoney and Rueschemeyer, 2003:8; Bray et al, 2014). This has clear implications for the selection of cases and the basis for comparison. The term 'sufficient' above is not qualified in detail by the authors, however the educational data in Table 1 below demonstrates that there are key similarities between the three cases in the study. This data also provides an initial contextual foundation for each of the countries under scrutiny.

Table 1. Demographic and educational data of comparison countries

	Germany	France	England²⁴
No of schools (total state-funded, excl. private schools)	26,265 ²⁵	45,877 ²⁶	22,471 ²⁷
No. of teachers (total)	693,753 ²⁸	725,181	453,813 ²⁹
No of pupils in lower secondary ³⁰	4,906,857	5,699,000	3,409,277
Average class size ³¹ (lower secondary)	24-26	25.6	22
Starting salary (€) (lower secondary)	55,153	27,709	28,022

The latter is important, because it gives an indication of the status of teachers, as well as the financial incentives that might influence recruitment to the profession. It should be noted that other countries within the UK are excluded from the table and this may account for the smaller figures for England in comparison to the other two countries. The age at which compulsory schooling begins and the types of lower and upper secondary schools also demonstrate some differences (see Chapter 2 for a detailed description of the three education systems.)

These differences notwithstanding, the statistical evidence in the above table demonstrates that there are ‘sufficient’ similarities between the three cases for a meaningful comparison to be made. In addition to locating the cases within a general context, as above, reference to additional, secondary sources will deepen the educational contextualisation. Reference will be made throughout the analysis to education policies, particularly with respect to recent reforms to teacher education

²⁴ Unless otherwise specified, data provided is for the UK.

²⁵ <https://www.destatis.de/EN/FactsFigures/SocietyState/EducationResearchCulture/Schools/Tables/> Data for 2015-16 for all schools for pupils of compulsory school age.

²⁶ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/461102/number-public-schools-france/> Data for all public schools in 2016.

²⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2017> This data refers to state-funded primary, secondary and special schools in England.

²⁸ <https://de.statista.com> figures for 2015/16.

²⁹ Department for Education: School Workforce in England: November 2016 (SFR 25/2017, 22 June 2017).

³⁰ <http://ec.europa.eu/Eurostat>

³¹ <https://stats.oecd.org/>

and the introduction of national standards for teachers in each country. The timeline of education reforms provides an important historical backdrop to the research and offers a chronology of approach that resonates with the notion of 'processes over time', a significant feature of comparative historical research according to Mahoney and Rueschemeyer (2003:13). At an institutional level, the teacher education curriculum will be an important contextualising source, as it will highlight both the theoretical content and the planning and timing of the teaching practice (practicum) in schools and how this aspect of the programme is assessed in each of the countries.

The 'systematic' element to the research strategy involves the collection of data from student teachers in similar institutions and in comparable locations, through interviews and the thorough and in-depth scrutiny of the ensuing narratives. This in-depth knowledge of the cases adds 'conceptual validity' and ensures that differences can be clearly identified. (Mahoney and Rueschemeyer, 2003). The systematic approach also involves the juxtaposition of the comparison countries in terms of the key themes that have been identified or emerge from the interview narratives. The small-N nature of the research study enables a movement back and forth between the cases and is an essential component in the process of analysis and attributing meaning to the data in each context:

"By employing a small number of cases [-] researchers can comfortably move back and forth between theory and history in many iterations of analysis as they formulate new concepts, discover novel explanations, and refine pre-existing theoretical explanations in the light of detailed case evidence" (Mahoney and Rueschemeyer, 2003:13).

In practical terms, my approach to analysing data comparatively closely follows David Philips' six-stage model(2006), developed from an earlier model by Bereday (1964). The first stage in the analysis is a detailed description of the educational phenomenon under review, which Philips suggests establishes the research question in a neutral sense, without regard to the context in which this phenomenon is located. The second stage introduces the specific comparative contexts in which the phenomenon is to be studied and links well with the idea of 'contextualised comparison' described above. This study adds to the contextualisation by making reference to secondary data sources, such as demographic and educational statistics, curricular content and

national reform agendas, which will then inform the analysis. Although this is not a multi-level analysis, it is inevitable that research space will make reference to national, regional, institutional and classroom practice.

The third and fourth stages of Philips' model involves the isolation of differences between the countries and an explanation of these differences. In Bereday's original model, this is the 'juxtaposition' stage and represents the true comparative element of the analysis, comprising the interpretation of the data, the recognition of emergent themes, and the organisation of these into categories that can be linked to the research questions. The data here are the interview transcripts and the meticulous identification of themes, country by country. The fifth and sixth stages of Philips' model goes further than Bereday's final 'comparison' stage and responds to the research question by contextualising the findings and reflecting on how these could be applicable to the wider field, or (here) professional teacher education community. It is clear that the comparative method proposed by Philips goes well beyond the contrast of contexts method explained above and the following section will evaluate the method and the extent to which it responds to the research questions that are the focus of this study.

4.2.3 Challenges for the comparative researcher and limitations of the contrast method

Ragin (1981) asserts that 'Thinking without comparison is unthinkable. And in the absence of comparison, so is all scientific thought and scientific research.' (p.102) Despite this clear endorsement of comparative methods, there are criticisms of comparative approaches and challenges to be faced by researchers in making comparisons.

The advantage of the contrast method is the production of a thick and rich description of the cases, that also respects the chronological integrity of each one. The descriptive nature of the method has also been seen as its key limitation, since it stands on its own merits, without offering an explanation of the variables:

“Independent and dependent variables are never explicitly distinguished, and the chronological account, “telling the story” is allowed to suffice as the mode of conveying understanding of what happened and why.” (Skocpol and Somers,1980:193)

Although my research strategy is closely aligned with the ‘contrast of contexts’ method, it deviates in some significant ways and aims to overcome the above criticism.

My intention is certainly to produce in-depth, nuanced accounts of each case and to highlight the unique features of each one, paying due deference to the cultural and educational context, as well as recent contributory historical factors, such as policy changes and reforms to education. Unlike the pure contrast method, however, my study will not stop at the description stage, but will seek to answer the ‘orienting questions’ and offer explanations for any differences in outcomes between the three comparison countries. There are ‘variables of interest’ within the identified themes, although additional variables may come to light as the research progresses. The variables are expressed in the ‘orienting questions’ include asking participants about their school experience, their career choice, the structure of their programme of study and their initial experiences of teaching when on practicum. In doing so, the research findings may inform future teacher education practice, or at least, open a debate about the way student teachers are educated.

The literature cited by Skocpol and Somers (ibid.) gives specific examples of the contrast method as applied to macro-level units, that is, whole countries, however, the key units of analysis for this research study are micro-level, that is, individual student teachers at university. The three comparison countries are all participants in the PISA studies and their performance has prompted education reforms, albeit within different time frames and to varying extents. There is some evidence of convergence where the outcomes of these reforms are concerned, for example, differentiated teaching methods, standardised assessment strategies, competence-led teacher education and fixed terms for higher education programmes are examples of aspects of education that are becoming more similar. Therefore, can findings from micro-level studies such as this one be generalised to a wider audience?

It is important for the researcher to acknowledge at the outset of the research that data from a small number of participants from two universities in each comparison country cannot speak for the whole student teacher community in each case, either within the institution or for teacher education institutions in the country as a whole and this is not the intention of this study. What it aims to do is to offer a much more nuanced and in-depth exploration of student teachers' experiences than would be possible in a large-N study and to compare these experiences across countries. In order for the study to be valid, comparative researchers need to make transparent the role that their own culture and values play in representing the perspectives of others in other cultures (Hantrais,2009). This view is shared by Mason (2014), who argues that detachment from the indigenous language and culture in which we have been socialised is impossible and that in making comparisons, our 'reality' is inevitably shaped by our own culture and its values. Trahar acknowledges the practical implications of comparative research across countries:

“Comparative qualitative research involves more than comparison; it is also implicitly 'translation' from one audience to another, sometimes literally across languages, but always between cultures and education systems.” (2006:29)

This has particular relevance for this research study, which aims to compare three European countries and their approach to teacher education. The daunting task in this study, beyond the collection and analysis of data from the three countries, is to represent as faithfully and authentically as possible the individual educational contexts, in such a way as to make them accessible to the reader. The collection of data and the review of relevant literature is conducted in the first languages of the comparison countries, (German, French and English), with the specific objective of representing the indigenous academic community and enabling participants to articulate their stories in their own language. The issue of working across languages is covered in more detail below.

The primary source of data is from semi-structured interviews, however, validity and objectivity can be increased by the use of secondary sources. Examples of such sources in this study are university documents (including websites) containing teacher education curricula. These contextualise the orienting questions relating to the

balance of the theoretical and practical components of the programme of study. Further examples are the handbooks that accompany the practicum and the rubrics of teaching standards or competences to be assessed, and other related education policy documents establishing standards for teachers.

4.2.4 Summary

“The most fundamental characteristic of qualitative research has been identified as its commitment to viewing events, actions, norms and values through the eyes of the people being studied.” (Hantrais, 2009:98)

In the above citation Hantrais highlights the importance of the close relationship between researcher and participant in international comparative research for the production of rich and deep data. Conducting interviews in the target language of the participants will facilitate this close relationship and enable them to articulate and reflect on their experiences more naturally and more fluidly than using English as the only medium of communication. References to secondary data sources and familiarity with the canon of academic literature from each country will provide important opportunities for contextualising the ‘events, actions, norms and values’ of the participants.

The chosen comparative method has as its objective the identification and explanation of differences in the experiences of student teachers in Germany, France and England and the possible consequences for the development of their professional identity. A small number of cases has been selected, in line with the qualitative, interpretive paradigm. Commonalities between the three countries have been established, however this selection has also been made pragmatically. I have a good personal and professional knowledge of each country and have worked within teacher education in Germany and England. In addition, I have a high level of fluency in all three languages and although achieving a meaningful analysis of data collected in a cross-cultural context is still a ‘magnificent challenge’ (Alexander, 2001:510), I am confident in being able to interpret the data accurately and contextually. The personal, professional and linguistic elements of this research are strong motivating factors.

4.3 Analysing interview narratives

4.3.1 Introduction

In the previous section, the foundation for the comparative research method has been laid and the rationale for the countries and units of comparison established. This is an empirical study which focuses on student teachers at university and seeks to encourage them to articulate their personal and professional journeys to becoming a teacher. The main qualitative tool will be in-depth, semi-structured interviews, using orienting questions as prompts only. Student teachers spoke extensively about their professional biography for an average of ninety minutes, and the product of each interaction is a form of narrative text. The analysis of the texts produced provided empirical data and the comparative dimension resulted in the experiences and perspectives of student teachers in three countries being scrutinised for similarities and differences. Although not employing the narrative method in its pure form, the analysis of the interview texts takes some inspiration from the works of Riessman (1993) and Clandinin and Connelly (2000) and to the definition of narrative research offered by Lieblich et al as: “any study that uses or analyses narrative materials” (1998:2). Squire et al (2014) make a distinction between ‘narrative analysis’ and ‘analysis of narratives’ and in this sense, the narratives produced by student teachers in this study will be analysed for their content, in order to facilitate comparison and as such can be viewed as an *analysis of (interview) narratives*, rather than applying the method known as narrative analysis.

4.3.2 What is an interview narrative?

The everyday understanding of the term ‘narrative’ is that of a story, usually in the world of literature, or as a childhood memory of being read to or told a story. In the same way as making comparisons between phenomena is an innate feature of people, telling stories is a natural human activity. Beyond the term narrative in common parlance there exists some disagreement as to the definition of narrative for research purposes and what constitutes the features of narrative that can be analysed.

There is consensus that narratives must have a structure, typically a beginning, middle

and end and therefore involve some sequence or chronology. Some authors regard narratives as centred on events from the past (Labov and Waletzky, 1967). As these past events are reviewed, we make sense of them in the light of our current perspective and are better able to understand who we are:

“Individuals construct past events and actions in personal narratives to claim identities and construct lives.” (Riessman, 1993:2)

Riessman contests the notion of chronology as an essential feature of narratives and argues that in interviews narratives may be thematically organised instead, so that the narrative moves backwards and forwards in ‘episodes’ as each theme is explored. This is certainly relevant to this study, where broad themes were used to provide a flexible structure for the interview and participants were afforded the freedom to articulate past and current experiences as they felt most appropriate in their response.

If *events* are the ‘linchpin’ of narratives according to Riessman, speaking about *experiences* is also important in the context of this research. A focus on events only might not allow an individual to explore identity in terms of reactions to situations, relationships with others and feelings or emotions at critical moments (Squire, 2013). There is therefore a distinction to be made between ‘event-centred’ and ‘experience-centred’ narrative, although in practice these are not mutually exclusive.

A final feature of narrative concerns the audience for whom it is intended. In the interview context, the interviewer is the immediate ‘audience’, however, the participant may also view the narrative produced in terms of a wider audience or readership that can give voice to concerns or seek to facilitate change. In this study student teachers sometimes expressed criticisms of the curriculum or of the support offered during classroom practice, which they hope provides a voice, for themselves and their peers, to the university or even education policymakers. For the researcher, this means maintaining a keen awareness that every individual narrative is set within the context of a ‘public’ or ‘metanarrative’. In a comparative study, these metanarratives are shaped by the cultural, social and historical context of the comparison country, thus Elliott suggests that identities as expressed in narrative are:

“ [-]the product of an interaction between the cultural discourses which frame and provide structure for the narrative, and the material circumstances and experiences of each individual.” (2005:127)

In sum, narration as an activity is a crucial way of exploring and making sense of our world and our place within it (see among others, Gibbs, 2007; Bold, 2012; Benwell and Stokoe,2006). In addition to being inherently human, Squire lists the further features of narratives as having a sequence, reconstructing experiences in a way that is meaningful and resulting in evidence of transformation on the part of the narrator, as a result of the action.

Narrative as produced in the context of an interview introduces the idea of a dialogic relationship, in which the interviewer uses questions in order to encourage the participant to ‘tell their story’ or narrate their lives. It involves both events and experiences and is likely to move between the past and the present, as the narrator explores and evaluates these critical moments in their autobiography, within the cultural scripts or ‘canonical narratives’ in which they live. The interaction that takes place in the interview and how both interlocuters contribute to making meaning, and the temporal nature of the narrative are explored in more detail in separate sections below.

4.3.3 The analysis of interview narratives

The purpose of this research is to discover the way in which student teachers construct a sense of teacher professional identity during their time at university and in schools on practicum. The two objectives of the in-depth interviews were to empower the individual to talk in depth about their life and their journey into teaching and, concurrently, enable the researcher to contextualise the narrated events and experiences in terms of the social world and cultural script within which they are located (Elliott, 2005; Mischler, 1991). Additionally, as participants narrate their experiences of becoming a teacher they are given a voice:

“It encourages us to take seriously the way people construct and support their identity, because through narration people tell us what kind of person they think they are or would like us to think they are.” (Gibbs,2007:57)

Once the interview has taken place, the thick, rich and nuanced texts that are produced demand a method of analysis that stands in direct contrast to the aggregated, statistically-led approach of surveys or structured, 'formal' interviews. What the latter methods gain in generalisability, they lose in depth and detail and for this reason, analysing interview texts in this way is not used for hypothesis testing (Bold, 2012). The choice of the interview as a suitable vehicle for eliciting a detailed narrative raises further epistemological and practical questions. The form that interviews take says much about the level of detail that can be achieved and the extent to which the participant is empowered to respond. For example, faced with a structured interview consisting of a long list of questions, the participant is likely to respond with brief answers, rather than an in-depth narrative. In the former case, the power balance is firmly in favour of the interviewer, whereas in the latter it favours the participant.

Ultimately the form of interview, and the mode of analysis of the text produced, is determined by the research question. In this study, the research questions concern student teachers' motivation for becoming a teacher and their experiences of teacher education and how this biography influences the construction of professional identity and therefore eliciting a more fluent narrative through orienting questions will provide detailed data and facilitate a more expansive comparative perspective.

There are many ways in which written or oral texts can be analysed and approaches to working with verbal or written texts include discourse analysis, conversation analysis, sociolinguistics or semiotics. Analytical emphasis may be on lexical features of language, textual structure and form, or the content of the text. The former are most often the domain of discourse and conversation analysts, however, whilst the language, structure and form of the narrative can be analysed, there may equally be a strong focus on the content and interactional context. Mischler (1991) summarises the differences in approach as representing the three functions of language, structure and interactional context and likens analysing a text to looking through a photographer's lens, using different angles in the interpretation.

In this research study the emphasis is on the *content* of the participants' narratives, in

particular, how they make sense of their experiences and how or when they perceive themselves as teachers. The justification for the focus on content is pragmatic as well as epistemological. Research participants will be interviewed in the language of the country where they are studying, with the goal of removing any barriers to the free flow of ideas that might be imposed by communication in a second language.

Analysing the language and structure of the narrative would be highly complex when three different languages are involved and would require expertise outside the experience of the researcher. Variations may also occur in the 'cross-cultural story grammar' which gives additional mitigation to prioritising the content and context of the interaction (Riessman,1993).

The process involved in analysing interview narratives has resulted in authors offering different models to explain the action. A particularly clear chronology of experience-centred analysis is proposed by Riessman (1993) and is based on the semi-structured or unstructured interview context. She begins with the 'attention to' and 'telling' of an experience. Cognitive and sensory functions ensure that we become aware of particular phenomena (attending) to which we attribute meaning. We narrate the experience in the moment (telling), choosing and using language to convey the experience, though accepting that the reality of the experience can never be fully recreated. At this point the participant as narrator engages in a form of 'narrative editing', reviewing and reflecting on an experience and how to represent it verbally (Elliott, 2005). Narratives are constructed for an 'audience', so that the way in which we retell an experience will vary according to who is listening to us and why. This may well extend beyond the interviewer to an imagined wider audience.

The third stage of the process of analysing an interview narrative concerns the transcription of the narrative into a written text. Riessman (ibid.) argues that this is inevitably an incomplete representation of the narrative, since it involves interpretation on the part of both the researcher/transcriber and the reader, who reference their own cultural contexts in the process. Transcription is discussed in greater detail below.

The last two stages are the analysis itself, and the reading of the final narrative.

Analysis comprises the identification of the similarities and differences between narratives, in order to isolate themes that may then be joined together to form a 'metastory'. In this research study the themes identified will undoubtedly be part of a 'metastory' or 'metanarrative', which links the individual's experiences to the education culture of the comparison country, the teacher education curriculum and how it is organised, and the institution in which the student teacher is studying. Creating a coherent 'metastory' from a series of interviews or narratives is a challenge:

"The stop-and-start style of oral stories of personal experience gets pasted together into something different." (Riessman,1993:14)

The dilemma faced by the researcher is therefore how much to focus on the 'big' stories or themes evolving from the content and how much to consider the 'small stories' of the individual as a contributory factor to the broader picture. (Phoenix,2014; Bamberg,2004).

The final, 'reading' stage will involve two levels of interpretation. The researcher will interpret the original interview narratives and synthesise key themes in the published findings, however, the way in which these are presented will be strongly influenced by the researcher's own beliefs, values and cultural scripts. Decisions have to be made as to what to include from the original narrative, what to emphasise and what to omit. Other readers of the published findings will add a second layer of interpretation, using their own values, experiences and cultural contexts to achieve understanding.

It is clear from the chronological, five- stage model of inquiry described above that an interview is a two-way, communicative process between the participant and the researcher. The interviewer may have relatively few, broad-based questions, but there is an interaction in which both contribute to the final narrative.

"By talking and listening we produce a narrative together." (Riessman, 1993:10)

The following section explores the dialogic context of the interview as a site for the shared construction of meaning.

4.3.4 The co-construction of meaning

“Identity is not to be found inside a person (like a kernel within a nutshell) but rather it is relational and inheres in the interactions a person has with others.” (Elliott, 2005:124)

Many authors have criticised the idea that an interview is a simple interchange between two people, or in Behaviourist terms, a stimulus-response scenario where questions are a technical tool designed to elicit a response and where the interviewer holds the power and the respondent acquiesces. Mischler (1991) argues that an interview is a ‘speech event’, in which meaning is constructed as a result of the interaction between the interviewer and the respondent, producing a shared discourse, “as they try to make sense of what they are saying to each other” (p.53-4). These diametrically opposed epistemological standpoints raise issues of how knowledge is produced in the context of an interview.

The analogy of ‘mining’ and ‘travelling’ proposed by Brinkman and Kvale (2015) explains the differences in approach to knowledge production. The researcher as ‘miner’ digs down to uncover the experiences of the participant, both in terms of facts and subjective responses to situations. Knowledge is therefore ‘collected’ rather than ‘constructed’. The researcher as ‘traveller’ is a metaphor of the journey travelled during an interview. Researcher and participant travel together to discover meaning as they interact, with the interlocutors participating together in a type of circular learning process:

“Interview knowledge is socially constructed in the interaction of interviewer and interviewee. The knowledge is not merely found, mined or given, but is actively created through questions and answers, and the product is co-authored by interviewer and interviewee” (ibid,2015:63).

The above citation highlights the important role that context plays, since a narrative will never be told the same way twice and will be expressed differently dependent on the context and the audience. For example, the detail given in an interview context is likely to be very different from the same event or experience recounted to peers in everyday life, indeed many of the themes narrated during an interview may never be told in everyday life. This suggests that the context of the research interview may

promote a deeper level of reflection on experiences, as both interlocuters explore the meaning of those experiences together. Reflexivity involves self-evaluation and evaluating experiences is the “soul of the narrative” (Labov and Waletzky, 1967).

A final point about the co-construction of a narrative concerns the potential audience. In speaking about their lives, research participants may have in mind the wider readership of the narrative. In this study student teachers sometimes expressed criticism or frustration about aspects of their programmes of study or relationships with tutors or mentors that they hoped might result in improvements to the experience of other student teachers in the future. As such they can be viewed as a mouthpiece, representing the experience of a wider peer community.

4.3.5 Temporality and the interview narrative

In the world of fiction, narratives traditionally have a beginning, middle and an end. Non-fiction narratives produced through interviews as part of research may not always be as clear cut in their form, however, they certainly demonstrate the temporal nature of narration. In their seminal work, Labov and Waletzky (1967) define a narrative as the telling of a sequence of past events, thereby affirming that there exists a chronology within each narrative. Elliott concurs with this definition, but also acknowledges that others offer a more flexible definition of narrative as any extended prose. Narratives are temporal, meaningful and social and she argues that temporality provides a structure to otherwise ‘continuous streams of happenings’ (2005:7).

The meaning we attribute to a past event or experience takes place within the context of the present and all the subsequent events and experiences that have occurred in the meantime. If we subscribe to a constructivist paradigm, each new event or experience can only be perceived in relation to all that has gone previously. Thus, our research participants ‘do not hold still for their portraits’ (Riessman, 1993:15) and we need to be cognisant that the same event or experience narrated in the future may change, as the individual continually develops new understandings or new perspectives from future events and experiences, and thus attributes fresh meaning to past experiences.

The chronology of the narrative not only concerns retrospective narration as expressed in the past tense. It may also involve current views and emotions, as well as future predictions about what might happen at a future moment in time (prospective) in the individual's experience. This is especially pertinent in this study of the development of teacher professional identity, because student teachers not only recount their past educational and professional experiences, they also express their current concerns and anticipate their future professional role as teachers. Squire (2013) introduces a further dimension to the meaning making of the narrative act – the transformative effect on the individual as experiences are recounted and the journey evaluated. In this research study student teachers were conscious of this transformation, particularly as they reflected on their teaching practice experiences and the growing confidence in front of a class.

There may be an assumption that narrative chronology is one-directional or linear, however this can be challenged according to the three dimensions described by Clandinin and Connelly (2000:50): the personal and social dimension represented by the interaction of the interview, the place or situational context of the interaction and the continuity within the narrative. The latter links with the temporality depicted in other models, in that it refers to the past, present and future narrated in the interaction. The difference is the suggestion that questions should prompt narrative responses about experience in different directions: inward, outward, backward and forward. This may mean variations to themes or 'plotlines', as respondents consider, for example, the personal impact of an experience, the external factors, such as the role of the educational institution and previous experience, for example of classroom practice, with the potential challenges of the professional role once qualified.

4.3.6 The challenge of transcription

Transcribing interviews is a long, laborious process, fraught with problems. Nevertheless the production of interview transcripts is central to the analytical process, enabling the researcher to review interview texts repeatedly, in order to identify key themes relevant to the research question and to make effective comparisons between cases.

The written text produced can only ever partially represent reality and involves a transition from the language of the oral to the written narrative:

“The interview is an evolving, face-to-face conversation between two persons; in transcription, the conversational interaction between two physically present persons becomes abstracted and fixed in a written form.” (Brinkman and Kvale, 2015:203)

The audio recording of an interview at least offers a representation of paralinguistic features such as accent, the stress placed on certain words, changes in pitch, pauses and hesitations. The written version omits both paralinguistic elements and non-verbal communication, such as facial expression and gestures, which often represent tacit understandings between interviewer and interviewee, thus it poses a dilemma that cannot be resolved (Mischler,1991) or at best, necessitates compromise (Elliott, 2005). In order to achieve the most accurate and systematic transcription, a combination of repeated listening to audio versions of the narrative and proofreading of written versions, in tandem with field notes concerning the context, offers the most acceptable compromise.

Transcription is a subjective process and the researcher must make decisions about the form the transcription takes. Elliott (2005) proposes three possible forms. The ‘clean’ transcription contains only the content in words, omitting repetitions and non-lexical utterances. It may or may not contain the interviewer’s questions and may also omit punctuation, since adding punctuation itself involves an element of interpretation by the researcher, which may not accurately reflect the meaning the narrator intended to convey. The clean transcription also neglects the emotional aspect to the narrative, the way in which particular elements are stressed or the vocal emotion evident in relating to certain events or experiences.

The second form noted by Elliott is the ‘detailed’ transcription, as exemplified by conversation or discourse analysis. The use of symbols to notate pitch, pauses and emphases results in a highly detailed version of the language and rhythm of the interview. Lastly, the use of units of discourse devised by Gee (2004), which divide the transcription into single lines or stanzas of ideas, can precede the coding of themes, allowing a sharp focus on the choice of words and use of linguistic tools.

A question arises as to who carries out the work of transcribing and whether it is possible to guarantee the validity of the transcription (Lapadat, 2000). Kvale and Brinkman (2015) calculate that up to five hours may be required to transcribe one hour of interview text from a recording. Since the activity is heavy on time and resources, it is often delegated to an administrator or research assistant. This raises issues of validity and reliability, since a third party is unlikely to be as motivated to produce the most accurate transcription, as they were neither present at the interview, nor share the research interest of the interviewer.

In this research study, the added complexity of interviews conducted in three languages represented a particular challenge. For this reason, the researcher took the decision to transcribe the interviews herself, to enhance validity by having conducted the interviews and being familiar with the institutional setting and context in each case. In addition, listening to the interviews many times during transcription initiates the analytical process, making analysis concurrent with transcription, as well as following the production of the written texts. The final text will be a 'clean' transcript, prioritising the flow of the narrative, and free of punctuation in the first instance.

In order to shorten the transcription process, voice-recognition software may be employed. The software may be 'speaker dependent', which requires some training and set-up time, or 'speaker independent' which offers immediate access (Fletcher and Shaw, 2011; Alleyne, 2015). In this research study, the freely available Google Docs 'voice to text' facility was used, which is in the category of 'speaker independent' software, but has the advantage of a language selection tool, reproducing text with grammar and syntax appropriate to the language concerned. Listening to and repeating the interview text so that a document can be produced shortens the time required significantly, although proofreading is essential. The intimate interaction with the original interview provides a 'first analytical moment' with the data collected (Fletcher and Shaw, p.721)

4.3.7 Analysing the data: coding

“Coding is a process for which there are no rules, merely guidelines.” (Gibson & Brown, 2009:129)

Transcription is an integral part of the analytical process and enables familiarisation with the data and brings the context of the interview to the forefront of the memory. The next step is therefore to scrutinise the transcripts and explore the content more deeply, in order to identify key themes and highlight similarities and differences between the experiences of the participants and the relationships between them. In this study particular attention will be paid not only to individual variations, but also to the similarities and differences common to student teachers in each of the three comparison countries. This iterative process can be approached deductively, which infers that themes or codes have been decided in advance of the analysis (a priori codes), or inductively, in which case the codes arise only as a part of the analysis of the transcripts (empirical codes).

In practice, it is likely that both approaches will be used. Themes may already have taken root in the thinking of the researcher as a result of reading literature on the subject of the research study, and especially if there is a clear theoretical framework in place (Gibbs, 2007). In this research study I have drawn on both extensive reading and professional experience in order to design my research questions and the key themes to be elicited at interview. However unstructured the interview, I am cognisant of what could be termed my ‘research agenda’ and this inevitably determines some of the themes – or code families (Gibson & Brown, 2009) I will look for in the data. Examples of the overarching themes will include career choice, family influence, teachers who have been role models, experiences of the teaching practicum and the structure of the programme of study.

Coding as an activity involves ‘intensive seeing’ (Gibbs 2007:41) in all approaches to analysing interview data, however, the types of codes will vary according to the orientation of the analysis. A *structural* orientation such as critical discourse analysis or semiotics will derive codes from the way in which language is used. A *substantive* orientation focuses on content, in particular the way in which an individual perceives

the social world and expresses ideas and emotions (Ritchie et al,2014). In a practical vein, Richards (2015) suggests beginning with descriptive coding, such as gender, age and other factual features of participants, moving on to topical coding, in which themes or categories are identified and progressing to analytical codes, which aim to interpret and give meaning to the data.

My approach to coding will have a substantive orientation, since it prioritises the perceptions of student teachers and how they relate to their developing teacher professional identity. I will use topical, a priori codes as a framework for analysis and add empirical codes as the analysis progresses.

4.3.8 Internal and external validity in qualitative research

Within the quantitative paradigm the results of research represent an external reality that can be quantified, or measured, often pertaining to collection of data from a large sample size, that claims validity in terms of the generalisability of the findings. The same positivist approach cannot be applied to qualitative research methods such as narrative inquiry, because the sample sizes are usually small and the aim is for thick, detailed descriptions that have as their reference point a specific context. Critics of this approach cite the small sample sizes and small geographical area as reasons why results are not generalisable to a wider community.

Elliott (2005) delineates between internal and external validity in qualitative research and suggests that validity is achievable in both cases. In terms of internal validity in narrative inquiry, participants are encouraged to speak freely about themselves and the resulting narrative is therefore less fragmented and more authentic and trustworthy. In the discussion above, narrative elicited through interview is portrayed as being a meaning-making space, where both interlocutors contribute to the construction of meaning, thus the narrative produced is not simply a description of the participants' experiences. She cites critics who claim that the emphasis on co-construction produces a distortion of life experiences, which therefore invalidates the findings. Ultimately, the research question will determine the appropriateness of the method and if the way participants understand their experiences and give meaning to them is central to the research question, the method can be said to be valid.

The extent to which research findings produced using qualitative methods are generalisable is often left to the reader to decide. According to Williams (1998:8):

“Almost every classic interpretivist study, while acknowledging the subjectivity of the researcher and the uniqueness of the repertoire of interactions studied, nevertheless wishes to persuade us that there is something to be learned from that situation that has a wider currency.”

I would argue that there is at least some built-in external validity to this study not covered by Elliott’s explanation. Although sample sizes in each location are small, the geographical area is not, and as the essence of the comparative method is to compare contexts, similar findings in all three countries would provide some evidence as to the relevance of the results for the wider education community. Additional validity can also be derived from referring to other documentation, such as the published teacher education curriculum in programme handbooks, in government policy documents or on university websites (Bohnsack et al, 2010).

4.3.9 Validity and reliability in cross-cultural research

The comparative, cross-cultural researcher faces specific challenges related to interpreting the cultural context of the participants and the language in which the empirical research takes place. The researcher may be perceived by participants as an ‘insider’ or an ‘outsider’, and this will inevitably have an effect on the success of the process and the validity of the research findings. Liamputtong (2010) cites the four types of researcher as: the indigenous insider, the indigenous outsider, the external insider and the external outsider.

Insiders are able to reduce cultural and linguistic obstacles, either because they have been born and reside in the culture studied (indigenous insider) or because they were born and socialised elsewhere, but have been assimilated or ‘adopted’ into the culture (external insider). The ‘indigenous outsider’ was born and socialised within the culture, yet has been assimilated into an external culture. ‘External outsiders’ have none of the above links with the culture of the research, having been born and socialised within another culture (Irvine et al, 2010).

A particular challenge faced by outsiders is that of the language of interaction. There

may be situations where participants would be able to use English as the language of communication, however, even with a good level of competence, they may still feel restricted in their responses or may struggle with words for which there is no direct equivalence in English. Since we make sense of the world in our own language, including our culture, being able to express this reality in our first language has clear advantages.

Both types of 'insider' have the advantage of being able to overcome all or some of the cultural and linguistic obstacles of the culture of the research country. They may therefore be able to: "project a more truthful, authentic understanding of the culture under study" (Liamputtong, 2010:112). This, in turn, contributes to an enhanced validity of the research data and its interpretation.

Outsiders may be better equipped to view issues more objectively and in a more detailed way, because they do not overlook aspects that insiders may 'take as read'. Conversely, outsiders may be unable to read non-verbal cues or may be regarded as strangers and viewed with suspicion by indigenous participants.

There may be cases when the researcher is both insider and outsider. As a comparative researcher I believe that I am both an 'indigenous insider' in the English context and an 'external insider' in the other two comparison countries, particularly in Germany. In these cases I have been socialised and educated elsewhere (in the UK), but have spent sufficient time living and/or working in the other two countries to be assimilated into their cultures and values, as well as having near native competence in the languages concerned. This is a rare advantage (Temple 1997), however I recognise that in some sense, every researcher has facets of the insider and outsider about them:

"[-]whether native or other, we are all 'another' in the field, because there will always be facets of ourselves that connect us with the people we study and other factors that emphasise our differences" (Liamputtong, 2010:119).

4.4 Conclusion

The act of interpreting real, lived experiences is contested by some authors, who argue that it is not possible to explain or synthesise the individual experiences of participants, and interview narratives should remain as simple descriptions or 'careful journalism' (Strauss, 1987). In comparative research, however, the act of comparing individuals and cases presupposes that there must be some explanation of the commonalities and the differences, why they arise and why this is important to know.

The research question at the heart of this comparative study concerns the development of teacher professional identity among university students learning to become teachers. The analysis will focus on extended narratives produced at interview and reviewed within the specific context of the educational, social and political agendas of each of the countries involved. Participants will articulate "internal representation of phenomena, thoughts and feelings" (Bold, 2012:23) and I acknowledge that the findings cannot be generalised to all student teachers in each context. I believe, however, that the rich and detailed data collected will offer an insight into the experiences of student teachers that cannot be replicated by data from a larger sample, for example, using questionnaires.

"The methods are slow and painstaking. They require attention to subtlety: nuances of speech, organisation of a response, local contexts of production, social discourses that shape what is said, and what cannot be spoken" (Riessman, 1993:50).

The blending of methods from qualitative and comparative traditions will be the vehicle for achieving this in-depth review of teacher identity development in three countries. Despite the clear challenges, it offers an effective approach to answering the research question and exploring possible implications for teacher education more broadly.

The next chapter is the preface to the three chapters presenting the research findings and provides an introduction to how the data is to be collected and analysed, what some of the practical challenges have been in this respect and how they have been overcome. An original analytical model has been devised by the researcher to interpret the narrative data from the interviews, and therefore the chapter will offer a rationale for its design and an explanation of how it will be implemented.

CHAPTER 5.

THE 3E MODEL AS A TOOL FOR DATA ANALYSIS

The previous two chapters set out to establish and provide a rationale for the choice of the theoretical and conceptual framework for this research study, and to review the methods to be used to collect data. The purpose of this chapter is to contextualise the process of collecting and analysing the interview data. The approach will be to mirror the chronological journey I took in this study, from the early decision-making about the data sample, to the interview experience and how data was collected. The last section reflects on some of the challenges of publishing findings, in terms of issues of validity, reliability and credibility.

5.1 Selection of the research participants: deciding on the sample

There is relatively little literature on sampling per se, although it commonly forms part of more extensive texts on qualitative data analysis (see for example, Gibson & Brown, 2009; Harding, 2013; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). Robinson (2014) offers a more detailed model of the sampling process, defining four stages in arriving at a data sample: explaining the target population from whom the sample can be selected, deciding the size of the sample, choosing a sampling strategy and sourcing the sample itself. This model will be applied here, as it provides a useful structure for the discussion of the process as I experienced it.

For this research study, the target population (Robinson's 'sample universe') is all those currently engaged in university-based teacher education programmes in the three comparison countries. In order to give an indication of numbers, student teachers in their final year of teacher education courses in the 2016-17 academic year totalled 30,118 in Germany, 37,300 in France and 27,065 in England (with Wales). In the latter case, only 12,190 were studying at a Higher Education Institution and the remainder were on school-based initial teacher training programmes (SCITT). In all cases the female students outnumbered the male students, particularly those training for primary education.

In order to narrow down the target population, inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied. For the purposes of this study, students must be studying on a university course, therefore those on school-based courses such as Teach First can be excluded³². Two further inclusion criteria are that the students should be preparing to teach in secondary schools and that they must also have had some experience of teaching in a school. Typically, this means that the participants are either currently on, or have recently completed, their practicum (teaching practice in a local school or schools³³). In terms of the research aims, the development of teacher professional identity is strongly associated with practical experience and how this links to the theoretical elements of the teacher education curriculum. In both France and Germany, a considerable time is spent on imparting theoretical knowledge, before the student teacher embarks on a practicum.

Robinson (2014) suggests that the more inclusion criteria are applied, the more homogeneous the sample will be. Ritchie et al (2014) define a homogeneous sample as one that can offer a detailed review of a particular phenomenon. In this study the sample could be classed as both homogeneous and heterogeneous. The cross-cultural, comparative nature of the research means that the sample is inevitably diverse in terms of language, cultural background and curriculum. Conversely, the advantage is that commonalities across the sample are likely to be more generalisable than with a more homogenous sample. This in turn enables differences or divergences between the countries to be identified more easily. Nevertheless, within each small group of participants there is some homogeneity, as the previously stated criteria are applied to a group sharing a specific institution, within a specific location and with its own curriculum and ethos or education culture.

The decision on the size of the sample, at least provisionally, was made at the planning stage and reflects both theoretical and practical aspects of the study, in line with the research aims. The theories of professional identity development discussed in

³² Teach First began in England in 2002, and in Germany in 2008, though it has remained on a much smaller scale.

³³ Although teaching practice placements usually involve nearby schools, it should be noted that in two of the universities in the study, a practicum in a neighbouring country is also a requirement.

Chapter 3 propose that personal and professional identity are not mutually exclusive and emphasise the role of the participants' life story in shaping identity. For student teachers this will be reflected in their motivation to become a teacher, the influences of family, friends and school teachers, their values and beliefs about education and their early experiences of being in front of a class.

Each participant is given the opportunity during the interview to narrate his or her story, the journey towards becoming a teacher and the events and experiences that have punctuated this journey. In order for the participants' stories to be analysed intensively and to have a 'locatable voice' in the study, the sample size needs to remain relatively small (Robinson, 2014: 29). As well as the 'voice' of the individual, the comparative nature of the study means that the participants in each location are representing the voice of the community of teacher education in that country. Thus the sample size needs to be large enough to enable commonalities, differences and relationships (Gibson and Brown, 2009) to be identified between the three countries.

In practical terms, research using in-depth interviews, across three countries, is resource-heavy. In addition to the interview itself, time must be allocated for travel, communication with participants and academics at each institution before and after the interviews and familiarisation with the venue ahead of the interview. In most cases, the room allocated for the interview will be unfamiliar to the interviewer, who must choose the most appropriate layout for seating, so as to create a positive and comfortable environment for the interview. Post-interview there is, of course, a lengthy time period required for transcribing the interviews into analysable texts. For a solo researcher, working with the challenges of operating in three languages in three countries, the sample size must therefore be workable and the data produced manageable.

At the design stage, I planned for a sample size of ten in each country, using participants from two comparable universities in each case wherever possible. In the case of Germany and England, the process of data collection went largely to plan. Cognisant of the fact that "collecting in-depth data leads to challenges that are *never* entirely predictable at the outset of a project", it was the French sample that proved to

embody this challenge (Robinson, 2014:31). Access to research participants at one university alone took over a year to organise and therefore the whole sample was ultimately derived from one French source. In this sense, sampling can be termed an 'organic' process, developing over time, as obstacles in the recruitment of participants arise and the original plan must be adapted (Mason, 2002). With a planned thirty participants, this sample falls within the parameters of 12-60 given as a rule of thumb for qualitative research (Adler & Adler, 2012; Ragin 2012).

A critical part of the sampling process concerns the choice of sampling strategy, since this can affect the authenticity and credibility of the findings for those reading the research study. A 'convenience' strategy, for example, which selects participants in the vicinity, easiest to access or available at the time, can introduce an element of bias into the sample, which is undesirable. The sampling strategy used in this study is best described as stratified purposive sampling. Purposive sampling refers to criterion-based sampling, where the researcher has previously identified specific characteristics of the target participant group, "which will enable detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes and questions which the researcher wishes to study" (Ritchie et al, 2014:113). This has been established above as student teachers at university, preparing to teach in secondary education and having embarked on their practicum. The stratified aspect refers to groups in the sample that vary in relation to a certain phenomenon but are otherwise quite homogeneous. The sample for this study varies in terms of the geographical location and home institution of the participants, however, they share the common experience of studying to become a teacher. In this sense the sample could so be classified as 'typical' (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016), because the participants represent average student teachers, rather than those who are unique in some way or deviate from the expected norm.

The final stage of the sampling process is the sourcing of the sample. This is potentially the most challenging aspect of the preparation phase of any research study – how to convince otherwise often overstretched student teachers to take part in an interview about their experiences. In this respect I was able to utilise my 'insider' status (see Chapter 4), by exploiting the teacher education network and beginning by contacting colleagues already known to me. Although they can perhaps be seen as gatekeepers

of their institutions, they acted as intermediaries, approaching potential participants on my behalf. Using this as a starting point, I was able to interview student teachers in two universities in Germany, one in France and two universities in the Greater London area.

In one German university, the participation process was extended by the opportunity to observe the student teacher participants teaching a lesson, prior to the interview. This experience had obvious advantages, namely the chance to see the teacher education curriculum in practice and recognise the expectations in terms of knowledge and skill, as expressed in the assessment criteria. In addition, I was also able to get to know the participants before the interview. In the two London-based universities I was given the chance to speak to groups of student teachers at the end of a lecture. After explaining the purpose of the research, anyone willing to be interviewed was asked to write their name and email contact on a sheet of paper left near the exit and out of my view. Neither the lecturer nor the students were known to me, so the participants were those who were particularly interested in the topic of the research.

In a second German university I was employed part-time as a lecturer for one year and therefore it proved much easier to source a sample of students and timetable the interviews, as they were familiar with who I was and where I was located. In this case I was operating as a true 'insider' and the sample was a mixture of students I knew and others who were unknown to me. The advantage of knowing students is that they should feel more at ease during the interview, however, as discussed later in this chapter, the relationship is not that of peers and is therefore unequal, in terms of perceived power relations between student and teacher. A major advantage of this role was accessing the contact between the university and a partner institution in France. It was a colleague in the International Office of the university who contacted a French colleague on my behalf and who in turn proved very helpful in finding a number of participants from his own student groups. Numbers were smaller than desired and therefore a return visit was organised the following year to achieve a viable sample of eight French participants.

5.2 Ethical considerations

Atkins and Wallace (2012) emphasise the need for an ethical approach to permeate all aspects of the empirical research process for those involved in education:

“We believe that an ethical approach to educational research is essential not *only* in the context of undertaking ethical research, but because it is part of being an educator –“ (p.30).

The narrative method at the core of this research study involves participants narrating parts of their life history and therefore places a great weight of responsibility on the researcher to ensure that participants are as well-informed as possible about the implications of their consent to participate, as well as their right to withdraw at any stage, or to choose not to respond to certain questions. The researcher should be honest and authentic with regard to their role and the reasons for undertaking the research, not only with the participants, but also with themselves.

“writing is never neutral or innocent because it is a social and political activity with consequences and that, as such, writing about, and thereby re-presenting, lives carries a heavy ethical burden” (Sikes cited in Bathmaker & Harnett, 2010:11).

My integrity as a researcher means that it is important to acknowledge two issues involved in the interview process and the data produced. Firstly, I must recognise and respect the power relationships that underpin the interaction between research interviewer and interviewee. In the majority of cases the participants and I had not met prior to the interview, however, they had been informed of my work in teacher education and in most cases, had responded to requests for indications of interest or willingness to participate from their tutors, who were also teacher educators. The implication of this is that although participation was entirely voluntary, the participants are likely to have related to me – at least initially – as an academic peer of their tutors, rather than a student peer. Before starting the interview itself, I was able to mitigate some of the perceived differences, by emphasising my student role and explaining the purpose of the research and the anticipated benefits for the participants. In most cases this resulted in an in-depth and frank narrative from the participant student teacher being interviewed.

The second issue concerns the interview narrative as expressed in both the text of transcription and the interpretation of the interview data. However accurate the transcription, it represents the narrative of the participant at a point in time, in what Sikes describes as a 'fix, freeze and stop the clock' moment, acknowledging that post-interview, what has been narrated could never be repeated at a future point (Sikes, p.15). Making sense of experiences is a temporal process that will inevitably change with subsequent experience and the knowledge and understanding that comes with it. The researcher must remain cognisant of this temporality in the interpretation of the data (see Chapter 4 for a more detailed evaluation of the analysis of interview narratives).

For the purposes of this research study, the participants were all adults over the age of twenty-one and were students at one of five universities in the comparison countries, England, France and Germany. In order to ensure an ethical and equitable approach, documents relating to obtaining informed consent were translated into French and German for participants in those countries. Each participant received information about the research in the form of a letter, introducing myself and my dual role as doctoral student and teacher educator and explaining the comparative nature of the research and its purposes. As participants cannot be expected to have the same understanding of the research project as the researcher (Atkins and Wallace, 2012), potential participants were given the opportunity to ask further questions, either by email, or face-to-face, when there had been an opportunity to introduce the research and its purpose to a group of students in person.

At the interview meeting, I explained the form the interview would take and reiterated to the participants that the interview was entirely voluntary and that they could say as much or as little as they wished on any aspect or stop at any point. I gave further opportunity to ask any questions and obtained further consent with regard to the recording of the interview. Confidentiality and anonymity were emphasised and participants were reassured that recordings would be deleted once the interview had been transcribed and that no names of either the participants or their institutions would be disclosed. The suggested time frame for completion of the thesis was explained and many participants expressed an interest in reading the final work,

especially because of its comparative perspective.

It has been suggested that asking participants to review the interview texts can add validity and empower those who have participated. The decision was made not to pursue this for practical reasons. As the interviews were carried out in three countries over a period of four years in total, many of the participants had since completed their studies and were working as teachers. Thus email contact had been lost in most cases. Logistically, contacting twenty-eight participants individually and waiting for responses would have extended the time frame of submission beyond reasonable limits. It should be noted that one participant did contact me and requested a copy of the interview for the purpose of providing evidence of for an award in intercultural communication. This required me to confirm the role of the student teacher concerned and write a short summary of the objectives of the research study. This was a positive reciprocal and unexpected benefit of the research. Other participants gave unsolicited expression to the value they had derived from taking time to reflect on their journey to becoming a teacher during the interview, and how this connected to the development of their teacher identity.

Having passed the ethics review process prior to commencing the collection of data³⁴, I have since updated my understanding of research ethics by successfully completing the GDPR training at the UCL Institute of Education³⁵.

5.3 The 3E analytical model

The theoretical framework discussed in Chapter 3 established that teacher professional identity cannot be seen as having a fixed start or completion point, but is fluid in its development and influenced by a multiplicity of events, experiences and interactions. These may begin with conversations conducted with family members or friends who are teachers, which portray a particular image of teaching and continue with experiences of school or extra-curricular activities as a learner. Teacher education will offer new experiences and opinions of teaching and learning, in

³⁴ Confirmation of approval by the IOE Research Ethics Committee on 23.02.2015.

³⁵ Confirmation of successful completion of GDPR course on 30.10.2018.

interaction with teacher educators, teaching practice mentors and other colleagues. Once in post the development of professional identity continues, through growing experience, professional development opportunities and encounters with reforms driven by the political actors and their education agendas. Judyth Sachs offer a succinct definition that summarises the complexity of teacher professional identity development:

“In the development of professional identity, teachers draw on their own experiences as a student and as a teacher, their personal and professional histories inside and outside of schools, as well as the images of teachers presented in the popular media, films, fiction and so on” (in Kompf and Denicolo, 2005:8).

Thus to suggest that we are merely passive recipients of the outworking of the social environment on us is to deny that we can and do make choices in how we respond to each situation, informed by our past experiences, values and beliefs.

Sachs has described the three key elements of teacher professional identity as ‘how to be, how to act and how to understand’ (2005:15) (see Chapter 3 for an expanded explanation of the model). Davey (2013), although focusing on teacher educators’ identity, employs a similar approach, using the five descriptors ‘becoming, being and belonging’ (Sachs’ how to be), ‘doing’ (how to act) and ‘knowing’ (how to understand).

The model that is used to frame the analysis of data in this research study pays homage to the models proposed by Sachs and Davey, but offers an alternative, temporal perspective on the development of teacher professional identity that, in addition, provides an in-depth exploration of three different phases, specifically for student teachers. The model is composed of three lenses on identity: emergent, evolving and epistemic (Fig.2) These lenses correspond with themes elicited from the interview data and the sub-sections of prompts or questions asked during the interviews.

5.3.1 Emergent Identity

The *emergent identity* phase acknowledges that the journey towards becoming a teacher starts long before the commencement of formal university studies in the

discipline or in education. Participants' nascent teacher identity emerges as they narrate and reflect on their childhood experiences of teaching and learning, positive and negative. They describe teachers who they consider to be role models of the profession and summarise their conception of good teaching. The culmination of this early phase asks them to articulate their motivations for choosing teaching as a career. Interview prompts for this phase were as follows:

- *Tell me about your motivation for becoming a teacher. Did you consider other careers?*
- *Are there teachers in your wider family?*
- *Describe your experience of school. What kind of pupil were you? Did you enjoy school?*
- *Can you remember any teachers who you would consider positive role models?*
- *Any negative experiences?*
- *Describe the qualities of a good teacher for you.*

The model (Figure 2, below) is constructed to show where different phases or stages in teacher professional identity development overlap. The emergent identity connects with both the evolving and the epistemic identities. In terms of the overlap between emergent and evolving identities (1), it quickly became clear from the participants that previous practical experience of working with children and young people had had a strong influence on their choice of a teaching career. This experience had served as a kind of 'testing ground', which they used to confirm their suitability for teaching and enhance their motivation. The overlap between emergent and epistemic identities (2) demonstrates that student teachers may develop tacit theories of teaching and learning while at school and whilst working in different contexts with children or young people. The practicum may endorse or develop many of these tacit theories or may challenge them.

In describing both positive and negative role models, participants reflected on the practice of those teachers and the experience of the learners. This, in turn, led to the conclusions they drew concerning the qualities of a good teacher. Many also reflected on the qualities they bring to teaching, utilising their image of a good teacher as a kind of checklist or template.

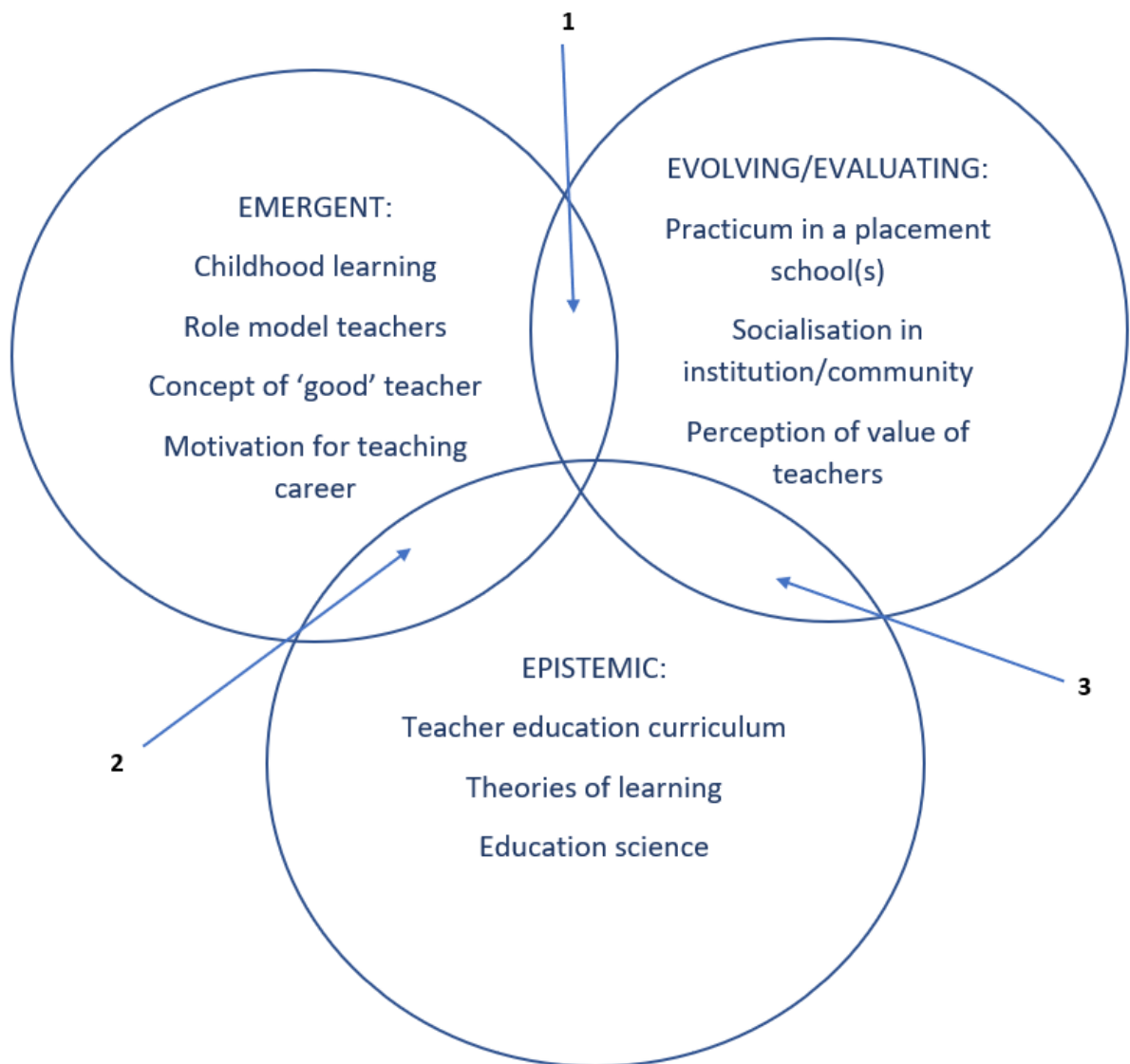


Figure 2. 3E Phased Model of Teacher Professional Identity Development

5.3.2 Evolving Identity

The evolving identity phase charts the student teachers' development once on their teacher education programme, as they embark on the practicum and encounter the classroom from the teacher's perspective for the first time. This phase is naturally a shorter, more intense time than the emergent phase, as student teachers evaluate each experience and attempt to reconcile the dissonance of their espoused theories with the 'praxis shock' (Smagorinsky et al, 2004) of encountering the reality of teaching as it is. Student teachers are socialised into a school community, with its own ethos and particular practices and policies, as well as facing the demands and expectations of being observed and assessed against formal teaching standards. As such, their concept of *professionalism* in terms of wanting to be a 'good teacher' may collide with the political agenda of *professionalisation* as incorporated in the teaching standards. Finally, these first steps to joining the wider teaching community may also introduce the student teacher to the place society attributes to the teaching profession.

Interview prompts and questions related to evolving identity are:

- *Tell me about your experience on teaching placement.*
- *What were the highlights and challenges for you?*
- *Describe your relationship with your mentor and tutor.*
- *What did you learn from your practicum experience?*

5.3.3 Epistemic Identity

The epistemic identity link to Sachs 'how to understand' and Davey's 'knowing' and refers to the pedagogical and didactical knowledge assimilated from the teacher education curriculum. Episteme refers to formal, testable, universal and value-neutral knowledge (Eisner, 2002), but in teacher education this should be connected to the application of that knowledge in practice³⁶. The timing of the theoretical and practical elements for student teachers can be largely concurrent or consecutive, when the

³⁶ Application of theoretical knowledge is termed *phronesis* or 'situational knowledge' (Korthagen, 2010).

theoretical component is ‘front-loaded’ (Allen, 2011) and followed by the practicum. During the interview, participants are asked to explain the content of the curriculum and the extent to which they feel confident to make links between the theory and the practicum (3). Prompts and questions were:

- *Describe the content of your teacher education programme.*
- *Were any theories particularly relevant? Did they inform your practice?*
- *Extent to which theory and practice are linked.*
- *Balance between theoretical and practical components of the programme.*

5.3.4 Rationale for using the 3E model as a comparative analytical tool

In the following chapters each element of the 3E model will be used to analyse the interview data from the three comparison countries, with reference to literature on developing themes, particularly other empirical studies. A review of first language literature indicates that although many themes have been the subject of extensive research, particularly career choice and the role of the practicum, two key features are evident. Firstly, there have been very few comparative studies on any of the elements of the model that focus specifically on student teachers. Secondly, although there are numerous studies on topics such as motivation for becoming a teacher, others are listed, but not investigated, for example, the influence of former teachers on current practice or the role that previous experience of working with children plays in the choice of a teaching career.

The catalyst for many recent studies is the concern about the shortage of teachers experienced by many countries, not least the three that are the focus of this study. Not only are there insufficient numbers of applicants wishing to train, but there are also problems of attrition due to both the difficulty in retaining teachers in England and the large number of teachers approaching retirement in Germany. The situation makes it imperative for teacher educators and policy makers to ensure that the curriculum equips student teachers effectively for the demands of the profession. Providing student teachers with a voice to articulate and evaluate their experiences is the first step to ensuring that teacher education supports the development of a strong

sense of teacher professional identity:

“Teacher education usually tends to focus on the future pupils of the student teacher and not on the emerging professional identity of the student teacher” (Furlong, 2013:68).

Furlong goes on to explain how student teachers map their previous experiences and lay theories to what they learn on a teacher education programme that inevitably “reflects the influence of the surrounding societal and more particularly education landscape” (p.71) In this context, the challenge of this research study was to identify the similarities and differences in experiences, whilst being fully cognisant of the importance of socio-cultural differences with regard to education and how these might inform the responses of the student teacher participants. In a comparative study of classroom practice in England, France and Germany, Leach and Moon draw attention to the value of studying across countries:

“There has been little sustained analysis and understanding of the nature of cultural differences and how they influence the day-to-day life in schools – in particular how they influence teachers’ work” (1999:125).

The findings of this study should advance our understanding of how teacher education in each country prepares student teachers for this day-to-day work and how it influences their emergent, evolving and epistemic identity. As the analysis in the following chapters demonstrates, there are both expected results, that might endorse the ‘culturally embedded archetypes’ (Furlong, 2013:70) and quite unexpected results that cross cultural and geographical boundaries.

CHAPTER 6.

EMERGENT IDENTITIES

6.1 Introduction

One tangible sign of the development of teacher professional identity is calling oneself a teacher for the first time. For student teachers this can occur at any time before, after or during their teacher education studies. With reference to the 3E model of this research study, it reflects either the culmination, or intersection, of emergent, evolving and epistemic identity phases of professional identity development. The development of this identity is analogous to a journey, rarely straight and direct, and often a complex trajectory, progressing at different paces at different points in time, in what Britzman terms 'the tension between being and becoming' (1991:32, see also Akkerman and Meijer, 2011).

What motivates someone to become a teacher? It is generally accepted that early, formative experiences of teaching and learning while at school can have a powerful influence on how future teachers perceive the work of the teacher, in what Lortie (1975) calls an 'apprenticeship of observation' and which results in the construction of lay theories of teaching. Moore (2004) concurs with this view, proposing that student teachers have already formulated a clear idea about what constitutes 'good teaching' before they begin their teacher education studies. An individual's school experiences and the teachers who have contributed to both positive and negative memories at school affect both the motivation to enter teaching and the perceptions of what effective teaching should be, (Feiman-Nemser, 2012; Sinclair, 2008). Mifsud suggests that these school experiences can act as 'push and pull' factors for someone considering entering the teaching profession and describes them as follows:

"An interplay of various related factors, experiences as direct recipients of schooling at the compulsory school attendance stage act in both negative and positives modes to shape these participants' career motivation at a rather young age". (2018:66)

For the purposes of this study, the first or 'emergent' phase of teacher professional identity development is explored by considering student teachers' biographies of their

journey from childhood to the start of their teacher education programme. Thus, in the first part of the interview, they are asked to narrate their 'chronologies of becoming' (Britzman, 2017), by reflecting on their motivation for becoming a teacher, their experiences of being a learner at school, positive and negative teacher role models and their perceived qualities of a 'good' teacher.

The choice of teaching as a career has been the subject of a number of empirical studies, however other aspects of the emergent identity highlighted in the previous chapter have rarely been discussed in the literature and not at all from a comparative perspective. Bergmark et al (2018) emphasise the lack of research into the relationship between the motives for teaching and student teachers' previous experiences as pupils at school, and why this is critical for an understanding of the development of teacher professional identity:

"It can be argued that student teachers' formulating of motives and perceptions of the teaching profession may be the first step in the development of their identity as teachers, albeit in the beginning of the process." (p.3)

In Germany, König and Rothland (2012) made a similar reference to gaps in research in their empirical study of career motivation:

"Preservice teachers' motivations developed before starting university have not been taken into consideration" (p.290).

In addition to experiences of school as learners, a key omission in existing literature concerns the role that previous experience of working or volunteering in an educational setting has on the motivation to become a teacher. In addition to complementing existing single country studies and by presenting a comparative perspective that is lacking in the literature, the findings from this research will offer an original and comparative perspective on the under-researched aspects of teacher identity formation outlined above. The key questions to be addressed in this chapter³⁷ are:

³⁷ For a full list of interview questions see Appendix 2.

- what has motivated student teachers to choose a teaching career?
- how have their positive and negative role model teachers influenced this decision?
- what do student teachers consider to be the qualities of a good teacher?

6.2 Motivation for teaching and career choice

6.2.1 Previous research studies on motives for becoming a teacher

Research into the motivation for choosing a teaching career is not a new phenomenon and can certainly be traced back as far as the seminal sociological study of schoolteachers by Lortie (1975). More recently the impetus for such research has been in the context either of an ageing teaching workforce, as in Germany, or teacher retention and attrition. These studies are seeking to find a solution to the problem of commitment and retention among student and beginning teachers and why they fail to complete their studies or leave the profession post-qualification. Sinclair (2008) notes that much research on this topic was undertaken in the United States some time ago and seeks to provide more recent data. Her findings relate to student teachers in Australia and their motives for choosing teaching, with the objective of using this information to predict the likelihood of them remaining in the profession at a time when recruiting and retaining teachers is a challenge.

As part of a wider qualitative work on teachers' lives and work, Huberman et al (1989) researched teachers' motives for entering the profession and distinguished three categories of motivation: active, passive and material. Active motives included a desire to work with children, a love of their subject and the wish to impart knowledge and to influence their pupils' life chances. Passive motives were related to seeing teaching as a fallback career, resulting in a reticence to commit to teaching in the long-term. Material motives concerned teaching as offering financial security, diversity in the nature of the work and compatibility with family life.

More recent research has built on these early categorisations and there has been consistency in the literature of authors employing a typology of motivational factors, grouped into intrinsic, extrinsic and altruistic motives (see for example: Bergmark et

al, 2018; Moses et al, 2017; O'Brien and Schillaci, 2002; Fokkens-Bruinsma and Canrinus, 2012). Within each group, there may be many factors, such as the ten listed by Sinclair (2008): a love of imparting knowledge and a desire to work with children (intrinsic), a sense of vocation or 'calling' and a strong sense of wanting to make a difference in the community or wider society (altruistic) and the influence of others or perceived benefits of the profession, such as job security and working hours compatible with family life (extrinsic). An interesting addition to this three-category typology is offered by Friedman (2016) and concerns the concept of narcissism as a motive for teaching. He proposes that teaching is synonymous with performance, where teachers "are 'on stage' in a self-glorifying role, self-consciously performing" (p.627). Friedman maintains that narcissism is not, in fact, dichotomous to the selfless motives generally associated with altruism, but is part of a continuum that includes 'healthy' narcissism, which elicits respect, and a leadership style that keeps pupils focused on a task.

A widely cited quantitative study by Richardson and Watt (2006) presents a Likert-based model to examine why people choose a teaching career, termed the FIT-Choice scale (Factors Influencing Teaching Choice). Of particular relevance for this study is the finding that most participants believed that teaching would be a satisfying career, despite its obvious demands and challenges and, for some of these participants, prior experiences of working with young people increased the perception that they had the requisite skills and qualities for teaching. Fokkens-Bruinsma and Canrinus, (2012) (see also: Canrinus et al, 2012a) are critical of the FIT-Choice model, however, arguing that it fails to consider the relationship *between* motives. They suggest that this relationship can result in pre- service teachers being 'adapted' or 'maladapted' towards their teacher education studies and future profession, and propose that there is a clear correlation between being well 'adapted' and their level of commitment to remaining in the teaching profession.

In Germany the FIT-Choice model was adapted for an extensive study of five universities by König and Rothland (2012) in which student teachers' level of motivation is linked to their academic achievement at university, with a particular focus on the assimilation of general pedagogical knowledge. General pedagogical

knowledge, integrated in education science, is one element of the theoretical foundations for classroom practice and includes understanding learners and the learning process, as well as classroom management strategies. Glutsch and König (2019) also used the FIT choice scale with pre-service teachers and focused on the role of the subject discipline in the motivation to become a secondary teacher. This theme will be revisited in Chapter 8 on epistemic identity.

Research studies on career choice using quantitative methods predominate, however, there have been a number of small scale and longitudinal qualitative studies. Source materials often reference students' written texts which include autobiographical aspects such as reflective journals or practice portfolios used in teacher education programmes (O'Brien and Schillaci, 2002; Bergmark et al, 2018). Large-scale studies may also employ a mixed methods approach, in which quantitative or qualitative data is complemented by interviews, in order to achieve a more nuanced perspective of student teachers' motivation (Elliott, 2005).

The timing of research into career choice in the biography of the participants is important to many authors. Bohndick et al (2017) are critical that most studies of career choice focus on teachers or student teachers already *in* teacher education. They argue that greater validity of research into career choice can be achieved by questioning school leavers, rather than student teachers and therefore carried out research with pupils in the final year of ten grammar schools across Germany. Their justification for this approach is that after starting teacher education:

“the memories of themselves making prior decisions about the profession and their perceived competencies might be romanticised.” (p.571)

Whether or not student teachers have romanticised views of their career motivation once they have started their practicum is questionable and will be explored further in the interviews conducted for this study. It would also be valid to ask how many 18-year-olds finishing school are unwavering in their decision to become teachers?

Kyriacou and Coulthard (2000) explored the career choice of undergraduates in terms of why they might or might not choose a teaching career, rated against twenty factors. They found that high numbers of respondents believed that teaching would fulfil

intrinsic motives such as caring for others and working with children or altruistic motives, such as contributing to society. In a review of empirical studies on teaching as a career choice, Heinz (2015) listed 41 studies carried out in 23 countries. The greatest number of these were from the US, however, nine European countries were represented, including Germany and the UK. From the perspective of this research study, there are two noteworthy points. Firstly, the majority of studies have a one country focus and the number of comparative studies is very small. Secondly, France rarely features among these studies published in English. A review of French language literature on career choice has only elicited one such study by Berger and D'ascoli (2011), however, French-speaking Switzerland and not France is the focus of the study. In Germany, the aforementioned study published in English by König and Rothland (2012) offered a within country comparison, and a further study by these authors in German, compared career motivation in three German-speaking countries (König, Rothland et al, 2013). No other German language studies on the topic could be found. Finally, one qualitative study by Moreau (2014) compared secondary school teachers' career choices in France and England. In the latter case, the majority of participants had already been in the profession for over ten years and were therefore responding with the benefit of experience and hindsight. At this point it is pertinent to ask why there is so little empirical research on student teachers in France and Germany? A review of the literature suggests that whilst the key English-speaking countries have a long track record of empirical and qualitative research in teacher education, wide academic acceptance of qualitative empirical research in this field has come later in France and Germany. Studies cited here have been undertaken within the decade and indicate that qualitative research in teacher education is only recently gaining momentum.

There is clearly a dearth of comparative studies in the area of career motivation with regard to teaching and no empirical research comparing France, Germany and England. This research will therefore fill this gap and offer an original insight into the subject in the three comparison countries.

Heinz concludes:

“There is clearly much room for advancing the field of teacher career motivation research, and future projects should aim to engage in much more nuanced analyses of trends within as well as similarities/differences between countries and contexts.” (2015:275)

Motivation as it relates to career choice and the factors that influence it are not mono-dimensional and are highly individual, forming a complex web of interlocking elements. It would therefore be pertinent to ask whether it is valid to attempt to compare career motivation across countries, since the cultural context inevitably adds to this complexity? In considering the role of culture, Holliday suggests that in order for qualitative research to move beyond the ‘everyday’, it “must take on the discipline of making the familiar strange” (2007:13). This research study will seek to do that, by moving from the ‘familiar’ reasons for choosing a teaching career, to explore the ‘strange’ or the unexpected results that can be derived from undertaking an in-depth comparison. It will also aim to fill in the gaps of the pre-university experience mentioned above by König and Rothland (ibid) and drill down into the detail of the social and pedagogical influences in the three comparison countries.

In Chapter 5 the sampling strategy for the participants highlighted the importance of achieving a relatively homogeneous group in each country, as well as in the group as a whole. The findings will therefore be presented firstly on a country by country basis and then comparatively. In each case the motivation aspect of emergent identity will be presented in two stages. Firstly, there will be an analysis of the data, using the typology of intrinsic, extrinsic (or pragmatic) and altruistic motivating factors, in order to establish congruence with existing studies that use this typology. Secondly, data yielding unexpected results will be explored, particularly the incidence of second career choice student teachers and the explicit recourse to previous teaching-related experiences, as a conscious ‘testing ground’ for career choice.

6.2.2 Research Findings

6.2.2.1 Germany

All the German participants gave intrinsic reasons for becoming a teacher. Whilst only one expressed a lifelong vocation to become a teacher, the rest cited strong social motivations, including a desire to work with people, or more specifically children and to help and support people. Four had originally considered other people-oriented occupations, such as social work, police work or paediatric medicine, before settling on a teaching career.

A significant result from the German cohort was that the confidence in their career decision was connected to previous experience of working with children and young people. In the 3E model developed for this study, the overlap between the emergent and evolving phases of teacher identity development suggests that this previous experience plays an important role in both the career choice and the confidence with which student teachers approach their practicum. Eight participants cited previous experience as a reason for their career choice. This experience included private tutoring, sports instruction, youth work and taking a *'freies soziales Jahr (FSJ)* (free social year) working in a school or other educational institution. Two other elements linked to previous experience were evident. Firstly, the majority of this group also described their experience of working with children as 'fun', indicating a perception that in making this decision, they would be predisposed to enjoy the profession they had chosen. Secondly, they had used their previous experience to verify their career choice, using it as a kind of 'testing ground':

I started teaching sports. It was a kind of 'key experience'[-] It was so much fun and proved to me that I can do it.[-] So I am a teacher by conviction. (Johannes)

There were a small number of altruistic and narcissistic reasons given for becoming a teacher. One participant stated a belief that education had the potential to solve many of the world's problems, whilst a few others spoke of imagining themselves standing in front of the class and passing on knowledge.

It is interesting to note that the use of language also demonstrates that these student

teachers are already identifying themselves as teachers during this pre-teacher education phase. This could be attributed to the fact that at the time of the interview they have the pre-university and current practicum experiences to draw on and may therefore feel a strong sense of continuity between these various experiences of teaching and learning. This therefore enables them to call themselves ‘teachers’ at an earlier point in the development of their professional teacher identity.

One participant added to intrinsic motives what could be considered a pragmatic reason, stating that she particularly wanted to use her knowledge and skills in higher level teaching. This highlights a key decision that faces German student teachers. They not only have to choose between primary and secondary teaching, they also need to decide on the *type* of secondary school and select the appropriate teacher education programme accordingly (see the section on Germany in Chapter 2). Two participants explained why they would not choose to work in a grammar school, but preferred the perceived pedagogical challenges of the two other types of secondary school:

*Originally, before my FSJ, I wanted to teach in a grammar school, but [-] in the grammar school everything is so easy and when you have seen the pedagogical tough cases [-] and enjoyed it so much, I decided to work in special education.
(Jannick)*

6.2.2.2 France

The French participant cohort demonstrated a high level of reflection on possible career choices, however, in stark contrast to the German findings, only a minority of two participants cited intrinsic reasons for their career choice or having a sense of vocation for working with children and young people. Within this small number, one student had begun to train as an ‘animateur³⁸,’ but changed study pathway due to a perceived lack of recognition for this professional role. A second participant had always wanted to teach and gave additional, altruistic reasons for the decision, explaining that she believed her role would be to provide a good foundation for children’s future, by being a role model for behaviour and values that pupils can use in

³⁸ An ‘animateur’ is a type of youth worker, including those who work in summer camps known as ‘colonies de vacances’.

their future studies and career.

The majority of French participants stated extrinsic reasons for becoming a teacher, such as job security, improved chances of securing a good post, geographical location and professional autonomy. Taking these reasons in turn, job security is an unsurprising motive, since, as civil servants, French teachers are employed directly by the State and are therefore guaranteed a job for life. This is especially true in the current climate, where France struggles to recruit sufficient teachers for its future needs. Four of this group had originally hoped to continue as academic researchers, envisaging doctoral studies as a starting point. This was particularly true of those who had already completed a Masters in their subject discipline. A combination of personal and professional reasons had led them to reconsider this option, particularly the uncertainty of future career prospects in academia and the high cost of the studies. Faced with this situation, teaching offered a suitable alternative and stable employment.

I thought I would become a researcher at a university. [-] I did a research masters and I loved it [-] but then I realised it would be difficult to continue. It (teaching) was the best solution in terms of the studies I had completed and being able to quickly get a job. (Olivier)

With siblings yet to enter Higher Education, this student was concerned about the financial burden further studies would place on his parents and was uncertain how future employment prospects might look after completing his thesis.

The geographical location of this cohort of student teachers plays a role in their career choice in two respects. Firstly, the participants' university is in the region of Alsace, close to the border with Germany. Many of the participants were attracted by the possibility of working in bilingual schools after qualification. The programme of study is open to those who have studied German or are from German-speaking families and includes extended study and a teaching practicum in the German partner university. This option is only offered for primary education and this led to an additional dilemma for the participants, particularly for those who had envisaged an academic career and therefore might have been expected to opt for secondary level teaching. Secondly, choosing primary teaching means that student teachers will be offered a post within

the 'Académie'³⁹ and can therefore remain in the region in which they have studied. Conversely, student teachers for the secondary sector are posted nationally and may be sent to a school in another region, often in one of the priority education areas⁴⁰ in large urban conurbations, away from family and friends. Thus, the combination of bilingual teaching and staying within the region meant that the participants compromised on possible higher-level subject teaching, in order to ensure some stability in their personal lives. In addition, they were aware that choosing the bilingual teaching route would offer better chances of passing the competitive exam and securing a post at the end of the two-year Masters programme, since there is less competition for such posts.

For two participants teaching was a second career choice and pragmatic reasons were also offered for this change in direction. In one case, the student teacher had taken a professional degree in engineering and had worked in the field for some time, travelling across the country in her role. At one point she had considered a transition to teaching but was informed that her professional degree would not meet the entry criteria. Following some serious health issues, she re-evaluated professional opportunities and found that she would be accepted for teaching in the primary sector:

It's not a vocation at all, well it's a late vocation at least! (Nathalie)

In the second case, the participant had been a professional dancer all her life, although she had previously completed a university undergraduate degree, but had subsequently failed the competitive examination. The uncertainty of securing regular employment and the need to provide stability and security as a single parent led her to reconsider and to apply for teacher education as a mature student. This example is relatively rare in France, where the system is geared towards an academic pathway of entering university straight from school and then completing an undergraduate

³⁹ The French education system is divided into administrative districts called 'Académies,' of which there are twenty-six in mainland France.

⁴⁰ Zones d'Éducation Prioritaire (1990+) are designated areas of socio-economic disadvantage where additional resources, including teachers, are provided to combat educational inequalities.

degree and a Masters in Education (MEEF) for those wanting to teach.

Finally, a small number of student teachers stated that having professional autonomy as a teacher was a reason for their career choice. This was a surprising result at this stage and indicated a high level of reflection on the teacher's role and what it entails. There are two possible explanations for this finding. Firstly, although teachers in France are required to follow a strict national curriculum, they have autonomy over how to organise this curriculum and the way in which it is taught. There is also little monitoring of their work by others, either internally or externally, and teachers tend to view the classroom as their professional 'territory'. Secondly, some of the participants were in their M2 year and were therefore spending half the week teaching in a school '*en responsabilité*' which means they are afforded full responsibility for the class during that time and experience a certain level of autonomy, even during their training (see the section on France in Chapter 2).:

I think that teachers have [more] autonomy and have the opportunity to do things that are a bit more creative. (Hugo)

One participant added that the amount of administration was a negative aspect of the work, but that he considered that it was outweighed by having autonomy in the classroom. The concept of professional autonomy will be revisited in greater detail in Chapter 7, which explores the participants' experiences during the practicum.

6.2.2.3 England

Responses from the English participants evidenced a more complex picture in terms of their motivation to become a teacher. In terms of intrinsic motives, there were two categories of respondents. Four stated that becoming a teacher had always been in their thinking, however half of them had chosen to pursue other careers, with a view to teaching at a later point. Of the remaining participants, who had enrolled in teacher education programmes directly after their university studies, one explained that she came from a family of educators and was fully cognisant of the ramifications of her career choice and also, altruistically, of the benefits of education to society. This 'real world' view could be considered as a fusion of intrinsic and altruistic reasons.

The second category of participants cited intrinsic motives with considerable conviction. This group represented student teachers for whom teaching was to be a second career and represented two thirds of the English participants. The key professional reason given for the career transition was growing dissatisfaction with previous employment roles and the search for a career they believed would be more fulfilling. Personal reasons for moving careers tended to be more pragmatic and included choosing a job with family-compatible working hours. For some participants, they felt the need for a career they would find more challenging or meaningful. One example concerned a participant who had worked in an environmental science role, which he found increasingly unfulfilling:

I just couldn't see what impact I was making, and I wanted something to change. I looked into teaching and thought this is going to give me that satisfaction, adding value to someone's life and actually inspire them about the environment that they're in. (Adam)

Changes in career are not often undertaken lightly and in order to make an informed decision, many of these participants made a conscious choice to seek work as teaching assistants, in order to experience the school environment first-hand and evaluate their suitability for the work involved. The secondary schools involved were often in disadvantaged areas and the work was challenging, however, that of itself seemed to offer additional reassurance to these participants that they would be able to cope with any school environment:

I (became) a teaching assistant to see if I enjoyed it and I really liked it. It was a terrible school and I thought, if you can endure this, you can do anything. (Emma)

It was not only the second career participants who used experience of working with children and young people to confirm their career decision. Five student teachers referred to positive previous experiences of working in an educational environment as playing a major role in their decision to become a teacher. This was an unexpected and unsolicited response and demonstrates how student teachers draw on these experiences before enrolling on a teacher education programme, as well as providing them with confidence as they begin their practicum (see Chapter 7.) These participants had used experience of working with youth organisations or as student ambassadors to review their skills set with respect to teaching. They spoke of a sense

of fulfilment when their students retained learning and when they could see them progress and develop. Some described what might be termed narcissistic motives, explaining that they felt empowered standing in front of groups of students to teach and enjoyed the 'act of teaching' itself:

[-] at university I got involved as a student ambassador [-] and I absolutely loved it, getting up in front of kids, you know, showing a bit of me off [-] I felt it was almost like a stage performance and I loved being in the spotlight. (Tim)

One group were of particular interest and could be termed 'second career, second chance' participants. Although this was only two of the English student teachers interviewed, their narrative is significant, as it is evidence of an education system in which those who have under-achieved at school in some way are offered a second chance at gaining a higher education qualification. These participants had followed an adult-specific Access to Higher Education course, enabling them to apply for an undergraduate programme. In each case the ultimate goal had been to complete a PGCE programme and become a teacher. Perhaps unsurprisingly, their narratives describe revelatory moments about teaching and learning, or education in general, together with altruistic motives:

I had a dysfunctional background. [-] I went to college but I dropped out. [-] I was a bus driver [-] but it became monotonous and I needed to find a challenge and then looking at being a teacher, that was always the main route I wanted to go. [-] I just wanted something different and something, because I have two kids as well, something for them to look up to and to aspire to. (Lewis)

None of the English participants had been motivated by purely extrinsic reasons, however, one second career student teacher explained that she thought teaching would accommodate her parenting responsibilities and a few participants cited the financial advantages of a bursary as a reason for choosing the university route to qualification.

6.2.3 Motivation to teach: comparative analysis

This section aims to draw together the findings on career motivation across the three comparison countries and summarise key similarities and differences. It will be seen that although contextual factors underpin all the findings, they are most significant in

terms of the divergences between the countries. The literature review above highlighted that there have been few empirical studies on career choice in European countries and even fewer comparing two or more countries. The latter have generally focused on similarities between countries and none have included all three comparison countries from this research study. In the following section the divergences between the countries are of particular interest and are analysed in-depth, in order to make a specific contribution to a field of research that has not yet been investigated.

Intrinsic motives were apparent in all three countries and the most commonly cited of these are displayed in Figure 3 and are broadly in line with other studies (Rothland,2010; Richardson and Watt, 2006; Sinclair, 2008; Bergmark et al, 2018.) Working with children was a strong intrinsic motive in all cases, although this was also expressed as a general desire to work with people or in a social occupation. Sharing knowledge or expressions of passion for one's subject was least cited as a motive by German student teachers. A possible explanation for this difference is the way in which the teacher education curriculum is organised in the three countries. In France and England, undergraduates generally study one subject discipline and follow this with postgraduate teacher education. This means that the choice of subject is often one that evokes strong positive feelings in the student, who at this point may not yet have made the decision to become a teacher. The immersion in subject study may therefore account for the higher number of these student teachers who offered passion for the subject as a motivating factor:

One of the reasons that I decided to do secondary education and Geography in particular, was, I think, the passion I have for the subject. I felt that it was really vital knowledge, that connects the world as a whole. (Tim)

The German participants were all required to study at least two subjects⁴¹, concurrently with education-related topics, and these subjects may straddle two very different disciplinary areas. This division of study into many different subjects could

⁴¹ A brief review of relevant university websites demonstrates the flexibility in subject combinations available to student teachers, for example, a science with a language or a humanity.

offer a plausible explanation for the lack of specific commentary by the participants. The student teacher cited below gave pragmatic reasons for her subject choice, illustrating the complexity of combining diverse elements of the programme in Germany:

There was no place available in Biology and I had to decide whether to wait or quickly choose another subject and I chose Design Technology. (Doris)

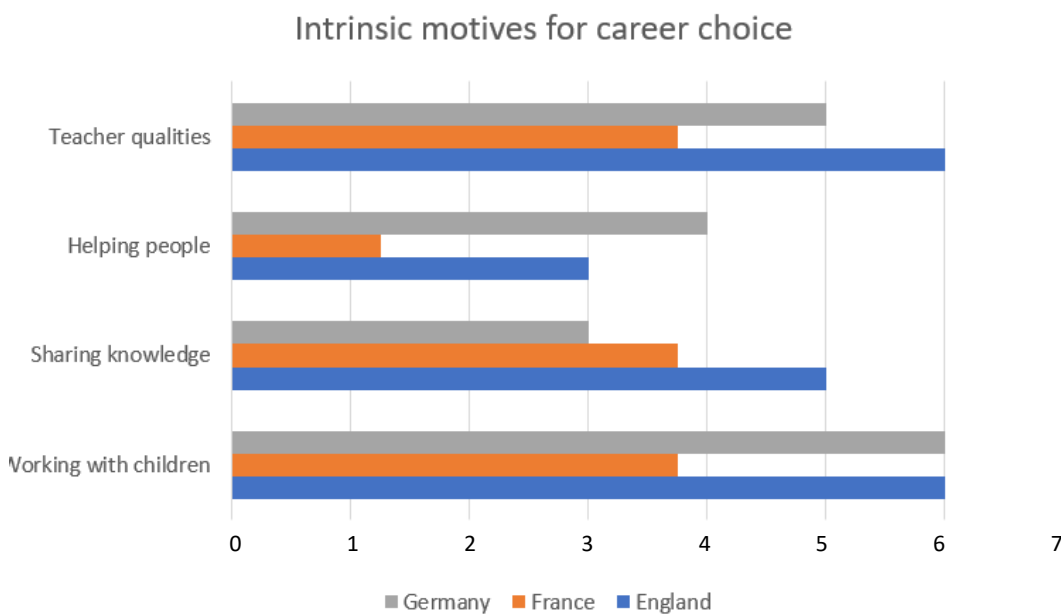


Figure 3. Motives for choosing a teaching career

In addition, the decision to become a teacher is usually made at the point of entry into university and therefore the curriculum is structured with this in mind. This early career choice might go some way to explaining why German student teachers prioritise other factors over studying a specific subject or combination of subjects.

The importance of the teacher-pupil relationship was prioritised by German student teachers throughout the interview. Linking this aspect to career motivation, many expressed a strong desire to help children and young people, to listen to their problems and to equip them with life skills.

I absolutely love children [-]to be a teacher and accompany them in life and give them a good start and watch them develop was my main motivation. (Julia)

The desire to work with children as a strong intrinsic motivation aligns with many empirical studies on career choice (see for example: O'Brien and Schillaci, 2002; Sinclair, 2008; Mifsud, 2018; Thomson et al, 2012), also termed 'helper-identity' (Bergmark et al, 2018).

The last intrinsic motive commonly cited by participants concerned the belief that they possessed the requisite qualities to be a teacher. This was more prevalent among the German and English student teachers and might be attributed to the fact that within these groups a higher percentage had previous experience of working with children and young people, which in turn gave them the confidence that they had qualities suited to the teaching profession. This supports Löffström and Poom-Valikis (2013) finding that participants with higher 'teacher efficacy beliefs' demonstrate a stronger motivation to become teachers and the view expressed by Knowles et al that "previous experiences are most important in the formation of an image of self as teacher and what it means to be a teacher" (1994:34).

Empirical studies that include the role of previous experience in the motivation to enter the teaching profession as one of a list of factors (see for example, König and Rothland, 2012) have not offered an in-depth or nuanced study of this area. One example from German literature is the research on career goal orientation among German student teachers by Rothland (2010), who found that over a third of students who had previously worked with children or young people were more secure in their decision to become a teacher.

Much of the previous experience narrated by participants was gained between school and university, during a 'gap year'. This was absent among French participants and can be explained by systemic reasons, since the concept of taking time out between leaving school and starting university is a recent phenomenon and has only been formally approved from the 2018-19 academic year. Universities may refuse deferred study and students must provide details of a specific project they plan to complete and how it will benefit their studies (Le Monde, 9th March 2018). This means that student teachers interviewed for this research study would not have had this opportunity.

The strength of influence that previous experience of working in education had on participants' career choice was an unsolicited and unexpected result from the interview data in this comparative study. It should also be mentioned that there were several participants from all three countries who had entered teaching as a second career and who therefore had previous professional experience, though not in education. Interestingly, of this group, the majority had had some experience of working with children and young people, even if this was not involved in their previous role. Figure 4 illustrates the comparative perspective between the three countries. As this is an unexpected result, it is important to analyse these two phenomena and seek reasons for the differences between the countries.

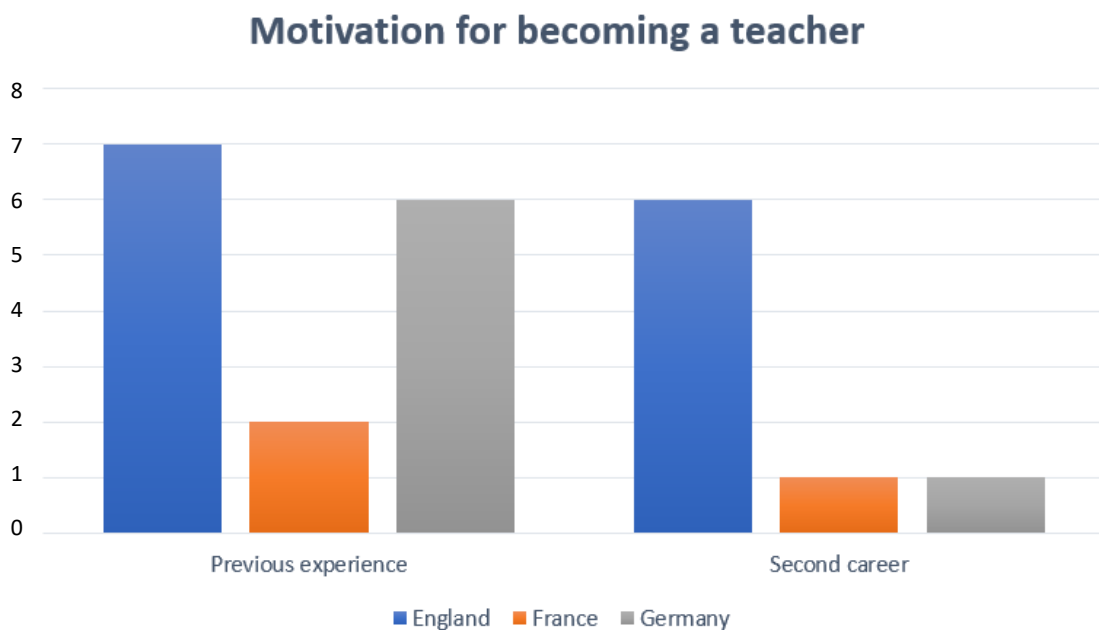


Figure 4. Previous experience and second career teachers

It became evident during the interviews in Germany and England that student teachers had made a conscious decision to create or avail themselves of opportunities to experience teaching and learning in a variety of settings, before making a commitment to teacher education studies. This phenomenon was largely absent in the French participant cohort, although one student had worked on the activities team in a summer camp for children. This is not uncommon among students of 17 or 18, as a way of earning during the long summer vacation period, however, this was

not reported as a deliberate choice for exploring teaching as a career.

The nature of the previous experience was quite different in England and in Germany. In the latter case, many students had chosen to complete an FSJ, a year spent in an educational setting, often with children with physical, cognitive or behavioural challenges. They receive a small monthly stipend and are awarded points that can be used in their favour when applying for a university place. Other students worked voluntarily in different educational institutions. This experience confirmed their decision to enter the teaching profession and showed them that they had some of the requisite qualities, as well as showing them that they would find the work enjoyable.

Figure 4 shows that seven of the English student teachers had previous experience of working with children or young people before embarking on teacher education. In contrast to the German participants, four had made a conscious decision to work as a teaching assistant or similar, in order to test their decision to become a teacher. The socio-cultural context is important here, as most English schools employ teaching assistants to support classroom teaching, which is not as common in the other comparison countries. In the following case, the participant had worked as a teaching assistant in a particularly challenging, inner city school and saw the experience of being able to rise to the demands of the learning environment as a kind of 'rite of passage', proving to themselves that they could work in difficult classroom situations:

A really very poorly performing school. And I went in there as a TA essentially, but then they were like, can you teach some lessons now? (laughing) And yeah I did and it was, it was fun, you know I got some lesson experience in. (Andrew)

In another case, the experience of working with young people before university prompted the participant to take an education module as part of his undergraduate studies, involving a considerable number of hours in a school:

I had to get 100 hours in a placement school with an after school club and I helped in a local primary school and secondary school with teaching and built up the hours and it went towards my degree and just reaffirmed the decision that I definitely want to go into teaching. (Sebastian)

This demonstrates that German and English student teachers, in different ways, used their previous experience to confirm their suitability for teaching. The German context

has a well-established system for working during a gap year or longer period. The English context is one where finding a post as a teaching assistant is relatively straightforward, particularly in urban areas and where volunteering in youth organisations is commonplace. This also means that student teachers in these two countries tend to be older and more mature when they commence their studies and are highly motivated towards teaching. This finding contradicts the claim by Bohndick et al (2017) that student teachers are likely to have a romanticised view of their career choice, since the participants in this study had clearly made an informed choice and were under no illusion as to the realities of the teaching profession.

By contrast, although a small number of French students had worked at summer camps in school holidays, this had not been undertaken with any specific view to entering the teaching profession. In this group extrinsic outweighed intrinsic motives and concerned job security, professional autonomy and location.

A second unexpected finding was the relatively high number of English participants for whom teaching was a second career. In line with other, single country, studies (Richardson and Watt, 2005; Mattarozzi, Laming and Horne, 2013), the motivation to change career had little to do with extrinsic factors such as remuneration, and much to do with dissatisfaction in the previous career and the belief that teaching would offer a fresh challenge and be a rewarding career. For most of these student teachers, a good degree in an appropriate subject had been the only prerequisite for entry onto a PGCE programme, with qualification being awarded at the end of a year. For others, the journey into teaching was much longer, beginning with an A level equivalent programme (Access to Higher Education), followed by undergraduate study and a PGCE. For these students in particular, the commitment to becoming a teacher represents a considerable personal investment.

In the other two countries only one student in each had chosen teaching as a second career. The French participant was seeking job security for her family and the German participant was a highly qualified migrant, who could not continue with her first career

in Germany. The increasing shortage of teachers in Germany has prompted changes to the system to allow 'Seiteneinsteiger'⁴² to qualify as teachers. This applies especially to federal states with large urban conurbations, for example, recent figures for North Rhine Westfalia suggest that more one in ten teachers is a second career teacher (11.3% in 2019:www.deutsches-schulportal.de). The process is lengthy, with most graduates requiring two years of study in a second subject, followed by a practicum year and assessment. France and Germany do not offer a second chance equivalent to the Access Course for those who have not achieved the school leaving certificate.

6.3 School Experience and Role Model Teachers

6.3.1 Introduction and previous studies

The second element of the Emergent phase within the 3E model focuses on the experiences of schooling and role model teachers described by the research participants. Whilst this cannot be divorced from the motivation to become a teacher, the influence of others on the individual student teacher merits separate analysis for two reasons. Firstly, although this theme occurs in studies as one of multiple motivating factors, few authors have studied this specific aspect in any depth. Secondly, where attention has been given to the school experience of student teachers, no authors have offered a comparative perspective on this topic. The comparative lens enables the researcher to go beyond the individual commentary and reflect on the role the educational culture plays in each country. It seeks to ascertain what similarities there are between the participants and whether differences can be attributed to the cultural archetypes of teaching (Sugrue, 1997) in which they have completed their schooling.

A review of literature on the motivation to become a teacher yields plenty of evidence of the influence of lay theories and conceptions of the ideal teacher on that process. These lay theories and ideas about 'good' teaching are formed during the student

⁴² Seiteneinsteiger, refers second career teachers who have a university qualification and therefore complete just the second phase – Referendariat – before being fully qualified.

teacher's schooldays. In their study of students' written narratives on motives for teaching, O'Brien and Schillaci (2002) found that twenty-eight percent stated that their views of what teaching is were due to the impact their teachers had on their lives. Lortie (1975) terms this concept of early school experiences of teaching and learning an 'apprenticeship of observation', which results in student teachers coming with 'internalised models of good and poor teaching through observation and countless hours in classrooms' (Anspal et al, 2012, 197.) Mifsud (2018) concurs and suggests that past experiences as a school pupil is the most influential factor in determining career choice, as prospective teachers wrestle with 'push and pull' (positive and negative) memories from their schooling. Indeed, negative experiences at school can lead the would-be teacher to work out what kind of teacher they do *not* want to become (Löfström and Poom-Valickis, 2018). The nature of pupil-teacher relationships and the use and misuse of power in that relationship is the subject of a poignant study by Uitto (2011), in which students give accounts of experiences of humiliation and injustice at the hands of their teachers. It became evident that negative memories have had a lasting effect on the student in each case, often more so than with favourable memories. Uitto says that qualitative research asking students to describe negative teacher-pupil relationships is rare. She suggests that an opportunity to process such memories ought to form part of initial teacher education, since this would enable students to gain a better understanding of the nature of teacher-pupil interactions and the power of the teacher to determine a positive outcome.

In a study of student teachers' texts explaining why they chose to become teachers, Bergmark et al (2018) identified four discourses, the first of which was a desire to (re)create the *caring* school. Students who had overwhelmingly positive experiences of school were seeking to replicate this in their practice. Those with negative experiences of school were motivated by the opportunity to redress the balance by ensuring their practice was the opposite of their school experience. The authors propose that these experiences are not only motivating factors, but also play an important role in establishing their teacher professional identities:

“The students’ own school experiences were the basis for the expressed feelings concerning teaching and have great significance for the construction of their pedagogic identities” (p.11.)

Sinclair (2008) suggests that the ‘influence of others’ is one factor affecting the choice of a teaching career. These ‘others’ include family and friends and past teachers. In this study, only one student teacher in each country came from a family where there were teachers, therefore this would suggest that the role of teachers at school has a potentially greater influence on these participants and the developing sense of who they want to be as teacher. In an Israeli study of student teachers’ perceptions of the ‘ideal’ teacher, Arnon and Reichel (2007) found that the participants already had a clear image of this ‘ideal’ before they began their teacher education studies, formed in both social and educational environments. Moore (2004) agrees that memorable teachers play a key role in the perceptions of ‘good’ teaching that student teachers bring to their teacher education studies and that these perceptions can be entrenched and resistant to change. The resulting dissonance between these notions of the ‘ideal’ teacher, the tacit theories of teaching they have developed and the classroom reality that they encounter as they embark on their practicum will be explored in more depth in Chapter 7.

In the following section, findings from each of the three comparison countries will be presented, paying particular attention to what Britzman (1991) terms the ‘cultural baggage’ that might explain differences in the experiences and conceptions of teaching between the participants.

6.3.2 Research Findings

6.3.2.1 Germany

The majority of German student teachers had enjoyed their schooldays and believed they were good learners, although many commented on specific subjects which they found difficult or in which they achieved lower results. This positive experience can largely be attributed to the German secondary school system, since all but one participant interviewed had attended grammar school, where the focus is on academic excellence and expectations from both teachers and parents are high. The

students were forthcoming with a number of different examples of positive role model teachers and negative experiences of others. Six participants commented positively on teaching methods, highlighting innovative and varied use of strategies to engage pupils, even when the participants acknowledged that they themselves were not strong in the subject. They also commented on being encouraged to learn independently, using different resources to solve problems. One participant was particularly impressed by the flexible approach of a science teacher who had completely changed the planned lesson to discuss a topic that had recently received considerable media attention. Another described at length a Geography teacher who used innovative resources and a wide range of methods:

One teacher in the sixth form was super, both in subject knowledge and in rapport with the class [-] he used a particular chocolate to show us the layers of the earth's atmosphere [-] we went outside a lot and he used a very rich variety of methods [-] it was fun, he was just an open person, always well-prepared. (Kersten)

Although the 'stand out' experiences mainly concerned the use of more interactive teaching methods, three of participants believed that a more traditional, lecture-style approach had certain merits. This was especially true when preparing for formal assessments, when these participants expressed a greater sense of security from the teacher-centred approach, and how this had resulted in them feeling better prepared. Two student teachers admitted that they preferred a lecture style and expressed dislike of more interactive methods such as group work. One participant explained that the 'older' teachers in her school tended to use more teacher-centred methods and that those who used this approach helped her prepare more effectively for assessments. She went on to say that less effective use of traditional methods often resulted in boredom and feeling under-challenged. Younger teachers at this school used a wider range of methods and she hoped to copy these in her practicum.

Another participant described a French language teacher who was heavily focused on the textbook, but gave clear explanations:

{he} was very textbook intensive and didn't seem prepared to engage us, [-] he taught his subject clearly, but I missed the variety. (Anne-Marie)

German participants also rated highly an engaging style and a teacher personality that

motivated them to learn. Three mentioned specifically that it was this type of teacher who had inspired them to choose a teaching career and whom they hoped to emulate in their own practice. Establishing a good rapport with pupils and showing empathy was considered important by three participants in this group. This result was initially somewhat surprising, as this quality had featured strongly in the initial interview question, when participants recounted their previous experiences of working with children and youngpeople. It is possible that the proximity of these questions in the interview narrative meant that participants felt it had been implicit in their first response and had therefore not prioritised it when describing positive role model teachers.

Negative experiences at school focused on the use of humiliation by teachers and feeling unfairly treated. Participants spoke about being humiliated when giving a presentation in front of the class. The *Referat* is a common form of summative assessment in German education and involves preparing a prescribed topic to present orally to the class:

As far as humiliation is concerned, it was like a conveyor belt where every lesson a student cried because they had to do a presentation and the teacher sat at the back and said 'that's not correct' and then asked a question the student couldn't answer and just looked right at the student – not saying anything, just looking with a black expression and that was pure humiliation, really awful. (Lauren)

Other participants spoke about being put down by teachers when they asked questions in class. One described a Maths teacher as 'autocratic, a destructive person who humiliated us.' Whilst most spoke about similar experiences, others mentioned assessments that were set at too high a level for the class or that lesson topics lacked relevance or were delivered without enthusiasm by the teacher.

6.3.2.2 France

The French participants made several comments about teachers who represented good role models for them. In presenting these findings, it is important to recognise that there is inevitably some overlap between perceived attributes. Firstly, this is because some aspects may be expressed in different ways, but mean fundamentally the same, for example, some participants spoke about 'empathy' with pupils, whilst

others called it 'rapport', therefore these two terms have been amalgamated under one category. Secondly, one participant may have described more than one role model teacher and thus the percentages are not necessarily representative of the group as a whole.

The most often cited attribute concerned teachers who stood out because of their enthusiastic teaching style, including their dynamism in class, their obvious love of teaching and their passion for the subject. Clearly connected to this enthusiasm, but listed separately, is the personality of the teacher. Participants spoke about teachers who were humorous, relaxed, quirky and interesting and were able to create a positive learning environment in which pupils enjoyed learning. What seemed particularly important to French student teachers was that their teachers demonstrated empathy with pupils and established a rapport with them. They commented on feeling 'noticed' or 'valued' by teachers who took the time to get to know the class and understand the pupils. This is interesting in the context of an education system currently in a period of slow transition from traditional, teacher-centred methods, to more learner-centred approaches.

Half of all comments related to the types of teaching methods used by role model teachers, although there was an interesting diversity in the perception of 'effective' methods. Interactive and creative methods were often cited and clearly contrasted with more traditional approaches. The following participant comments on both the methods and the empathy of the teachers concerned:

I have a good memory of an English Language teacher at college [-]she used contemporary songs and we were really interested to discover what was hidden in the music of these songs [-] she was kind [-] she was interested in us, I think she tried to put herself in our shoes. (Claudette)

Other participants mentioned their appreciation of well-structured lessons and clear explanations, which helped them understand the subject and gain confidence:

She was very structured and that helped me to learn [-] she was really strict and had a severe way of teaching [-] but I found it helped me to progress a lot. (Joanna)

The above citation illustrates an unanticipated result from the French participants, which is that having authority in the classroom and being 'strict' are seen as positive qualities that student teachers wish to emulate. Evidence from these participants illustrates that more traditional approaches are still prevalent in French classrooms. In the cultural context, this conception of authority extends beyond normal classroom management and includes an expectation that the teacher will be respected and may not be criticised by pupils:

*They know perfectly well they do not have the right to criticise the teacher.
(Nathalie)*

Participants spoke of the expectation that they would work in silence and that teacher-centred or 'lecture style' methods were often accompanied by a requirement to rote learn knowledge.

I remember an English teacher I had at secondary school who made us learn the lesson by heart, word for word and it was just impossible. (Camille)

In my own schooling I have never seen a teacher use differentiation. (Nathalie)

The second of these two student teachers is currently facing the challenge of using a pedagogic approach that requires differentiation in the classroom and is representative of the transition that is underway, from traditional 'magistral' models of teaching, to new approaches that take account of the growing diversity of the pupils in French classrooms (Maroy, 2012). The issues of teacher authority and differentiation will be analysed in greater detail in the next chapter on the practicum.

The literature cited at the beginning of this section has highlighted the effect that negative role models have on student teachers. In this respect, the most often cited issue was lack of empathy or the use of humiliation tactics by a teacher. Participants spoke of losing confidence in the subject, of being demotivated to learn, being reduced to tears by an unsympathetic teacher or being the victim of public ridicule:

Well there was this Economics teacher [-] where the lessons were really lectures [-] he expected us to learn it by heart and I spent ages revising [-] but I got poor marks and I went to see him in tears and said I couldn't have done any more [-] and he replied that perhaps it was that I didn't have the ability [-] and this remark from the teacher really hurt me and we were out in the corridor and it was the worst moment of my schooling. (Felix)

Other negative aspects included pitching the lesson content at an inappropriate level and setting unachievable assessment tasks that were unrelated to the lesson content. In this category were also criticisms of the overuse of rote learning, which was considered to be an ineffective way of getting pupils to learn. Participants also commented on teachers who lacked authority in the classroom, demonstrated no passion for their subject or came to class unprepared.

It is perhaps unsurprising that the negative aspects are often the opposites of the positives, however there is evidence from these participants that they accept traditional approaches, provided the teacher maintains 'authority', is well-prepared and delivers a structured lesson that helps them to understand and progress.

6.3.2.3 England

The English student teachers represented by far the most diverse group of participants in the comparison countries. Three of this group had been educated, wholly or partly, outside the UK and this offered an unexpected additional comparative element to their narratives on schooling and role model teachers. In general, the English participants offered a wider range of attributes when describing their teachers. The two most cited attributes were pastoral support and passion for the subject. Eight participants spoke about teachers who had demonstrated caring and nurturing attitudes. Of particular value was the dedication of teachers who made themselves available outside standard lesson time:

*He was something else. He was the best teacher in the school [-] he put time and dedication into explaining things. I remember, if me and my mates had some trouble, you could go and see him in his lunchtimes [-] he really supported me.
(Tim)*

Other participants commented on teachers who established a good rapport by getting to know them as individuals and how this boosted their confidence as learners. Six highlighted the passion role model teachers displayed for their subject and this enthusiasm for the subject was frequently linked with engaging and interesting teaching methods that made learning enjoyable. Two said that these teachers were active in the classroom and four said the teaching style encouraged them to learn.

Specific to the English participants were two further attributes, not mentioned by the other two participant groups. Firstly, they believed that their teachers pushed them to achieve and think more critically:

He was encouraging me in certain skills I was quite good at , he worked on my weaknesses and pushed me to better myself as well [-]That moment in my life stuck in my head [-] so that's one of the reasons I became a teacher. (Chloe)

I had two Geography teachers; they were fantastic. [-] "you're doing a lot of background reading, here's some resources, go away and see what you think", so it was a lot of work, but they guided us through and made it quite engaging. (Sebastian)

Secondly, a small number of participants expressed being aware that the teachers used an inclusive approach in their teaching. The latter should not be understood in the light of current educational discourse on inclusion, but rather that the teachers were described as knowing and involving everyone in the class and is more likely attributable to using a more diverse range of methods and resources in their practice.

The strong emphasis on dedication and enthusiasm among the positive role models makes it unsurprising that the antithesis featured in student teachers' narratives of negative school experiences. Four described teachers who were clearly disengaged and lacked passion for their subject, often using limited teaching methods or being heavily reliant on a textbook. One example was of a teacher whose approach was to use acetates that the pupils were expected to copy throughout the lesson. Another described a teacher who spent each lesson repeating the same anecdotes, but rarely progressed the class to new topics. These teachers commonly also demonstrated a lack of control of the class, that participants said resulted from the lack of enthusiasm or any attempt to engage the pupils:

I also had a Chemistry teacher, who put me off Chemistry for life. [-] I think one of the reasons was that he was very, very disengaged with the students. He made no effort whatsoever to engage the students with science. (Faith)

A smaller number of participants spoke about teachers who had humiliated pupils. In one example, a teacher had made pupils feel ashamed that they had answered a question incorrectly. In two further examples, the teacher had shouted at pupils as a way of keeping control:

One was the typical authoritarian, a teacher who thought they could just teach with a loud voice, demanded silence all the time [-] and that was a really disengaging way of teaching [-] so that's a teacher I never learnt anything from really. (Sebastian)

6.3.3 School experience: the comparative view

In order to collate the comments made by all the participants about their school experience and form a viable basis for comparison, the positive attributes from their descriptions of role model teachers have been grouped into four categories: engaging methods, which includes enthusiasm for teaching and for the subject, empathy and rapport, which also incorporates pastoral attributes, such as a caring and nurturing personality, motivation to achieve, which includes positive feedback and lastly, authority, also termed 'strictness' or 'firmness'. The similarities and differences are depicted graphically in Figure 5 below.

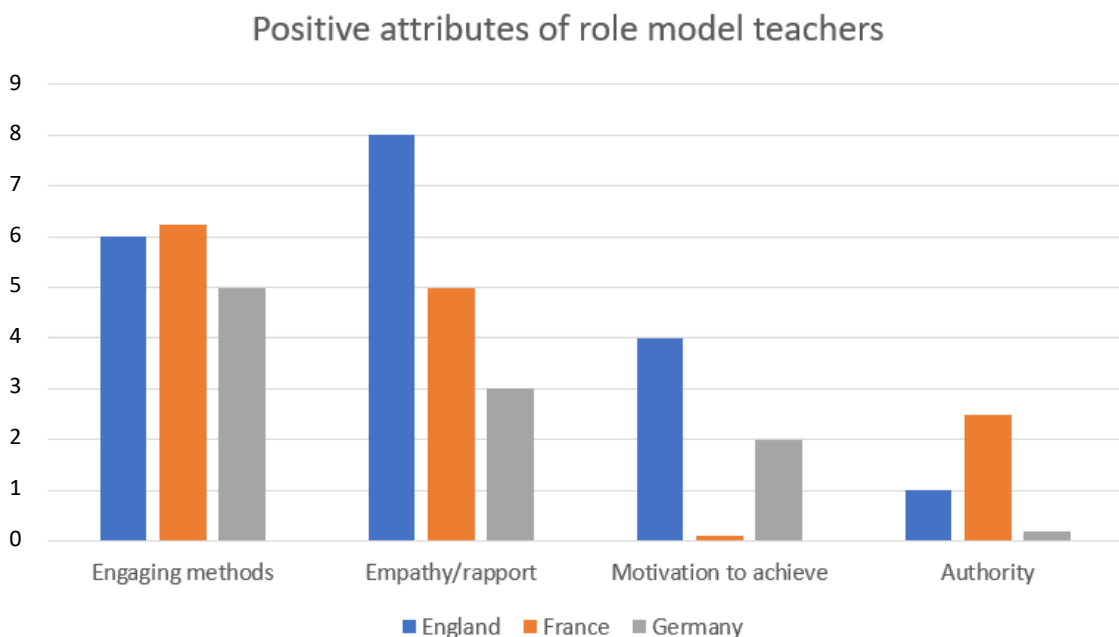


Figure 5. Role model teachers (1)

In all three countries, participants placed importance on an engaging teaching style and use of methods, as well as passion for the subject in the role model teachers they described, however the variance in educational culture (or 'cultural baggage', Britzman, 1986) was evident in the responses of the student teachers in each group.

Both French and German participants acknowledged that much of the teaching they encountered at school was traditional, with the teacher at the centre of the learning process. In both countries there were student teachers who recognised that there were benefits to a traditional, teacher-centred approach in the classroom, but for different reasons. In France the transition from the model of the teacher as ‘magister’, to the teacher as ‘pedagogue’ is a more recent phenomenon. The former is still commonplace in secondary education, where the teacher as a figure of authority and subject expertise is accepted by pupils and teachers alike. Although the practice of rote learning was criticised by French student teachers, the structure and didactic exposition of the teacher-centred approach was appreciated by many. The reason for the marginally higher result in France may therefore be attributable to the teachers who deviated from this norm and were therefore more noticeable and resulted in these participants valuing the difference in approach.

In Germany there has also been a tradition of teacher-centred methods in grammar schools, however, the didactic emphasis has long been on Socratic questioning and problem-solving (see Chapter 8 on theory in teacher education). German participants valued this method when formal assessments were imminent, as they believed it offered them better preparation. However, they also recognised that the traditional approach was not always effective and most preferred greater interaction and variety of methods, which they experienced as more engaging. The educational culture in England has embraced learner-centred pedagogy for a longer period than the other two countries. The omission of any reference to teacher-centred approaches may testify to this difference and explain the additional aspects in the responses of the English participants. They commented specifically on how active the teacher was in the classroom and the use of inclusive approaches by teachers. Otherwise, in common with France and Germany, they remembered teachers who had made lessons varied and enjoyable, who had adopted innovative or creative approaches and used a wide range of appropriate resources.

Teachers who established a positive rapport with pupils, showed empathy and offered support were prized by student teachers in all three countries, though to varying extents. Many spoke of feeling valued or encouraged by their teachers and being

supported in their learning. Others commented specifically on the positive learning environment established by role model teachers, termed 'the classroom climate' by French and German participants. The higher result from the English group may indicate one clear area of divergence in school culture in England, not present in the other two. It concerns the availability of teachers outside of lessons and was mentioned by many participants as a sign of dedication in their teachers. In England, teachers are contracted to be present in school before the school day commences and remain there until after school finishes. It is not uncommon for teachers to spend time working with pupils who need additional help during their break times or after school. Teachers in France and Germany may be no less dedicated than their English counterparts, however, this support is generally restricted to lesson time. German teachers are not required to be present in school when they are not teaching and many schools still start early and finish at lunchtime, although the concept of the all-day school is increasingly common. In France the teaching community adheres strictly to contractual obligations and is unlikely to sanction additional support hours outside the school day.

Teachers who motivate pupils to achieve and make progress scored highly among the English participants and is linked to the idea of teacher availability to support pupils who may need additional help in a subject. A further reason might be the assessment culture prevalent in English education currently and the wide use of 'assessment for learning' as a strategy to promote progression. German student teachers also valued teachers who offered constructive feedback on their performance and said that this motivated them to improve and achieve well in the subject. French participants did not comment specifically on this aspect and this will be explored further in the following chapter on the teaching practicum.

The final category evident in descriptions of role model teachers relates to authority, also termed 'classroom management' or 'strictness'. All three participant groups cited this attribute in teachers, although to differing degrees and from different standpoints, which once again reflects the education culture in each country. From the English student teachers' perspective, the ability to keep the attention and interest of the pupils by engaging and enthusiastic teaching resulted in effective

classroom management. The few German participants who commented on this, cited teachers who were considered 'strict', but yet had a positive rapport with pupils and supported their learning effectively. The notion of 'authority' was strongest among the French participants and was described as integral to the teacher's persona. One reason for this view might be the strong sense of responsibility teachers in France possess as civil servants and employees of the State and deserves to be revisited in the following chapter, when student teachers recount their experiences on practicum.

It is clear, however, that the authority of the teacher is a linchpin in the way that teachers are perceived and indicates the power relationship between pupils and teacher. Strictness in combination with clarity, enthusiasm and empathy are perceived as acceptable, whereas humiliation as an expression of the teacher's power is damaging.

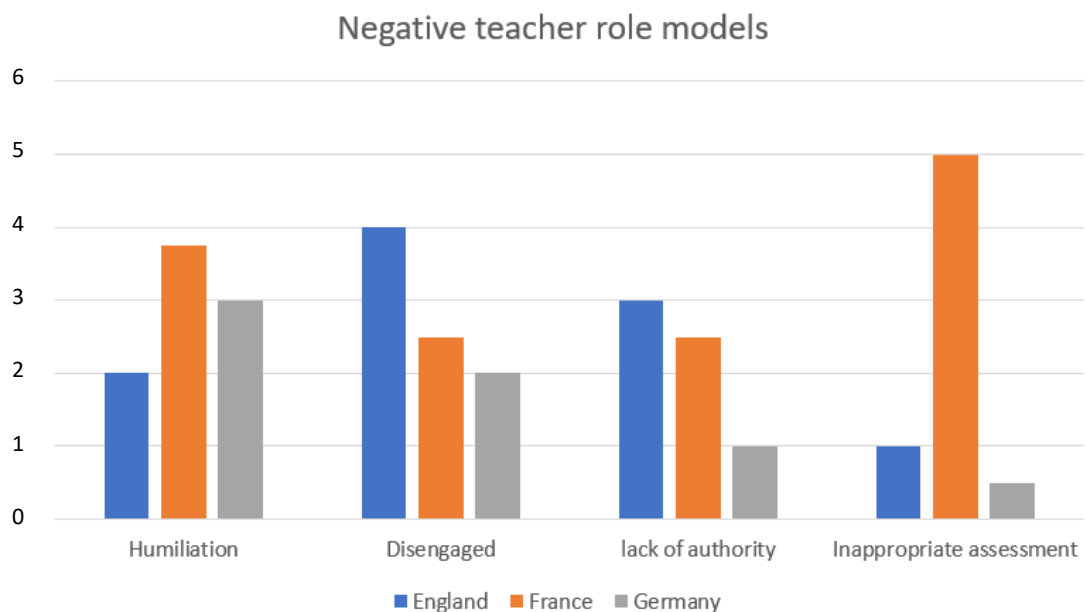


Figure 6. Role model teachers (2)

Negative experiences at the hands of teachers could be divided into four clear categories: the use of humiliation, a disengaged teaching style, a general lack of authority, also referred to as poor classroom management, and assessment at an inappropriate level for the students (see Figure 6 above). Participants in all three countries spoke of feeling shame and being demotivated as a result of public

humiliation by a teacher. In most cases this concerned feedback given following assessment and in others, it was after answering a question in class. The slightly lower result in England is difficult to explain. A possible reason might be the culture of public scrutiny, both by parents and the Inspectorate, as a deterrent to inappropriate commentary by teachers. All the student teachers were critical of teachers who were disengaged, unenthusiastic or unprepared. The higher result among English participants corresponds to the belief iterated previously that teachers should be active in the classroom and demonstrate passion for their subject. The French and German results might be due to a greater tolerance for more traditional approaches, which can be less engaging from the pupils' perspective.

Participants in all countries were critical of teachers who lacked authority in the classroom. The English student teachers expressed this as a lack of control over inappropriate behaviour, describing lessons where pupils ignored the teacher and engaged in their own activities. It was therefore also connected to a disengaging teaching style, resulting in pupil boredom. The difference with French student teachers was that an absence of authority was associated more with a concomitant lack of respect for the teacher. This makes sense when viewed through the lens of teacher-as-authority already discussed above under positive attributes. Far fewer German participants spoke about lack of authority, but those who expressed a view commented on feeling bored or lessons lacking relevance, which has more to do with teaching style than with classroom management per se.

The final category produced the result with the greatest divergence between the countries. English and German participants both commented on assessment tasks that were pitched at too high a level or did not relate sufficiently to lesson content, however in each case this was a small number, not representative of the group as a whole. Half of all French student teachers were critical of the ways in which they were assessed. Of this figure, three quarters described being expected to learn by rote for assessments and the pressure they experienced as a consequence. Others expressed having to complete 'unrealistic' assessments, too demanding for the knowledge covered in lessons.

In conclusion, the school experience and the identification of role model teachers, both positive and negative, demonstrates the lasting effect these teachers have had on the student teachers concerned. In many cases, positive role models were a source of inspiration and some participants attributed their career choice directly to such teachers. Negative experiences in each case were painful memories and often resulted in student teachers being demotivated or undermined as learners. The final section of this chapter seeks to synthesise these experiences and explore what the participants consider to be the qualities of a 'good' teacher.

6.4 Conceptions of the 'good teacher'

6.4.1 Introduction

In the previous section student teachers recounted their school experiences and particularly the teachers they remembered as having a positive or negative influence on them, both as learners and now as future teachers. As a result of these experiences, they were asked to summarise what they believed to be the qualities of a 'good teacher.' This is an important part of their emergent, pre-teaching identity, since it forms the foundation for their teacher education studies and, more especially, for the teaching practicum.

"Student teachers' pre-teaching professional identities arise from their images of teachers, their beliefs and concepts of a 'good teacher' and their personal theories about teaching." (Löfström and Poom-Valickis, 2013: 105)

It has already been established that these 'personal theories' may represent deeply held beliefs about teaching, that may be resistant to change (Lortie, 1975; Sugrue, 1997). Strongly expressed ideas about what constitutes 'good' teaching are the product of both memorable teachers and the way teachers are portrayed in films and other media, however these images may be hard for student teachers to reconcile with the realities of the classroom (Moore, 2004).

The participants in this study each listed a number of qualities they believed epitomised a ‘good teacher’, as would be expected. In order to collate the results in a way that will facilitate analysis and comparison, reference will be made to three overarching themes, which are depicted in Figure 7, below.

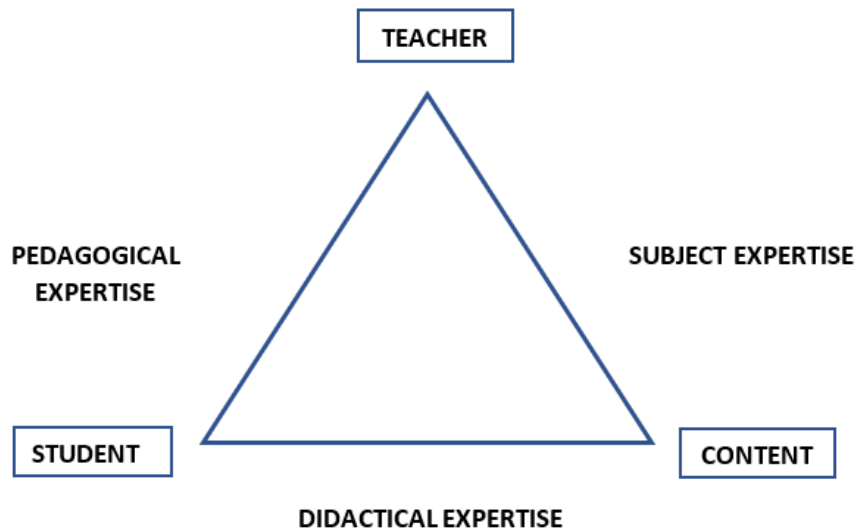


Figure 7. Attributes of the good teacher depicted as a didactic triangle⁴³

The didactic triangle is attributed to the German educational philosopher and pedagogue Herbart (1776-1841) but has been widely cited and adapted to explain the context of teaching and learning (see for example, Hopmann, 2007). In brief, it portrays a three-way relationship between the subject discipline (content), how it is communicated to and accessed by the student (didactics or teaching methods) and how the teacher builds a positive learning environment and establishes a rapport with the student (pedagogical strategies.) These three components offer one perspective on the development of the teacher’s professional identity:

“Teachers derive their professional identity from (mostly combinations of) the ways they see themselves as subject matter experts, pedagogical experts and didactical experts.” (Beijaard et al, 2000, cited in Brovelli et al, 2011:63.)

⁴³ Adapted from Hopmann, 2007.

The image of a 'good teacher' described by the participants incorporated all three elements in detail, although to varying degrees. The next section will focus on each country in turn, followed by a comparative review.

6.4.2 Germany

There were clear frontrunners for the German student teachers when considering the qualities of a good teacher. Competent subject knowledge was considered important by six of this group, which is an interesting deviation from the positive role model teachers they had described. These exemplary teachers were portrayed solely in terms of their didactic expertise, rather than their subject knowledge per se. In seeking a possible explanation, it is important to recognise the difference in perspective between the retrospective lens of the pupil and the current lens of the student teacher. As pupils, the conduits for a positive experience of the subject are engaging activities and resources and an enthusiastic teaching style, and therefore this was the key memory. As student teachers who have already begun or completed their practicum, the importance of secure subject knowledge is perhaps uppermost in their thinking and experience as they reflect on this recent classroom experience.

Complementing strong subject knowledge, didactical expertise still featured prominently in the German descriptions of the 'good' teacher. Half of the group said using a range of teaching methods was important as a way of motivating pupils to learn and ensuring that they worked cooperatively. Some mentioned the role of effective communication in good teaching, such as clarity of explanations or instructions, and others said that pitching the subject at the right level for the age of the pupils and structuring the lesson well was essential.

There is obviously some overlap between the didactical and pedagogical aspects of the 'good teacher', when it comes to the teacher's personality. Half of the German group cited 'personality' as important, because it has an impact on the teaching style, choice of methods and the relationship between the teacher and the pupils in the class. This was expressed succinctly by one German student teacher as follows:

[A good teacher] has the joint task of nurturing and educating and they should both be equally valued. (Anne-Marie)

Empathy and being supportive were highly rated by German participants, and many used terms such as 'openness' and 'authenticity' as being integral to these attributes. This corresponds well with role model teachers described by these participants, who demonstrated these pedagogical attributes. Some went so far as to say that without empathy, learning is compromised:

Empathy is a must, there's no question. Without empathy, the teacher-pupil relationship is reduced to just so much rhetoric. (Jannick)

Conversely, pedagogical expertise was also defined as having 'presence' and being able to manage or lead the class well. It is interesting that the term 'presence' in the classroom replaces that of 'authority' used by the French participants. This may have more to do with educational culture than semantics. In the wake of the PISA studies (OECD, 2000 onwards), current emphasis in Germany is on collaborative learning and working in different social groupings in the classroom. These pupil-centred methods clearly require a change in the role of the teacher, from the central figure in the class, to managing a more interactive and reciprocal style of working.

6.4.3 France

In their accounts of negative experiences of teachers, French student teachers cited traditional 'information transmission' methods and the requirement to rote learn information and complete assessments set at too high a level for the pupils. It is unsurprising, therefore, that didactical methods took precedence over pure subject knowledge in their narratives. In this respect, three participants said that the subject must be made to come alive and meet the interests of the pupils. A similar percentage said that teaching content must be at an age appropriate level and that a good teacher can adapt and adjust the lesson plan if it is evident that pupils have not understood and need additional explanation. A small number said teaching should be an active and enthusiastic or dynamic process.

In terms of pedagogical expertise, French participants were divided equally between those who believed the teacher's authority and being respected by pupils to be important and those who prioritised developing a good relationship with pupils. Interestingly, within the former group, some student teachers said that a good

teacher needed to ensure the pupils demonstrated respect for the teacher, whereas others saw respect as a reciprocal element of the relationship. Some alluded to the personality traits of the good teacher, believing patience to be an important quality, as well as a calm and open manner. Although this aspect might be considered to sit outside the didactic triangle model, these personal traits could also be said to contribute to both a positive learning environment and a good rapport with the pupils. A smaller number of French participants referred to fairness in the treatment of pupils as essential and others commented on the importance of maintaining professional boundaries as attributes of a good teacher, as one student teacher explained:

And then it's still [important] to have a good relationship with the pupils [-] but not let the children think that you're their friend – you are a teacher and that's not the same, but that doesn't stop you being nice. (Olivier)

There were occasional elements that did not fit within the model. One example was a different expression of professional boundaries and the notion of a positive work-life balance being an important part of the good teacher's role if teaching is to remain a fulfilling career.

6.4.4 England

Strong subject knowledge also featured prominently among English student teachers, with five speaking about pure subject knowledge and a further two participants believing having passion for the subject is important for the 'good teacher.' There was a broader range of elements related to didactical expertise in evidence in this group, again, possibly because they are more aware of these from their practicum experience. Participants rated highly employing a variety of teaching methods, together with making the subject relevant and interesting, in line with descriptions of role model teachers. Unlike the other countries, they also spoke about the importance of setting clear expectations for learning and differentiating according to the individuals in the class. In this respect there is another overlap with the pedagogical side, since differentiation also involves an in-depth knowledge of the pupils and their needs. Some participants said a good teacher should be flexible enough to adapt the

lesson plan if needed. It is summarised by this student teacher:

A good teacher will be confident in their subject knowledge, show passion, be enthusiastic and have a wealth of resources they can depend on. And they should be adaptable as well. (Sebastian)

In terms of pedagogical attributes, a majority of student teachers mentioned the importance of effective classroom management. Once again, this was not expressed as teacher authority, but as a critical factor in facilitating learning and achievement:

I'd probably say you need to have good behaviour management of the class, because [-] if you've got control of the class, you create a good learning environment for everyone there. (Adam)

Interestingly, the relationship or rapport between pupils and teacher was not mentioned specifically by English participants, in contrast to their role model teachers, however, it was implicit in the qualities of the 'good' teacher, such as patience, having an open mindset and being seen to be fair.

6.4.5 Conceptions of the 'good teacher': the comparative view

It has been shown that student teachers in all three countries have clear views about what makes a good teacher. This is an important feature in their emerging identities, since it informs the way that they approach the teaching practicum and may be difficult to modify (Moore, 2004; Sumara and Luce-Kapler, 1996). The attributes of the good teacher have been divided into three themes or aspects, as depicted by the didactic triangle in Figure 7, reflecting the teacher's relationship with the subject discipline, how it is communicated to students and how teacher and students relate to one another.

There are clear areas of convergence between the three comparison countries. These mainly concerned didactical expertise, such as bringing the subject to life and making it interesting. This could be achieved by varied teaching methods and ensuring that the subject was taught in an age-appropriate way. There are also unexpected divergences that are worth exploring. The first of these is the absence of any reference to strong subject knowledge among the French participants, contrary to the findings of Moreau (2014) and the prioritising of didactical and pedagogical elements.

Among plausible reasons for this difference are the education system itself and the role model teachers referred to by the French student teachers. They described a knowledge-centric experience of school, which was often rooted in traditional teaching methods, with the teacher as an expert, authority figure. Teacher education is organised according to a concurrent model, where student teachers have spent three or more years studying one subject discipline intensively. Thus, it could be that strong subject knowledge is 'taken as read' for a good teacher and was therefore not mentioned separately. On the other hand, role model teachers were portrayed as making the subject engaging and interesting and so it is this didactical aspect of the good teacher that has been prioritised.

A second subtle, but important divergence concerns classroom management and the good teacher. German and English student teachers depicted the good teacher as someone who can lead or manage the class well. This was clearly linked to establishing a positive learning environment and keeping pupils engaged by using appropriate didactical strategies. For the French participants, classroom management was expressed more in terms of the teacher as an authority figure who should be respected, although some implied that respect was to be earned and should be a mutual element of the teacher-pupil relationship.

A final, unexpected divergence is the absence of a specific reference among the English student teachers to the importance of a good teacher developing a positive relationship with pupils. This is surprising, as it had featured strongly in their descriptions of role model teachers and was highlighted by French and German counterparts as important. This might be explained by reviewing the requirements of the teaching practicum that the English participants were completing at the time of interview, which emphasise classroom management and the setting of learning targets related to the National Curriculum, as well being able to differentiate effectively according to need. This is therefore uppermost in the thinking and planning of these student teachers and is an area they find challenging (see Chapter 7 on the practicum). Thus they may consider effective classroom management as synonymous with establishing a positive learning environment in which pupils feel supported, and a good relationship between teacher and pupils is the outcome.

The correlation between role model teachers, as described by student teachers, and the image of a 'good teacher,' is one that warrants further investigation, but is beyond the remit of this research study.

6.5 Conclusion

The teacher professional identity of student teachers is developing before they begin their teacher education studies and is comprised of a complex tapestry of lived experiences that emerge slowly throughout their schooling and beyond. It has been shown that these formative experiences can influence their motivation to become teachers and inform their tacit theories about what constitutes good teaching. These early memories and emerging themes of teacher identity were elicited from the first part of the interview. The narratives produced were detailed and nuanced and reflect the journey of the individual towards becoming a teacher, however, areas of convergence and divergence could be identified across the three countries, as well as some unexpected results. In order to analyse the narratives, the context of each country must be reviewed, particularly as concerns the key divergences since systemic features and education culture have been shown to play an important role.

The decision to choose a teaching career involves a combination of intrinsic, extrinsic or pragmatic, and altruistic motives. Intrinsic motivation was evident among student teachers in all three countries and was generally expressed as a desire to work with children and young people and a belief that they possessed the necessary qualities to become a teacher. The latter motive was much stronger in the German and English participant groups and highlights the first main difference which was explained by a systemic feature not present in France. The majority of German and English student teachers have had previous experience of working with children and young people and this was used to confirm their career choice and show them that they possess the necessary qualities for teaching. The small number of French student teachers with previous experience highlights the way in which the system determines the choices made. It is not common practice for French students to take a gap year between school and university, although this is changing slowly. This means that French school leavers go straight to university, where they usually study only one subject discipline.

The decision to become a teacher does not need to be made until the end of undergraduate studies. This may account for the time taken by the participants to reflect on career options, and the higher incidence of pragmatic reasons for their decision. Secondly, entry into teacher education is confirmed by a competitive exam at the end of the M1 year, which has a notoriously low pass rate in a number of subjects. The intellectual and emotional investment required to pass the exam may represent a further obstacle, explaining why French student teachers are more likely to make pragmatic choices.

An unexpected difference between England and the other two countries concerned the higher incidence of second career teachers, including those who had left school without qualifications and entered higher education as mature students. This feature of the English system is without parallel in Germany or France and offers a second chance to those who have not achieved at school. All second career student teachers demonstrated a high level of intrinsic motivation, and the confidence that they had the requisite qualities to be a teacher. Most had also spent a year working in one or more schools as a teaching assistant, using this as a testing ground for their decision.

Participants from all countries gave enthusiastic accounts of a number of teachers whom they considered as role models of effective teaching. There were obvious similarities in their descriptions, such as showing enthusiasm for teaching the subject and using engaging methods. The relationship between teacher and pupils was also valued by all participants. One unexpected result was from French student teachers, who expressed admiration for teachers who demonstrated authority in the classroom, which they believed was important in establishing a structured, secure environment for learning and being assessed.

Stories of negative experiences were especially poignant, and in many cases involved humiliation by teachers of the participants concerned, resulting in a reduction in confidence. Lack of classroom management and an unenthusiastic teaching style were mentioned by all, however, French student teachers stood out in their criticism of inappropriate assessment methods and levels.

The final part of student teachers' narratives of their emerging identities explored their perceptions of the 'good teacher' and a summary of the most important qualities. It might be expected that these positive qualities would correlate with their descriptions of role model teachers, however, it was clear that the student teachers' experiences on practicum had influenced their views. Similarities were evident between role model teachers and conceptions of 'good teaching' in the value placed on didactical skills, and in all three countries participants considered engaging teaching methods and enthusiasm for the subject as key attributes.

In the area of pedagogical expertise there were unexpected divergences. Whilst German student teachers maintained their view that a positive relationship between teacher and pupils is important, their English and French counterparts focused more on maintaining control of the class and English participants did not mention positive rapport specifically, despite the fact that it featured strongly among their role model teachers. This might be explained by the requirements of the teacher education curriculum regarding the practicum and what student teachers are expected to demonstrate in their classroom practice.

In this chapter the early part of the life histories of student teachers in Germany, France and England have been analysed to ascertain how they begin to develop their teacher professional identities. Among experiences unique to the individual, there are also key similarities and differences that can be explained by contextual factors, such as the education system and culture within each country. This emergent identity provides the foundation for all that the student teacher will learn on their teacher education programme, both theoretical and practical. The cumulative experiences of their schooldays and any post-school, pre-university work in an educational environment and notions of effective teaching may be challenged, resulting in conflict or dissonance between these previous experiences and lay theories, and the content of the teacher education curriculum.

“Critical consideration must be given to what happens when the student teacher's biography, or cumulative social experience, becomes part of the implicit context of teacher education” (Britzman, 1991:443.)

The teaching practicum provides student teachers with their first opportunity to explore their nascent teacher identity in the reality of the classroom, and it is here that it evolves. This evolving phase of teacher professional identity development will therefore be the focus of the next chapter and will analyse the positive and negative practicum experiences narrated by the participants in this study.

CHAPTER 7. EVOLVING IDENTITIES

7.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter the focus of the findings was the first stage in the formation of teacher professional identity, referred to in the 3E model as the *emergent* phase, that maps the biography of student teachers to the beginning of teacher education. It was established that they develop tacit theories of teaching and learning through an ‘apprenticeship of observation’ as school pupils (Lortie,1975; Sugrue,1997). Evidence from the interviews conducted for this study has illustrated the power of positive and negative experiences in their conceptions of the ‘good teacher’. Many participants spoke about experiences of working in educational settings and these experiences further anchored their beliefs about what teaching involves and how best to do it. Thus, student teachers are in no way a tabula rasa on which teacher education paints a knowledgeable, skilled teacher. In the words of Britzman (1991:3), they start teacher education with “well-worn and commonsensical images of the teacher’s work.”

The teaching practicum plays a central role in initial teacher education and generally gives student teachers their first encounter with the reality of teaching a class, with its complexities and responsibilities. It is at this point that they endeavour to apply theoretical learning and reconcile their own beliefs about teaching with those of the teacher educators and school mentors who support them in their practice. Thus, the transition from university campus to school placement can be a difficult one and may result in ‘shattered images’ and ‘practice shock’ (Knowles et al, 1994).

Menter (2010) describes initial teacher education as a ‘site of struggle’ and although his focus is on the stakeholders in teacher education more broadly, the same could be said to apply to student teachers. In this case the struggle refers to the dissonance between their own beliefs about what teaching is and what they are told by university teacher educators, and it is intensified in the practicum as they seek to navigate a new location and new relationships with colleagues and pupils, discovering and developing their identity as a teacher in an authentic context. They also enter the practicum

knowing that their performance will be scrutinised and assessed by a number of different people, including mentors, university tutors and, in some cases, officials from local education authorities. Thus, they quickly become aware of the expectations placed on them to demonstrate competence as a teacher by meeting the criteria set out in national standards.

The significance of the practicum is that it represents the confluence of all that student teachers have learned and experienced up to that point and provides them with an opportunity to begin to identify themselves as a teacher:

“Learning the practice of teaching is not only about learning what teachers do, but learning to call oneself a teacher and to believe in what teachers believe in.” (Lampert, 2010:30).

In the literature review below, it will be seen that although there is empirical research from many different countries that elicit the views of student teachers about the practicum, there are no studies related to France or Germany, and no comparative studies on this aspect of teacher education. If indeed the practicum is the focal point for developing teacher professional identity (Allen & Wright, 2014; Mifsud, 2018), or calling oneself a teacher, it is essential to analyse this experience from the student teachers’ perspective. In other words, what specific aspects of the practicum do they believe promote the development of their teacher identity? Thus, the key questions to be answered in this *evolving* phase of teacher identity formation are:

- What positive experiences of classroom practice contribute to student teachers’ agency and growth of confidence and what challenges do they face?
- Who do student teachers say support them in their practice and what roles do these people play in this process?
- What do student teachers say they have learnt as a result of the practicum?

This chapter begins by contextualising the practicum in Germany, France and England, offering a comparative view of key elements, such as duration and the main actors involved. It is followed by a summary of literature on the practicum and the identification of a framework for analysis, based on three themes central to the formation of teacher professional identity: support for student teachers, professional learning and self-efficacy, and assessment of competence and accountability. The

main body of the chapter will analyse student teachers' experiences of the practicum country by country and then comparatively, seeking to establish the similarities and differences in the purposes and perceptions of the practicum.

7.2 The context of the teaching practicum in the three comparison countries

Any analysis of the practicum and the acquisition of practical skills from the perspective of student teachers must be prefaced by an explanation of the political and social context in which it is situated. Common issues in education, such as teacher recruitment and how to prepare future teachers for the increasing diversity in the classroom, or how to ensure the quality of teaching and improve pupil attainment, have received different policy responses in the comparison countries. Nevertheless, all three countries have witnessed the introduction of sets of competences or standards for teachers, including student teachers. This has given rise to an intense debate regarding the effectiveness of a competency-based approach to the practicum as a way of establishing student teachers' readiness for the workplace and the wider teaching role (Mohamed et al, 2017; André, 2013; Jönsson & Mattsson, 2011.)

The organisation of the practicum is the shared responsibility of the university and the partner school or schools in each country. Figure 8 provides an overview in terms of the overall duration of the practicum, and it is evident immediately that it is much longer in England than in its European counterparts. What cannot be seen in the graph is the number of hours of teaching each student teacher completes during the practicum and therefore the data below must not be taken at face value. French student teachers teach whole days but are in school only two and half days a week. English and German student teachers are in school all week, but the former teach 9-11 hours per week and the latter generally less than this. In England and Germany, the mentor is always present in the classroom, however in France student teachers have full responsibility for a class and the mentor is mostly absent unless carrying out an observation. A brief contextualisation of the practicum is given country by country below.

7.2.1 Germany

It has previously been established that the relative stability of the German education system, particularly teacher education, was shaken by the results of the first PISA study, published by the OECD in 2001. The poor performance of Germany triggered several reforms aimed at improving teacher quality and pupil attainment (see Ertl, 2006; Knodel et al, 2013). In 2004 the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education (KMK) published a set of standards for teacher education⁴⁴, divided into three elements: a) standards for teacher education, b) standards for subject areas and c) competences to be achieved by student teachers by the end of the second, post-university phase of teacher education.

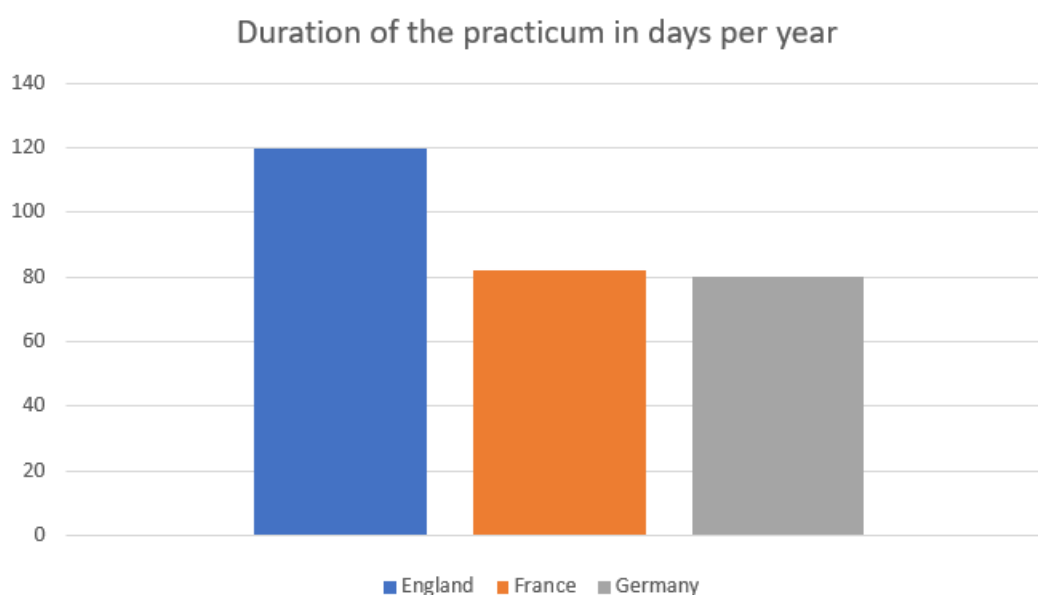


Figure 8. A comparison of the length of the practicum.

The purpose of the standards was to harmonise teacher education curricula across the sixteen federal states and was extended by the introduction in 2008 of a core curriculum for Educational Science, as well as obligatory content for each subject discipline and its didactics. One key outcome of the Bologna Declaration (1999) has been standardisation in the duration of undergraduate and postgraduate studies in

⁴⁴ Standards für die Lehrerbildung 12/2004 and revised in 2015 to include further guidance on diversity in schools.

initial teacher education and the renaming of the *Erstes Staatsexamen* (First State Examination) to Masters in Education in many federal states, although there is no consistency in the nomenclature at the time of writing.

The federal system means that although there has been some standardisation, individual universities retain a degree of autonomy in how they organise the curriculum, including the timing of the teaching practicum. One common reform has been an extension to the duration of the main practicum and the introduction of additional, shorter practicum periods with a specific focal point or purpose. The main practicum has been standardised to a full semester and is known as the Integrated Semester Practicum (ISP)⁴⁵, to be completed in the Masters phase of study⁴⁶.

Assessment is generally by lesson observation and submission of a portfolio of practice (Festner et al, 2018). Most federal states also include one or more short practicum experiences in the Bachelor phase, lasting between three and five weeks, and designed to introduce student teachers to the school and classroom environment and other education professionals working with them. During this practicum students observe teaching in their chosen subject disciplines and gain experience of various aspects of practice, such as planning, methods, resources and assessment (a detailed explanation of each practicum is provided in Ch.2).

Teacher education takes place in two phases and institutions: the university (culminating in the first State exam or Master of Education) and the local education authority (culminating in the second and final State exam). The criticism from German education researchers that there was no connection between the two phases has resulted in the establishment of *Zentren für Lehrerbildung (ZfL)* (Centres for Teacher Education) in most states since 2005, tasked with coordinating all aspects of the programme and improving cohesion between the two institutions.

⁴⁵ Integriertes Semesterpraktikum.

⁴⁶ In many federal states it was possible to complete the practicum in the Bachelor phase, but this was found to be too early for many students in terms of subject knowledge and understanding of didactics and therefore the location of the practicum in the Masters phase ensures sufficient subject knowledge and understanding of the school context.

The Standards for Teacher Education introduced in the 2005/06 academic year and revised in 2015, are divided into four key areas: teaching, educating⁴⁷, assessment and innovation. Each of the four areas includes two or three competences, making eleven in all. Unlike France and England, the approach to teacher education standards in Germany adopts an integral approach to theory and practice, by expressing both elements in one document. Each standard comprises underpinning theoretical content and the corresponding practical skills to be assessed on the practicum. Although expressed in terms of what the student teacher will know and be able to do, it is, de facto, a teacher education curriculum that has been centrally decided and provides a detailed framework for universities to follow.

7.2.2 France

It has previously been noted that the turning point for French education came with the 1989 Education Reform Act initiated by Daniel Bancel, the then Minister of Education (see Chapter 2). The newly created institutions responsible for initial teacher education (IUFM) were given a list of seven teaching competences that were specifically connected to practice (Corbett and Moon, 1996). In 2002 a practicum block was introduced, which increased the practical experience of student teachers to approximately a third of the study year. By 2008 a master's level teaching qualification became the formal requirement for student teachers.

Following a change of government in 2012, a new wave of reforms in 2013 once again changed the institutions responsible for teacher education. The ESPEs were departments within the universities, where would-be teachers completed a new qualification, the MEEF (Masters in Education and Training)⁴⁸. The teaching practicum in the second year was further extended to half the week throughout the year. This organisation of theory and practice '*en alternance*' (alternating) was intended to strengthen the links between theory and practice, and the university and partner

⁴⁷ Erziehen is one German term that has no equivalent in English. It encompasses nurturing, bringing up, caring and educating in one concept. I have therefore employed the term 'educating' as the closest concept.

⁴⁸ MEEF: Métiers de l'Enseignement, de l'Éducation et de la Formation.

schools, and thereby restore public confidence in the teaching profession (Page,2015). Assessment of the practicum was supported by a revised and expanded set of competences to be achieved by the completion of training, together with a professional portfolio of some fifty thousand words. Lapostolle et al (2007) suggest that whilst the completion of the portfolio was intended to promote the development of teacher professional identity and create cohesion between all aspects of the teacher education curriculum, it in fact:

“juxtapose[d] theory and practice, without the latter questioning the former and without the former offering solutions to the latter” (p.391).

The current document used to observe teaching (dated March 2015) now comprises fourteen competences, divided into common and subject specific statements and grouped into six overarching areas:

Legal and institutional, relational and communication, subject knowledge and didactics, pedagogic strategies for learning and diversity, use of information and communication technology, evaluation and adaptation of professional practice⁴⁹.

In contrast to the formulation of the German standards as a reference framework, the French competences are expressed as observable actions and tabulated with tick boxes entitled “sufficiently achieved” and “insufficiently achieved”. Although the university tutor supporting the student teacher during the practicum uses the competences to guide development and give feedback, the final decision on qualification rests with the inspector from the regional ‘Académie’. Since French teachers are civil servants, it is only a representative of the state who has the authority to certify a teacher.

7.2.3 England

Teaching has been a graduate only profession in England since the early 1970s and the practicum has remained a central element in initial teacher education. The locus of training has evolved as successive governments have exercised ever greater control

⁴⁹ *Bulletin Officiel No.13* (26th March 2015).

over the process of teacher preparation. School-based teacher education (SCITT) has increased since its introduction in the early 1980s and now accounts for approximately half of student teachers currently in teacher education. Although there are both remunerated and unremunerated options for school-based routes, the emphasis is on 'learning on the job' and thus they represent a kind of extended practicum.

47% of student teachers are studying in a university⁵⁰, where the PGCE curriculum combines theory with two practicum blocks in two different schools. The total time spent on practicum is tightly regulated at a minimum of twenty-four weeks, or 120 days.

The increase in state scrutiny of teacher education included the monitoring of quality by the government's Inspectorate (OFSTED) and the introduction of professional standards for all stages of a teacher's professional life. These were introduced as 'competences' in 1992 and subsequently renamed 'standards.' These standards have been reviewed and revised several times, most recently in 2011. The current Teachers' Standards are divided into two distinct parts: teaching, and personal and professional conduct. The teaching section comprises eight standards, focused almost exclusively on classroom skills. Standard 3 is the only one that makes specific reference to knowledge, requiring student teachers to demonstrate 'good subject and curriculum knowledge', in order to 'promote the value of scholarship'.

The emphasis placed on practical skills assessed by prescribed standards has been criticised by teacher educators and academics as an erosion of teacher autonomy (Ellis, 2010; Gilroy, 2014) and a rise in a 'culture of performativity' respectively (Bates et al, 2011; Ball, 2003). A similar debate on the standards took place in Germany and France, although with less ferocity, partly because it coincided with concerns about the reforms to be introduced by teacher educators in universities to accommodate the changes related to the Bologna agreement.

⁵⁰ Statistics for 2018-19 academic year of a total of 29,000 entrants to postgraduate ITE.

In order to summarise the evolution of the practicum in the three comparison countries, it is important to note three features of the teacher education curriculum and how each country has responded. Firstly, the organisation and duration of the practicum has been extended in each country over time. The practicum in England is longer and takes place in two settings, whereas in Germany and France an orientation practicum is used early in the programme to provide would-be teachers with first-hand experience of the classroom, and the main practicum in these two countries has also been extended. Secondly, the role of the Bologna Declaration has impacted the organisation of the teacher education curriculum, particularly in Germany, but also in France. The established modular system in England prior to Bologna meant that there was less impact on the structure of the curriculum. Lastly, all three countries have introduced national teaching standards or competences, although these are used in different ways. In Germany they are principally used as a reference framework in the university phase and include corresponding theoretical knowledge for each standard. In France and England the standards (competences in France) are used as a checklist of observable teacher actions that must be evidenced in order to qualify.

7.3 Previous research studies on the practicum

7.3.1 Introduction

In tandem with the burgeoning literature on teacher education in recent decades that has emanated from national and international reform agendas and policies aimed at improving the quality of education, great attention has been paid to the practicum and how student teachers develop the requisite skills to function effectively in the classroom. In general, research on the practicum adopts the perspective of the actors involved: teacher educators, mentors in the school and the student teachers themselves. Studies from the teacher educator's perspective focus on structural or organisational aspects, such as programme coherence (see for example, Canrinus et al, 2017; Korthagen, 2001; Allen, 2011) or models of practicum and partnerships between university and school (see for example, Mattsson et al, 2011). In a review of literature on the practicum, Lawson et al (2015) analysed 114 studies on the topic and identified nine recurring themes, that can also be divided according to the three

actors listed above. They include an evaluation of the effectiveness of the practicum from the teacher educators' perspective (see for example, Allen and Wright, 2014) and the role and practices of mentors. Over half of the studies reviewed concerned student teachers and focused on reflective practice, assessment, professional relationships and professional learning processes (see for example, Soini et al, 2015; Gawlitza and Perels, 2014).

It is evident that the practicum experience is a complex one, involving institutional, relational and cognitive dimensions. It could equally be argued that all these elements have some effect, directly or indirectly, on the student teacher and the development of teacher professional identity. For the purposes of this research study, however, three themes have been selected which have the most impact on how student teachers begin to identify themselves as teachers in all three comparison countries. The first of these is the support network of professionals accompanying student teachers from their initial, tentative steps in classroom practice, to becoming confident practitioners. Advice, guidance and feedback from experienced teachers as mentors enable the student teacher to develop a personal teaching style and grow in autonomy. Hong et al (2017) suggest that teacher identity is developed in social interactions and in the negotiation of roles within the school context.

The second theme relates to the learning process whilst on practicum. Student teachers learn how to plan lessons, how to select appropriate teaching strategies and how to apply these in the classroom. At the heart of this learning process is the development of pedagogical authority (Harjunen, 2009) and professional autonomy, which is closely linked to the formation of professional identity (Soini et al, 2015). The third and final theme positions the student teacher in the wider professional context in which they will practice and concerns the development of professional competence, as defined nationally by government education ministries and against which they will be assessed. The extent to which the new teacher will be held accountable for their practice will inevitably release or constrain them in terms of their professional autonomy. The level of autonomy will determine how they see themselves as teachers and as members of the wider teaching community.

7.3.2 Supporting the student teacher on practicum: the role of the school mentor, university supervisor and others

The teaching practicum plays a pivotal role in the growth in confidence and competence of student teachers and their sense of developing teacher identity. The experience can either be the 'best part' of the teacher education programme or an 'extended endurance test' (Kosnik, 2009:65). Moreover, the first practicum has the 'strongest impact' on their likelihood to remain in the profession (Ulvik & Smith, 2011). Supervision of the practicum in all three comparison countries is the shared responsibility of the university tutor and the school-based mentor. Student teachers generally attribute a positive practicum experience to the support and guidance from their mentor or cooperating teacher in the school placement. Since it is the mentor that the student teacher sees and works with on a daily basis, it is unsurprising that s/he is perceived by them as the 'significant other' teaching professional (McIntyre & Byrd, 1996), as opposed to the university tutor who may only observe their teaching periodically.

Tillema et al (2011) suggest that the practicum can be seen as a 'performance arena', in which the mentor plays an important guidance and support role if the student teacher is to move beyond merely surviving in the classroom, to developing as a competent professional. An effective mentoring relationship is characterised by "honesty, openness, sensitivity, enthusiasm, sense of humour, organisation, self-awareness and reflexivity" (p.140). However, the authors concur with others, who view the mentor's role as dichotomous and conflictual, because the mentor fulfils both a support and an assessment role (Ibid; Kosnik, 2009).

Student teachers draw on experiences from their own schooling, resulting in a familiarity with the classroom environment that may hinder them from trying new strategies. They may also receive so much direction from the mentor, that they simply copy what they have seen, without asking pedagogical questions (Feiman-Nemser and Ben-Peretz, 2017; Bertone et al, 2009). This 'master-apprentice' model of mentoring means that student teachers model their teaching on their mentor (Mattsson et al, 2011), rather than developing their own teaching style (Kosnik, 2009), although

conversely, the security that comes with modelling an experienced teacher can equally lead to greater agency on the part of the student teacher as they progress through the practicum (Soini et al, 2015).

There are criticisms of mentors and their role in teacher education and French authors have been particularly vociferous in this respect since 2012. This might be attributed to the reforms to teacher education introducing alternating 'blocks' of teaching practice and university study in the 2012/13 academic year and the need to evaluate this transition. It might equally be explained by the strong belief that academics are the best placed to assess student teachers. In French language literature, Bertone et al (2009) suggest that mentors give emotional support, but tend towards superficial feedback, lacking in analysis. Civaldini and Cartaut (2015) found that post-lesson feedback is often inadequate and concur with other authors who propose that lack of mentor training is to blame, and that research shows that trained mentors communicate more effectively and give better feedback (McIntyre & Byrd, 1996; Foster, 2000; Mifsud, 2018).

In recent empirical study of practicum supervision Barahona (2019) focused on the perceptions of forty university tutors involved in initial teacher education and highlighted the often unrecognised role of these tutors as: "a critical liaison point between the university setting and the school classroom" (p.263). Participants in this study were critical of the insufficient time allocated to the task of supporting student teachers on practicum. The threefold task of evaluating and assessing the practice of students, offering pastoral care and emotional support, and promoting student teachers' professional development was challenging. Participants also commented on the increased pressure from recent policies aimed at improving teacher preparation through rubrics of standards and some said they had adopted a more directive supervision style as a result.

Student teachers often receive conflicting advice and feedback from the mentor and the university tutor, which can lead to confusion as to how to act in the classroom (Mifsud, 2018; Tillema et al, 2011). French authors Escalié and Chaliès (2016: 314) propose that the mentor and university tutor should work together to create a

‘common teaching culture’ and to avoid conflicting advice. They advocate replacing the traditional reflective questioning technique as a way of promoting deeper level thinking, with a more direct mentoring style which teaches and models rules that the student teacher can implement in classroom practice, and which they argue promotes greater professional understanding and confidence.

Finally, there are questions over whether teacher education is fit for purpose, in terms of preparing student teachers for their future role. Mohammed et al (2017) suggest that the current teacher education curriculum is lacking in much of the key knowledge and skills needed by the twenty-first century teacher. Korthagen et al (2006) summarise the fundamental objective of teacher education:

“The learning of student teachers is only meaningful and powerful when it is embedded in the experience of learning to teach. As teacher educators we need to be actively creating situations where this can occur and for it to be a natural part of teacher preparation” (p.1030).

The student teacher participants’ experience of the mentoring relationship and its contribution to the formation of teacher professional identity will be analysed in the findings section below.

7.3.3 Professional learning, autonomy and pedagogical authority

As early as 1851, the German educator and philosopher Friedrich Diesterweg (1790-1866) alluded to the role of theoretical and practical knowledge in teacher education, when he stated:

“Therefore, no one should hope to become a skilled teacher through the study of any one theory. Practice can only be learnt in practice, in life.”⁵¹

There is a certain tension between the different types of knowledge present in the initial teacher education curriculum and how these synergise to produce a coherent experience for the student teacher. University courses related to the education sciences tend to prioritise epistemically rooted, propositional knowledge over

⁵¹ *Deshalb hoffe ja auch keiner, durch das Studium irgendeiner Theorie ein praktischer Erzieher oder Lehrer werden zu können. Die Praxis lernt sich nur in der Praxis, im Leben.*

practical or situational knowledge. Mattsson et al (2011) suggest that both forms of learning contribute to the rounded professional:

“A professional teacher today is required to demonstrate an increasingly large repertoire of personal, as well as professional qualities, knowledge, skills and understandings. These qualities cannot easily be identified and developed by just one form of learning, for example, university-based or school-based learning.”
(p.2-3)

In one of the few comparative studies in which student teachers evaluated their practicum experience, Rorrison (2011) collated narrative responses from twenty-seven student teachers from Australia, Sweden and China in response to questions about the memorable aspects of their practicum and what they had learnt as a result. They found that although the students wrote much about relationships with pupils and colleagues, there was little explicit evidence of professional learning taking place in these written accounts. This raises the question of what student teachers are expected to learn from the practicum? Contrary to Rorrison’s findings above, narratives of student teachers in this research study clearly indicated that much professional learning does take place during the practicum, and that this contributes in no small way to their developing teacher identity.

The knowledge gained during the practicum aligns well with the Aristotelian concept of *phronesis* or practical wisdom. This situational knowledge is dependent on the school and classroom context and the challenges this brings for the novice teacher. They must ‘think on their feet’, since being a teacher is “complex, uncertain, dynamic and rich in its particularity” (Rorrison, 2011:219). This highlights the many ‘unknowns’ that student teachers will face and the stress and emotional toll this unpredictability has on them (Pillen et al, 2013). This notwithstanding, overall, student teachers express positive views of the practicum and experience a sense of growth and progression in their practice and in their identification as a teacher (Mifsud, 2018). Without evidence of this growth and progression, teacher education risks becoming a ‘closed circle’, in which student teachers return to the patterns of thinking and practices they held before teacher education (Ulvik & Smith, 2011:529; Caires et al, 2012).

Critics of the practicum as a site for professional learning suggest that student teachers often default to familiar practices from their own schooling, rather than develop new strategies. Similarly, socialisation in the school community and the desire to 'fit in' may mean they adopt practices in keeping with the ethos of the school (Feiman-Nemser, 2012). If they experience success early in the practicum, there may be less motivation to reflect on their practice analytically. Britzman (1986) suggests that cultural myths about teaching mean that student teachers miss opportunities to develop their own teaching style, as they seek 'magic recipes' for effective teaching. If authentic professional learning is to take place during the practicum, Darling-Hammond (2010) insists that initial teacher education must focus on student teachers' "learning to practice *in practice*" (p.40).

A key area of concern for student teachers in this study and others (see for example Mifsud, 2018), is learning to manage the class and pupil behaviour, or developing 'pedagogical authority' (Harjunen,2009). Harjunen explains that three types of interaction take place in the classroom: didactic, pedagogical and deontic. The former is concerned with subject knowledge and the strategies used to transmit this, whilst pedagogical interaction is centred on the relationship between teacher and pupils. In an empirical study with a small group of teachers she found that building mutual trust and demonstrating a caring and empathetic response to pupils was essential to establishing pedagogical authority. Deontic interaction refers to the use of school rules and norms to maintain order in the class, which teachers admitted to finding more challenging. Some expressed the view that agreeing rules democratically with pupils was the most effective way to establish pedagogical authority. Mullooly and Varenne (2006:65) concur that interaction is the key to classroom authority and must be reviewed moment by moment in the unpredictability of teaching:

"No teacher can enter a classroom without worrying that what should happen will not happen".

Professional learning, including increased confidence in pedagogical authority, leads to a greater sense of professional agency, which is closely linked to professional identity (Soini et al, 2015; Goodson, 2003). In this respect, student teachers have said that working with experienced teachers in the school placement, by observation and

modelling of their practice, was central to their sense of agency. In summary, the outcome of professional learning is defined as:

“the knowledge possessed by professionals which enables them to perform professional tasks, roles and duties with quality” (Eraut, cited in Day, 1999: 53).

The use of standards or competences to assess this ‘quality’ is the focus of the next section.

7.3.4 Assessment, standards and accountability

The introduction of rubrics of teaching competences or standards has become commonplace, both in Europe and globally, as one outcome of neo-liberal trends in education policy making and a concomitant increase in evidence-based approaches. Under the guise of improving education quality by the ‘professionalisation’ or ‘reprofessionalisation’ (Beck, 2008) of the teaching workforce, policy makers have facilitated tighter government control and increased accountability, by introducing instruments of assessment aimed at measuring the competence of student teachers and qualified teachers alike. The objective is that the standardisation of teachers’ work will result in an increase in pupil performance and achievement, especially with regard to ‘at risk’ or under-achieving groups.

In a comparison of the introduction of teaching standards or competences in England, France and Germany, Page (2015) determined four catalysts for reform: professionalisation and the effect of neo-managerialism, the Bologna Declaration (1999), international comparative studies such as PISA, and teacher recruitment. The impact of these four drivers on policy making varies according to the social and political climate in the individual country and its response to external pressures, for example, the high percentage of German teachers over fifty means that teacher shortages and the need to increase recruitment make this a priority factor in recent reforms. In France and England, changes of government in 2012 and 2010 respectively have resulted in reforms aimed at the professionalisation of teachers’ work.

The terms ‘competence’ and ‘standard’ have become synonymous but warrant closer inspection. ‘Standard’ infers setting a benchmark to be achieved, whereas

'competence' is a descriptor for aspects of practice. In 2011 the European Commission published a review of literature pertaining to core competences for teachers and defined 'competence' as follows:

"the combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and personal characteristics, empowering the teacher to act professionally and appropriately in a situation, deploying them in a coherent way." (Koster & Dengerink, 2008, cited in Caena, 2011.)

Professional competences, therefore, clarify declarative, procedural and conditional knowledge, or what a teacher should know, be able to do, and when to do it (see among others, Mattsson et al, 2011). The notion of empowerment as integral to competence will be pursued in the findings of this research study and certainly merits further investigation in future research. The approach to defining competences of the teacher's work in largely procedural terms, rather than using a broader conception which incorporates teachers' declarative knowledge is a strategy used by governments' as part of a professionalisation agenda and the codification of professional knowledge into practically-oriented categories (Goodson and Hargreaves,1996).

The European Commission (2011) suggested that a distinction should be made between *teaching* and *teacher* competences. The former reflects a range of professional skills in the classroom, such as lesson planning, use of appropriate teaching methods and resources and assessment strategies, whereas the latter concerns the personal qualities of the individual teacher, such as empathy or classroom presence. This raises questions about how, or whether, these personal qualities can be assessed. It also raises questions about the validity of using rubrics of competences as a type of 'checklist.' Jönsson and Mattsson (2011) are critical of evidence-based approaches for observing teaching, on the basis that such a complex activity cannot easily be measured, especially from one classroom situation to another. They concede that clear rubrics may improve assessor reliability, but that too narrow a focus may oversimplify the complexities of teaching.

Within the French language literature, André (2013) reviews the recent introduction of teaching competences in teacher education and concurs with the above authors that

evidence of competences observed as 'achieved' in isolation does not guarantee that the student will be an effective teacher post-qualification. He acknowledges that without standards for assessment, any judgements made will be highly subjective, but rejects the use of competences that are too general or too prescriptive, which:

“imprisons [the student teacher] in a prescriptive straitjacket that is inadequate in terms of the context of his or her practice” (2013:9).

German authors highlight the challenge for universities of the introduction of standards in initial teacher education in an environment traditionally perceived as purely academic (Kotthoff and Terhart, 2013). Nevertheless, the directive of the KMK acknowledged the phased development of student teachers and organised the required standards as a hierarchy, to be achieved by the end of each of the two phases of teacher education. Mohamed et al (2017) go a stage further in their discussion of competences mapped to stages of teacher development. They question the validity and viability of expecting student teachers to evidence the same competences as experienced teachers, highlighting the importance of professional development throughout the career:

“Therefore, it is necessary to prioritise and determine what competences are indispensable for the job and what can be deferred for later years” (p.164).

Finally, it should not be forgotten that the discourse around teaching competences or standards is located within the education culture and ideology of the country. Pantic and Wubbels (2012) propose that European education culture is underpinned by an ideology of *Bildung* (see Chapter 2) and represents a *didactic* culture, whereas Anglo-American education is based on a *curriculum* culture. The significance of this distinction for competence approaches in teacher education is that in a didactic culture, the teacher has the autonomy to reflect on what the object of learning might mean for the learners and the appropriate methods to explore it. By contrast, in a curriculum culture, the teacher begins with the outcomes (generally pre-prescribed) to be achieved by learners by the end of the learning period and works backwards to decide upon appropriate methods. This transforms the way competences are used in teacher education, which can be either to produce autonomous teachers, operating within overall frameworks provided by the State, or agents of the system, trained to

reproduce a centrally determined curriculum and evaluated against student outcomes. This raises important questions about the total number of competences and the content and language used to express them, as well as their overall purpose in terms of the assessment of student teachers.

In the following section the three themes established above as central to the development of teacher professional identity during the practicum will be used to scaffold an analysis of the interview data on this theme.

7.4 Research Findings

In the analysis of interview data that follows, it will be shown that there are ‘push’ and ‘pull’ effects (Mifsud, 2018) on the development of student teacher professional identity in each case, expressed by them as positive and challenging aspects of the practicum respectively. The country by country analysis is followed by a comparative analysis, in order to signal key similarities and differences in experience and reflect on unexpected findings.

7.4.1 Germany

7.4.1.1 Supporting the student teacher on practicum: the role of the school mentor, university supervisor and others

The Integrated Semester Practicum in Germany gives student teachers practical experience in at least two subject disciplines. For each subject they are supported by a mentor, who is an experienced teacher in the school, and a supervising tutor from the university. The federal system means that although this support is a common experience in all states, in this study there were differences between participants from Berlin and from Baden-Württemberg. In the latter, student teachers are often placed in different schools for each subject and in at least one of these schools, they are organised into a practicum group for one day a week and teach on rotation, observed by their peers and the university tutor. This lesson is followed by a feedback discussion led by the supervising university tutor, in which everyone participates, and experiences are shared.

Interview narratives evidenced the importance student teachers attributed to being well supported in their practice. The literature cited above highlights the significant role the mentors have in the participants' eyes for their growth in confidence. Half of the German participants commented on the support they received from their mentor(s). Some expressed feeling valued and experiencing a sense of mutual respect between themselves and their mentors. Others explained how the mentors had given them guidance, shared teaching resources with them or showed them how to use learning technology. Others felt that the presence of the mentor in the classroom when they were teaching offered them security, as well as encouraging them to be confident in making their own lesson planning decisions:

I felt we connected on a personal level, I could ask questions and was respected in front of the class. I was valued. (Kersten)

I was given a catalogue of methods and materials, which I can adapt for the learning group. (Johannes)

{The mentors} gave me the confidence not to be afraid to experiment because they were present and introduced me to how to use different media and so I wasn't nervous about using the Smartboard. (Lauren)

Where the practicum had a peer group element, the support from their peers was considered as a positive experience, ranging from coming in early to help set up the classroom and materials for one another, to participating effectively in the post-lesson feedback. Participants commented on the constructiveness of this feedback from peers and university supervising tutors. They recognised the value of measured feedback and suggestions of alternatives and what they learnt from observing each other.

Beyond the immediate support network of mentor(s), tutor and practicum peer group, German student teachers were cognisant of the wider school community and their place in it. Seven participants commented on the welcome they received from the placement school and having a sense of being integrated in the school community. This was seen as particularly important during the 'orientation' phase of the practicum, when students are encouraged to observe teachers in the school. Many commented on the willingness of teachers in their subject areas and beyond, to allow

them to sit and learn by observing their practice, as well as the opportunity to take the first tentative steps in their own teaching, by taking parts of lessons:

*I found the way in which the school accepted me very positive. I was allowed to observe any classes I wanted to. [-] I asked "May I take over the middle part of the lesson from you?" and "Can I do that short part?" And I found that very good.
(Doris)*

Others explained that they had anticipated some hierarchy within the school and that they would be treated as students, rather than colleagues, and were surprised when that was not the case. One commented on being given a key to the staff room on the first day and how much this gesture contributed to her sense of belonging. Another had returned to her old school and was pleased to see that some of her former teachers were still there, who supported her in her practice. The size, location and type of school clearly had a role to play in the integration student teachers experienced:

It was a Werkrealschule⁵² and I loved it. There was a small staff team of about thirty teachers and that made for a great atmosphere. (Anne-Marie)

The sense of belonging in the practicum school and being socialised into the teaching community there clearly plays a role in enabling student teachers to begin to identify themselves as 'teachers' rather than students.

Where professional relationships are effective, the student teacher develops confidence in classroom practice and begins to think and act as a teacher, however, where the relationship is strained, confidence can be undermined. In this situation, the more supportive the wider network, the more negative experiences were mitigated. In one case, the practicum peer group had worked with a university tutor whose feedback was consistently negative and had a discouraging effect on the group. In this situation, the group rallied around one another and held a separate post-observation discussion of their own:

⁵² The Werkrealschule in Baden-Württemberg corresponds to the Hauptschule in other federal states and represents the more vocationally-oriented, less academic of the secondary school types. It generally has a smaller pupil body than the Realschule or Gymnasium.

The feedback [from this tutor] was overwhelmingly negative, with no tips on how we could have done things differently. It was a horror, because you can't do anything right and are just criticised and told what was wrong – and that from a university tutor – it was depressing. [-] So we went out afterwards and discussed among ourselves what was genuinely weak and how it could be improved. [-] That was a really great group. (Lauren)

This example illustrates how crucial effective feedback is to the confidence and professional identity development of the student teacher. In this case, without the supportiveness of a strong practicum peer group, the confidence of these nascent teachers would have been severely undermined. The situation was also mitigated by the fact that German student teachers complete their practice in at least two subjects and therefore a negative experience with one subject tutor or mentor can be counterbalanced with positive input from another.

7.4.1.2 Professional learning, autonomy and pedagogical authority

The classroom is the locus of professional learning, because, for the first time, student teachers step into the teacher's shoes and learn how to 'be' and how to 'act' (Sachs, 2005) as a teacher. In other words, as they begin to exercise the role of the teacher, they begin to identify themselves as a teacher. In the previous section it was established that the mentor often plays a pivotal role in supporting the transition of an individual from student to teacher. In the best examples, this transition was gradual, with the student teacher afforded increasing freedom, or autonomy, to plan and teach lessons as they wanted and develop an individual teaching style. In the worst, the student teacher felt constrained by the mentor to copy her/his practice, rather than developing their own. Similarly, managing a class and developing pedagogical authority as a teacher frequently required intervention from the mentor early in the practicum, but allowed the student teacher to develop his or her own strategies for exercising authority.

In common with their French and English counterparts, German student teachers embarked on professional learning through observation of experienced teachers, with over half classifying it as an important learning experience and a third believing that

the observation period allowed them to confirm their career decision. This 'apprenticeship of observation' (Sugrue, 1997) offered them an authentic insight into the day to day practice of teachers against which they would later map the development of their own professional identity. During the practicum, the breadth of professional learning experiences varied according to the location and the mentor. Student teachers commented on aspects of the classroom experience they had anticipated, such as teaching methods, use of technology and relationships with pupils, but some also explained that they were surprised when asked to participate in additional tasks, not normally part of the practicum. One explained with enthusiasm that he had been offered the chance to co-mark formal assignments and oral exams used to assess Abitur⁵³ students, which he found a very positive experience.

Four German participants said the most positive aspect of the practicum was success in developing effective relationships with the pupils in their classes. Knowing pupils' names and understanding how they learn was considered fundamental to classroom management and successful learning outcomes. Most were aware of the need to maintain positive professional relationships without being too strict or too familiar. Some of the student teachers saw this as an integral part of their personality, whereas for others it was an informed choice:

What worked particularly well was the lessons themselves and the relationship with the pupils. I don't find that difficult, it comes quite naturally. (Kersten)

Empathy is a must [-] but I think it's a mixture of everything, not over empathetic, not their friend, not too professional, not too reserved. (Jannick)

In terms of developing a sense of autonomy, a third of German participants commented positively on having the freedom to try out different methods and resources. Many of the participants spoke with evident motivation about lessons that had gone well. They felt a sense of satisfaction when pupils were clearly engaged in the topic, as well as when they had retained learning from one lesson to the next. The seminars that accompany the practicum teach student teachers to plan the lesson in

⁵³ Abitur refers to the school leaving certificate at age 18-19.

three distinct parts: introduction and review of previous learning, teaching of today's lesson topic, and plenary with consolidation. When the lesson went well and all three parts were in place, there was an obvious sense of fulfilment:

The best element of the practicum was actually being able to apply it in reality – introduction, main learning and consolidation. (Sara)

It was cool how they get excited to learn something new and then to see if they have learnt it. (Lauren)

Whilst some participants spoke in generic terms about positive classroom experiences, others gave details of specific lessons that were memorable for them. In two cases the student teachers explained that they had been asked to cover lessons for absent colleagues, which is commonplace in practicum schools. The freedom they experienced to teach a lesson with no one else supervising in the classroom was seen as both authentic and affirming:

[The cover lesson] was so much more relaxed, a huge difference. (Anne-Marie)

I must say that the best lessons were the ones I did alone. (Jannick)

The opportunity to take sole responsibility for a class, as narrated by these student teachers, provides them with a genuine situation, in which they behave and act as teachers. The fact that the majority of lessons they teach are in the presence of others means it often feels more like a simulation:

[-] the situation is a bit manufactured, when I am standing in front of the class and sitting at the back are the mentor, the university tutor and three other student teachers [-] it's unrealistic and naturally the pupils behave quite differently [-] it's a constructed situation. (Sara)

The level of freedom experienced by student teachers is closely linked to the approach of the mentor and the level of control s/he exercises during the practicum. In the most positive experiences, the mentor gradually relinquishes control and the student teacher develops greater confidence:

I had to teach the topic 'personal pronouns' and I was anxious, but she said that was the best way, to try on my own and think through my own ideas [-] and so we did everything ourselves and we had to send her the lesson plan two days beforehand. She corrected it and told us what could be improved and so we revised it. (Anne-Marie)

The reality of a teacher's everyday work also challenged the student teachers in this study, especially lesson planning, being flexible and establishing pedagogical authority. Half of the participants commented on the length of time needed to plan one lesson as a novice teacher:

It is very work intensive, the need to plan thoroughly. At the beginning it was four hours' preparation for one lesson, and it did my head in [-] Where do I start? Where do I finish? It was a real challenge at the beginning. (Kersten)

Others also added that the act of being responsible for the class and covering everything on the lesson plan was emotionally demanding:

The challenge is when you are standing in front of the class and have thought everything through in your planning at home and still forget everything or something happens. (Julia)

The fact that 'something happens' highlights the recognition by many student teachers that a teacher needs to have the flexibility to adapt to unforeseen situations in the classroom and not always adhere to every element in the lesson plan. 30% of participants gave examples of needing to be flexible, for example, realising that pupils' previous learning was insufficient for the topic of the lesson: *"It was spontaneous and so, yes, a good teacher must be flexible."* In another situation, the student teacher had underestimated the learning level of the language class: *"it was amazing how much hand-holding they needed just to form a correct sentence."* These examples illustrate how student teachers develop their professional identity as they recognise in themselves the personal attributes needed by teachers, that go beyond the mechanics of lesson planning to identifying learners' needs and building a positive rapport with them.

It has been shown that German student teachers prioritise positive relationships with pupils. It is therefore unsurprising that when pupils are challenging in their behaviour, student teachers are often self-critical and several commented on this aspect of the practicum. Whilst some recognised that pedagogical authority, or classroom 'presence' develops through greater experience, others felt a sense of inadequacy, particularly if the mentor had stepped in to re-establish order in the class.

In summary, evidence from the interview narratives demonstrates that the formation of teacher professional identity goes far beyond the acquisition of practical skills such as lesson planning, and is much more concerned with the personal qualities of the teacher: the ability to form positive relationships with pupils, developing strong pedagogical authority and being flexible and adaptable in diverse classroom situations.

7.4.1.3 Assessment, teaching standards and accountability

The practicum for German student teachers is assessed by observation and a portfolio containing lesson plans and written rationales for planning decisions. It was noteworthy that, unlike their counterparts in France and England, none of the participants mentioned assessment or, indeed, the teaching standards used to ascertain competence. It is rare for a student teacher to fail the practicum during the university phase. This anomaly can be explained by the fact that these student teachers are already anticipating the '*Referendariat*' (second phase) that follows the completion of the Masters in Education. This is perceived to be 'the real test' of their teaching skills by student teachers and is more formal and daunting than the university practicum.

7.4.2 France

The M1 and M2 practicum serve very different purposes for French student teachers. The M1 resembles the German orientation practicum, whilst the M2 practicum extends to a full year for half of the week. By this stage many will have passed the competitive examination which currently takes place between the first and second master's years⁵⁴. Those who are successful are awarded the status of 'trainee civil servants'⁵⁵ and receive a basic remuneration for this practicum year. The French participant cohort in this study was divided between M1 and M2 years, with the latter being the majority. It is interesting that all the M1 students are on a bilingual pathway

⁵⁴ Reforms introduced recently will move the competitive exam to the end of the M2 year from 2021/22.

⁵⁵ Fonctionnaire-stagiaire.

and have also completed a practicum in Germany. It will be seen that the opportunity to make comparisons between the classroom culture and practice in each country has enhanced their professional learning and conception of teacher identity.

7.4.2.1 Supporting the student teacher on practicum: the role of the school mentor, university supervisor and others

The two short practicum experiences in the first master's year are not supported by mentors in the usual sense. Students are allocated a teacher whom they observe, and most are given the chance to take small groups of pupils for an activity or teach a small part of a lesson. One student commented that after the first day the class teacher gradually pushed them to do more, until they prepared an activity on their own:

I hadn't expected to do that right away, but actually it was very, very good and it motivated me. (Olivier)

Overall, only a few participants commented on the role of their mentor. Since student teachers in France only study one discipline, they only work with one mentor during the practicum. A key difference that became evident is that the M2 student teachers are expected to teach '*en toute responsabilité*' (with full responsibility) and are therefore generally alone in the classroom, without constant surveillance by the mentor. This might explain why the participants offered relatively little commentary on this relationship. Those that did were generally positive, valuing the constructive feedback offered and viewing both mentor and university tutor as being open and available if the student had any questions. There were few comments relating to the university tutor, who only visits the school to observe on average once per term. One student teacher expressed a dilemma which highlights the conflictual role of being both tutor and assessor:

It's hard to ask questions, because he is the one who writes the report⁵⁶, so you are guarded about what you say. So it's not really a tutor in the usual sense. (Camille)

She went on to say that the tutor gave good feedback that helped her prepare for the inspection visit⁵⁷ but gave her freedom in her teaching approach, whereas some of her peers had been *'forced to do what the tutor says.'* It is clear from this and from interviews with university tutors that they carry a considerable responsibility for preparing student teachers adequately for the final formal observation by a representative of the Académie. Some offer a 'mock' inspection visit as a part of this preparation process.

One 'pull' factor that emerged from the narratives is the tension that arises when the mentor is not familiar with newer pedagogical approaches used by the student teacher. One student teacher explained that although she considered her mentor a good teacher, who had achieved very good levels with her class, she did not have experience of current pedagogical approaches related to heterogeneity, strategies of differentiation and behaviour management and the student teacher felt unsupported as she endeavoured to teach in a way that matched her developing teacher identity:

She was a good teacher. Her pupils were at a good level for their age, even ahead of the curriculum, but on the other hand she was certainly no pedagogue and was unable to advise Masters students like me. (Nathalie)

7.4.2.2 Professional learning, autonomy and pedagogical authority

Professional learning for French student teachers began with the brief practicum experiences in the M1 year. They spoke about using this practicum to confirm their career choice and cut their first professional teeth in a school environment. Most observed and took one or two activities and believed this allowed them to recognise the qualities they would bring to teaching:

⁵⁶ The university tutor prepares a report on progress, which is available for the inspector who carries out the final observation.

⁵⁷ The final assessment and certification is carried out by an inspector from the regional academy.

[-] the courses at the ESPE don't allow you to know if teaching is for you or not, but I loved it and that reassured me. At the same time, I learnt an enormous amount by being in the school, teaching and asking the class teacher questions. (Olivier)

The majority of participants spoke about their professional learning experiences in generic terms, such as learning how to sequence lessons, manage heterogeneous classes and differentiate for different pupils' needs. For M2 student teachers this learning takes the form of a 'baptism of fire', because they immediately assume total responsibility for their class. It was evident that learning to be autonomous was challenging at the outset, but that subsequently professional autonomy was then relished:

Oh it's intimidating. It's intimidating because you don't know how to construct a sequence of lessons and you try [-] but afterwards I felt so at ease and I said to myself that I am made to teach. [-] I adored being there in front of them, managing [the class], so at first it's hard, but then I understood that these are children and they are here to learn. (Nathalie)

This student teacher's experience epitomises the transition in professional identity from anxious novice to autonomous teacher during the M2 practicum. Others narrated similar experiences, although it was clear that the individuals learnt to make this transition at different paces:

I had great difficulty relaxing and staying calm [in class]. Pedagogical freedom is a huge ocean I need to steer across and in the beginning, I wondered if I would find the oars. (Emilie)

[The positives are] to do it yourself, to manage the class and manage the preparation by yourself. In the other practicum we didn't have full responsibility, we were allowed to do a bit, but always under supervision. Now I teach a whole day, not just a part. I can experiment. (Camille)

The school culture in France is one in which the teacher is an authority figure and is expected to command respect and reinforce school rules. Many of the student teachers in the study found this aspect of their professional learning difficult, with 50% citing pedagogical authority as a particular challenge. There was also a difference in the critical incidents narrated by M1 and M2 student teachers. The nature of the short M1 practicum means that learning to teach takes place without the constraints of formally assessed observations, yet challenging experiences can still undermine the

student teacher's confidence:

I didn't manage the class well. There are rules which are indispensable: tell them clearly 'you come into the room, you sit down quietly, and you don't touch anything'. Frankly, I learnt that rules are important. [-] It was a catastrophe; I was disappointed in myself. (Claudette)

I started singing [-] but they couldn't join in because they didn't know the song or the vocabulary. I thought, I can't become a teacher. The children laughed at me and I couldn't manage the class. (Joanna)

In the above situation, the class teacher discussed the incident with the student concerned and her confidence was restored. These student teachers often put such challenges down to inexperience and said 'afterwards you laugh about it'. For M2 student teachers, carrying responsibility for a class added to the expectation that they would exercise pedagogical authority effectively. For some, this aspect of professional learning proved to be successful:

I enjoy the profession I have chosen and don't complain, unlike a lot of teachers. I am in this for the long haul. [-] I think I've got a good class and there are no real problems with behaviour. Next year I will take the same approach (Felix)

In this case, the student teacher is linking his professional identity with both a practicum experience and a long-term commitment to teaching. He is confident enough in his pedagogical authority to confirm he will use the same approach when he takes up his first teaching post. For others, learning pedagogical authority was a slower process or one that they approached pragmatically, given the challenges of heterogeneous classes:

They are very chatty in class. I haven't been able to find a way to get them to work quietly. (Emilie)

The pupils who are repeating the year⁵⁸ all work noisily and just can't keep quiet. If I achieve half an hour of peace, I'm happy. (Nathalie)

Some of the interviews in this study were with student teachers preparing to teach in bilingual schools, which is common in the border region of Alsace. They used the

⁵⁸ This is known as 'redoublement' in French. In 2014 the OECD reported that 28.4% of 15-year-olds in France said they had repeated at least one school year, making France one of the highest among participating countries in the PISA study. Recent policy goals have included measures to reduce this figure.

experience of a practicum in Germany to reflect on the differences between the two education cultures and this clearly affected how they identified themselves as teachers. Many commented on the less teacher-centred, more discursive approach in German classrooms. They were impressed by the wide range of resources and methods and hoped to implement some in their teaching, though cognisant of the larger average class size in France:

I was inspired by what I saw in Germany and I have stayed in contact with them. The classes in Germany are smaller, so it's easier to do group work and things like that. More lively activities. [-] Those are the things I've taken away from Germany. (Felix)

7.4.2.3 Assessment, standards and accountability

The assessment process post-competitive examination involves formal observations by the university tutor and the completion of a professional portfolio (Mémoire Professionnelle). The latter is a research-based assignment for which student teachers can select any topic related to pedagogy, however it is not strictly a 'reflective' document and may or may not have a direct relation to the student's classroom practice. Assessment of the practicum makes reference to specific competences and it is clear that the students had been introduced to this rubric early on in the first year of teacher education. Their perception of professional identity was clearly connected to these nationally prescribed measurements of professional competence:

The term professional identity exists in France through teaching competences and we had to work on these competences in order to prepare for the first practicum, we had to take one competence and analyse it. (Joanna)

The two most significant points of assessment for French student teachers are linked to accountability. The Concours at the end of the M1 year confers training civil servant status, which means that student teachers enter their M2 year accountable to the State as employer. At the end of the M2 year their teaching is observed by an inspector from the regional academy and, if successful, they are officially certified as teachers. Most student teachers are extremely apprehensive about the inspector's visit, partly because this is most often an unknown person. There were instances, however, when the inspector concerned met the student ahead of the visit and this

clearly helped to allay their fears:

And it (M2) prepares us for this inspection to be certified as a teacher and then suddenly, it's really formalised that you have to demonstrate what the competences are. {-} Teachers represent the State, whose goal is to form pupils into citizens. (Claudette)

I had already seen the inspector several times, just before the start of the school year. Two weeks before the visit she came and said what would be the expectations and reassure us. Most don't do that. I knew exactly the day she would come but it wasn't like that for others. (Camille)

The comments related to accountability highlight that French teachers work within strict parameters laid down by the Ministry of Education, in terms of the national curriculum and achievement targets:

It's true that if I mark their exercise books and do my assessments and see that many of them haven't achieved the level, I don't just continue, even if that means I am behind with the programme. (Nathalie)

In this case the student teacher is torn between the demands of keeping up with the prescribed 'programme' and ensuring as many pupils as possible in her class are meeting the required level of achievement. It also highlights the challenges of accountability in increasingly diverse classes.

French student teachers experience a very intensive M2 year, in which they carry full responsibility for a class, as well as continuing their university studies. The status of trainee civil servant weighs heavily on these nascent teachers and there is an expectation that they will demonstrate pedagogical authority in the classroom. In the following section the experience of English student teachers will be analysed. Like their French counterparts, they face an intensive year, however, the role of the actors who support these student teachers results in a quite different practicum experience.

7.4.3 England

The PGCE programme organises two practicum placements for student teachers. The interviews were timed such that some of the participants in this study were finishing their second placement and the rest had completed their first placement and were starting their second. Most student teachers considered the dual practicum

experience as an attribute of the programme and for those who had experienced challenging schools or tensions in the mentoring relationship in the first placement, the second placement offered a fresh perspective. What was evident was the awareness of progression and the development of teacher professional identity over time as confidence grew.

7.4.3.1 Supporting the student teacher on practicum: the role of the school mentor, university supervisor and others

The essential role played by the mentor in supporting the student teacher in the placement school came across strongly, with nearly all the participants commenting on the positive relationship they had enjoyed with their mentor. In the first placement, they spoke about the increased level of support in the early days of the practicum and the greater independence that was encouraged as time went on. They valued the time the mentor spent with them and the detailed feedback they received, which often went beyond the hour usually allocated to the weekly professional dialogue contractually.

In my first placement I had a really hands-on mentor. Every step she was really helpful in guiding me through. I didn't know how to talk to the kids, I didn't know how to let them out of the classroom. I was a novice. [-] She definitely helped me improve my practice. (Faith)

Student teachers were aware of the mentor's previous experience, although both new and experienced teachers as mentors were seen in a positive light. One student described his mentor, who had been teaching for twenty years as '*a specialist in behaviour management*'. Although this is perhaps an exception, it was from the mentor that student teachers learnt the importance of classroom routines and an understanding of the individual school's sanctions for inappropriate behaviour. Many were impressed with the passion the mentor demonstrated for the subject and of his/her willingness to share resources with them.

Feedback from the mentor was reported as direct and targeted, setting students goals to work towards as they progressed through the practicum. Participants spoke about the frequency of feedback, which meant that any difficulties they experienced were

quickly picked up and guidance was offered:

I struggled with behaviour management with Year 8 and Year 9. She gave me the advice to give them more structure. She suggested I observe other teachers and their behaviour strategies. [-] she realised I had an issue and put things in place to help. So from being nervous about the Year 8 class, they're now my favourite class. (Adam)

The above example illustrates how learning from the mentor develops student teachers' confidence to exercise pedagogical authority and therefore good mentoring is one 'push' factor in terms of professional identity development. Conversely, a poor mentoring relationship is a 'pull' factor and has a negative effect on both confidence and developing teacher identity. Three participants recounted poor experiences with a mentor in one of the placement schools. In most cases, the mentor had been unprepared or unwilling to assume the role. One student teacher recalled that on the first day the mentor explained she had specifically requested not to mentor a PGCE student that term. The result was that the student concerned received minimal feedback on his teaching and that none of the required documentation was completed.

Having such an experience in the first practicum means that the mentoring relationship in the second practicum takes on added significance for rebuilding the confidence of the student teacher. The confidence of one student had been undermined by the mentor in her first placement and she spoke about the difference the mentor in her second school had made:

She's just amazing. She's really restored my faith in people because [-] she was supportive, on my side, understood what I was going through, understood my situation and was just unwavering in her support all the way through. [-] The day that I said 'I can't do this' she said 'Right, listen, we can do this. OK fine, you have a lot to prove, but this is how you can do it.' (Chloe)

When a poor mentoring relationship occurs in the second placement, as it did in one case, a positive first practicum experience went some way to mitigating the negative impact. The mentor in question had a highly critical, negative attitude towards the placement school. The student teacher could draw on a positive first practicum and worked hard to make sure her classroom practice was not affected. She acknowledged that the mentor helped her, but felt that she had to work harder at keeping motivated

in these circumstances:

The mentor in the second school was negative, because she didn't like the school and so I had to make sure the negativity didn't weigh me down. [-] She did help me in the classroom, but I had to work extra hard to motivate myself. (Emma)

Many students commented on the differences in the feedback they received from the mentor and from the university tutor. The daily presence of the mentor resulted in a more critical, yet practical approach to feedback, but provided the student teacher with tangible steps that could be implemented immediately. The university tutor observes the student teacher once per term. Most commented that this observation had gone well but that the feedback adopted a longer-term, 'broad brush strokes' perspective and was more likely to include references to theory (see Chapter 8 for a detailed analysis of links between theory and practice in the practicum).

7.4.3.2 Professional Learning, autonomy and pedagogical authority

In common with student teachers in Germany and France, the English participants had specific focal points when talking about what they had learnt during the practicum. The majority of the participants spoke in great detail about the importance of establishing a positive relationship with pupils and this featured strongly in their accounts of positive classroom experiences. The most frequent comment related to witnessing pupils engaged in learning, enjoying learning, showing they wanted to learn and asking questions. There was an obvious awareness of the need to make learning relevant, by using resources and language the pupils could relate to. One participant gave examples of adapting his science lesson to include a case study covered recently in the media and using cards of well-known cartoon characters to explain the action of stem cells. The reciprocal nature of this relationship means that pupil engagement empowers the student teacher and encourages them to identify teaching as a rewarding profession.

A strong sense of satisfaction resulted from persevering with challenging classes or individuals over time, which participants termed 'breakthrough' moments. Typically, they described pupils coming for extra help outside of class time and the satisfaction of

seeing those pupils make progress. Some saw breakthroughs in their behaviour management strategies and the role of positive feedback. In each case it was the perseverance over time and the conviction that a strategy would be effective that resulted in a strengthening of self-confidence and a stronger sense of being and acting as a teacher:

So I like those breakthroughs [-] That's another important quality – not being afraid of the surface, what you're seeing, but to delve deeper and to find that common ground with the student. (Chloe)

Much professional learning was attributed to observing and being able to question the mentor, as well as learning skills needed outside the classroom, such as how to mark pupils' work effectively. In some cases, it was in these professional discussions that student teachers began to recognise the connection between the theoretical and the practical:

I think a lot of us learnt on the job. I learnt more about differentiation in discussion with my mentor than from reading about it. It wasn't until I'd experienced it that I was in a position to look at it more academically. (Tim)

Half of the student teachers said that they had been given the autonomy to experiment with different strategies and develop their own teaching style, even if this sometimes went against the established culture in the school. This indicates that partner schools are aware of the expectations from the university that student teachers should be afforded a certain freedom in the practicum. The student teachers considered this autonomy a crucial factor in their professional learning and in the development of their own teaching identity. In many cases the year groups where this autonomy could be expressed were restricted, for example, some explained that their placement school had a policy of not giving exam classes to PGCE students or that experimentation was only permitted in lower secondary classes. Although some student teachers expressed frustration at not being able to teach more advanced pupils, they nevertheless valued the freedom to plan lessons independently:

She gave me carte blanche to teach as I wanted to. (Adam)

I had a lot more autonomy in Key Stage 3, but in GCSE classes it was a lot more strict about what I was expected to do. (Tim)

They wanted me to experiment with styles they wouldn't normally let teachers do, so that was great. (Sebastian)

Many students expressed being able to use differentiation effectively in their lessons as a positive experience. Under the guidance of the mentor, most had learnt to use differentiated resources and tasks to address the diverse needs of their pupils, and expressed satisfaction at seeing pupils achieve and progress. Many classes were heterogenous in terms of first language spoken and levels of academic understanding. This is a common experience in large, urban conurbations such as London. One student with a multi-lingual class explained: *'It was like planning six lessons for one class.'* Having said this, 70% of student teachers found learning to differentiate a challenging aspect of their professional learning. This was exacerbated when changing school types in the second practicum, such as from a comprehensive to a grammar or private school:

The second placement was very different. It was an all boys' private school [-] I think because it's a private school they are quite able, not as diverse as the previous school. I struggled with giving the higher ability pupils more challenging tasks. (Delia)

One student developed a strong teacher professional identity that resulted in some internal and relational conflict:

Differentiation as a topic upsets me so much, because the tutors here say it's no problem to have lots of separate activities for one class. I approached it as would a real teacher, with their time constraints. (Damian)

Some of the participants said that they had felt out of their depth at times or had experienced conflict between teaching methods expected by the university tutor or mentor and their own preference. In the case of Darryl (cited above) the student teacher had developed a clear philosophy about his subject, meaning that the didactic approach he believed best matched his teaching style was not that of his mentor:

His style was never something I aspired to. I'm more of a hard scientist I suppose – science is interesting on its own, it doesn't need to be fun. (Damian)

This example highlights that student teachers have an expectation of being required to copy the mentor or to comply with the expectations of those supporting them, because the university tutor and school mentor are responsible for ensuring would-be

teachers meet the teaching standards. The next section will analyse the student teachers' views on these standards and the notion of being accountable as teachers.

7.4.3.3 Assessment, standards and accountability

The practicum is assessed by formal observations and the compilation of a portfolio of evidence, known as the Assignment Record File (ARF), which includes lesson plans and observation reports. As student teachers begin to exercise their professional autonomy and seek to do their best in the classroom, they also become aware of two areas of accountability that may impact the development of their professional identity as an autonomous teacher: being assessed against teaching standards and working in a school environment in which teachers are increasingly accountable for meeting set attainment targets.

English student teachers commented on the centrality of the eight teaching standards in the practicum and the pressure to evidence competence every time they are observed:

The university tutor was tough on meeting standards. It doesn't say that you have to have activities anywhere in the standards, but here and elsewhere they emphasise it. [-] If I want to get signed off, I need to do it. (Damian)

This student clearly experienced some dissonance between the tutor's interpretation of the standards relating to teaching methods and his own. In other cases, student teachers felt forced to compromise their practice in order to survive:

[The] university tutors are really invested in making us thorough teachers, but they also have to tick boxes. [-] We became less concerned with being teachers and more concerned with just getting things done. There is so much stuff to do. (Andrew)

Sometimes student teachers' preconceptions of teaching left them disappointed, when faced with the assessment-focused accountability in schools. In this example, the student teacher was frustrated because he could not teach geography in a more holistic, connected way:

Because they are so focused on grades [the challenge] was showing them how things fit together, not just learning isolated things. (Adam)

Thus, the demands of being accountable in terms of the teaching standards, and the pressure on schools to evidence pupil achievement, results in constraints to their practice. They must reconcile these constraints with their desire for autonomy and best practice if they are to develop a strong identity as a teacher.

7.5 Comparative analysis

Any comparison of the experiences of student teachers during their practicum must be approached with caution and located explicitly in the educational context of the countries compared. The growth of practical skills and the development of a teaching style is an individual process and links to personality, confidence, previous experience of education and the supportiveness of the placement school and its teachers. Having said this, the act of being in a classroom, getting to know the pupils and engaging in teaching and learning activities form the fundamentals of a shared experience for all the student teachers in this study.

The comparative analysis will mirror the three themes established above as central to the development of the professional identity of student teachers: the support for student teachers on practicum, their professional learning and the assessment of the practicum, with particular reference to competence and accountability. In each case the similarities will be identified, and the differences highlighted, including any unexpected results.

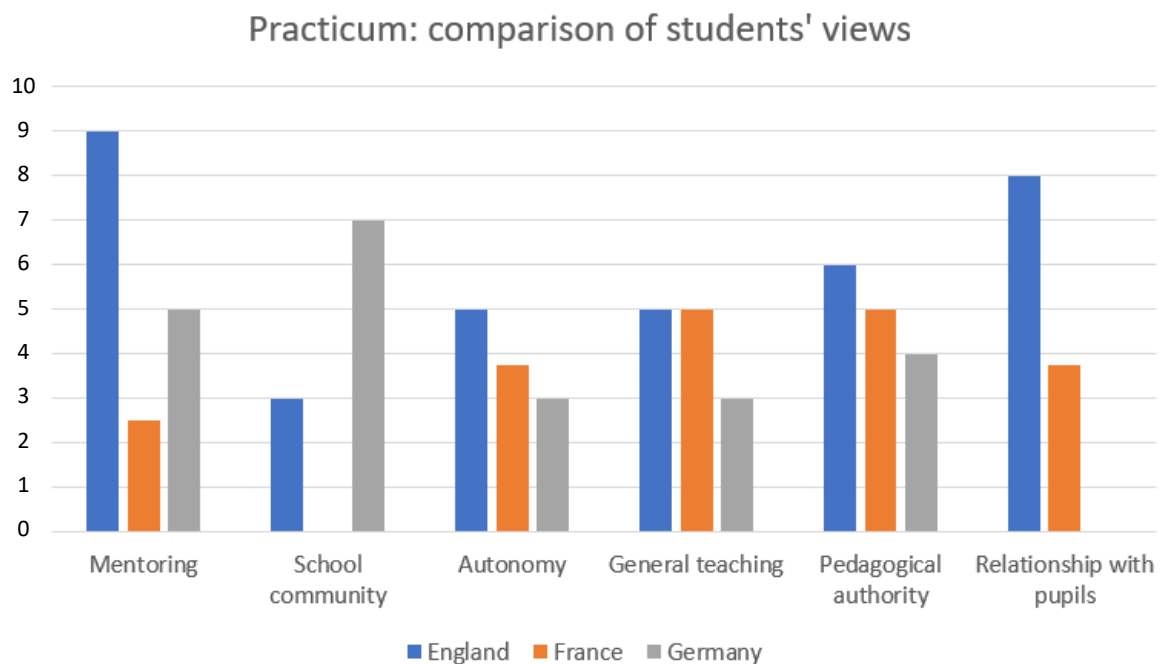


Figure 9. Student teachers' views of the practicum in comparison

7.5.1 Supporting the student teacher on practicum: the role of the school mentor, university supervisor and others

Student teachers in all three countries commented positively on the support they received from the mentor in the school and their university tutor, especially in Germany and England. Figure 9 shows that almost all of the English students viewed the mentor-student relationship as critical to the success of the practicum and the daily collaboration meant that a strong bond often developed between them, which sometimes made the transition from the first school placement to the second more difficult. Similarly, half of German student teachers valued the input and support of the mentors in each of their subjects and their willingness to discuss and guide practice.

For French student teachers, the mentoring relationship did not feature as prominently in their narratives, and comments concerning the mentor were more mixed. It has been noted above that M2 students, in contrast to their counterparts in Germany and England, are expected to work alone in the classroom for much of the time and this may therefore result in the role of the mentor being akin to a

‘professional advisor’⁵⁹, without the more pastoral elements at the forefront of many mentoring relationships.

One unsolicited result in terms of the support experienced by student teachers during their practicum is the response of the school community. Most German student teachers commented on the welcome they received and how this mitigated the tension they felt between identifying as ‘students’ and ‘teachers’ concurrently. Gestures such as being given the key to the staff room or being free to observe a range of different teachers across the school resulted in them identifying themselves more as teachers within a community of colleagues, than as students on placement.

A small number of English student teachers spoke about the positive relationships established with colleagues in the school or getting involved in cross curricular projects. None of the French participants mentioned the wider school community, which was a surprising result. One possible explanation might be that they do not spend a full week in the school and therefore tend to focus solely on their class teaching. It may also be that the division of the week between school and university means that there are time constraints which prevent greater integration in the wider community of the school. Teachers in France traditionally work in a more isolated way, focused on the classroom as their ‘domain’ and there appears to be less collaboration between teachers than in the other two countries.

7.5.2 Professional learning, autonomy and pedagogical authority

Professional learning in all three countries was focused on developing autonomy and pedagogical authority in the classroom and dealing with the challenges of heterogeneous classes. Most student teachers recognised and appreciated the autonomy they had been given in their practicum teaching. They enjoyed being able to experiment with different teaching methods and materials in a safe environment and many explained that this had helped them to develop their teaching style which, in turn, made them more confident teachers as time went on, however, the expression

⁵⁹ Official documentation relating to the practicum refers to the mentor as a *pedagogic advisor*.

of this autonomy was different in each case. In the English context, it was the mentor who played a decisive role in encouraging autonomy in the student teacher, and saw it as important for the development of the understanding and skills the student teachers will need in their future profession. In most cases the student teacher had observed the mentor's practice first-hand and may have modelled or adapted their own practice as a result. This was therefore an opportunity to locate themselves as teachers and be able to justify the professional decisions they make about their classroom practice.

French student teachers experience autonomy very differently to their English counterparts. In the M1 year, it has been shown that the brief practicum is viewed as an introduction to the classroom environment and may involve teaching small groups under the close surveillance of the class teacher. In the M2 year, student teachers who have passed the competitive exam are trainee civil servants and take on the full responsibility of the teaching role, although they have recourse to a mentor for support and guidance, and who observes their teaching on specific occasions. This obviously means that there is an expectation that they will be able to function independently, and many relished this professional freedom. Since the French participants in this study were from both M1 and M2 years, the statistic in Figure 9 (above) largely represents the views of M2 students who are already on practicum, and therefore the figure may be lower than with a participant group comprised entirely of M2 students. The figure among German student teachers was lower. This is likely to be because in one federal state in which the interviews were conducted, at least part of the Integrated Semester Practicum takes place accompanied by others from the tutor group, although students clearly recognise that they will have more autonomy during the post-university *Referendariat*.

The second area of professional learning where there were similar experiences concerned the relationship with pupils. German and English student teachers felt strongly that establishing a good rapport was one of the keys to effective learning and management of the classroom; they also believed that engaging pupils through interactive methods increased their responsiveness to learning. For French student teachers, the comments related more to pupils engaging in learning and in observing

progression, than to the relational side, and is therefore included in the 'general teaching' column in Figure 9. Two possible explanations might be found in the status of the student teacher and in the socio-historical view of the teacher as '*maitre*,'⁶⁰ since associated with this image are authority and a teacher-centred approach to classroom practice. The first real experience of teaching comes with the awareness of being a 'servant of the state', with responsibility for implementing the national curriculum and achieving the targets set for each school year. Chapters 2 and 6 highlighted the transition taking place from this traditional image of the teacher, to that of teachers as 'pedagogues', in the increasing heterogeneity of classrooms, however, the dual mantels of responsibility and authority may account for why these nascent teachers are perhaps less focused on the relational aspect of their work.

It comes as no surprise that many student teachers spoke of the steep learning curve of managing pupil behaviour and the need to develop pedagogical authority. Effective behaviour management was considered to be central to their sense of teacher identity, although comments were nuanced in their focus, depending on the country. English student teachers were aware of the connection between positive behaviour management strategies and pupils' learning. Some were aware of the explicit expectation placed on them in the Teaching Standards to: "Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment" (DES, 2011). French students did not comment on the rubric of competences on which they are assessed, but expressed the expectation on them to demonstrate 'authority' in the classroom. The official rubric uses the same terminology, stating that student teachers should manage inappropriate pupil behaviour "with the level of authority appropriate to the situation" (MEN, 2015). Issues with pupil behaviour seemed to be less of a concern for German student teachers. This can be explained by the way in which the practicum is organised in small tutor groups, meaning that while one student is teaching the lesson, the others, together with the mentor or tutor are observing. It is reasonable to expect that pupil behaviour is constrained by the presence of several adults in the

⁶⁰ Literally 'master'.

classroom. Student teachers who were alone in the classroom were more likely to cite managing pupil behaviour as a challenge.

The nature of professional learning relating to classroom practice was diverse and generally related to planning, selecting appropriate methods and resources to engage pupils, timing the lesson effectively so that it was well structured and paced, and assessing pupils' work to check that they are making progress. A key challenge for English and French student teachers in this respect is differentiation.

The diversity and inclusivity of English and French classes can be attributed in part to the education system. Student teachers are placed mostly in comprehensive schools, where classes may include a mix of first languages and other identified learning needs. Although setting according to ability is common in English schools, the student teachers were very aware of the requirement to differentiate appropriately for all pupils. The wording of the relevant teaching standard (Standard 5) clarifies the expectations for student teachers:

A teacher must: have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs; those of high ability; those with English as an additional language; those with disabilities; and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them. (DES, 2011).

Several student teachers had experienced classes with pupils in all of the categories listed in the standard and struggled with the increased level of planning this necessitated. In France, reforms to teacher education, particularly since 2012, have resulted in the concept of differentiation being discussed more widely with student teachers, although the equivalent competence in the French rubric is less specific than the corresponding English standard in its wording:

“Take into account the diversity of pupils and make sure to use adequate pedagogic strategies for their level.” (MEN, 2015).

In this case student teachers struggled with how to apply the theory of differentiation in practice. The traditional teacher-centred approaches still prevalent among many French teachers may mean that there are fewer examples on which to model their practice. The data in Figure 9 indicates that this less of a problem for the German student teachers that were interviewed. The reason for this is contextual and relates

to the structure of secondary education in Germany. In contrast to the comprehensive structure in England and France, German student teachers carry out their practicum in one of three school types, depending on the federal state, (Hauptschule, Realschule and Gymnasium⁶¹), therefore in a very real sense, the system has largely differentiated for them. This is not to say that classes in German schools are homogeneous, but the extent of the differentiation required is mitigated by the selective system. This is reflected in the teaching standards, which state briefly:

“Student teachers will be aware of the social and cultural diversity in every learning group.” (Kompetenz 4: Standards für Lehrerbildung 2017).

The official position therefore acknowledges the differences in the background of children in a class but does not address the diversity of learning abilities and how this should be addressed.

7.5.3 Assessment, standards and accountability

In the above section reference has been made to teaching standards or competences, against which all student teachers in this study were assessed. Awareness of the standards was far higher among the English students than in the other countries, with no German participants making specific reference to them. The difference can be explained by the level of accountability within each educational context. In England, student teachers recognise that all teaching standards must be evidenced in order to qualify. They also know that post-qualification, teachers are held accountable by the Inspectorate, OFSTED, on the basis of these standards. Thus, the same standards are used to judge both student and experienced teachers.

Very few French student teachers referred to teaching competences, however, the sense of being accountable as civil servants for pupil achievement and progression was clear. Many spoke about the need to adhere to the national curriculum and meet its targets for pupils at each level.

German student teachers demonstrated less awareness of either teaching standards

⁶¹ It should be noted that in 9 out of the 16 Bundesländer there are currently only two types of secondary school.

or a strong sense of accountability. In this educational context, the practicum that students carry out at university is essentially the forerunner to the post-university *Referendariat*, which, like France, involves a paid practicum with full responsibility for a class. Students are released weekly for seminars led by experienced teachers from the municipality and are examined by state representatives at the end of this practical period.

The comparative analysis of the practicum, viewed through the lens of student teachers, has demonstrated the importance of a strong support network, although the number and roles of those involved varies from country to country. Professional learning was evident in all countries, with student teachers experimenting in their practice to some extent and articulating common challenges with classroom management and pupil behaviour. Finally, recourse to teaching standards or competences as an assessment tool was common in France and England, however, German student teachers anticipated greater reference to the standards in the second, post-university phase of teacher education.

7.6 Conclusion

The practicum represents perhaps the most significant aspect of the teacher education curriculum. Student teachers have all experienced an extensive ‘apprenticeship of observation’ as pupils in school and in the early phase of teacher education, when they observe teachers as part of their programme of study. They approach the practicum with a wealth of theory behind them, together with their own tacit theories of teaching, and seek to navigate the classroom environment with these academic compasses. The development of a professional identity, or ‘being’ and ‘acting’ as a teacher (Sachs, 2005), is the outcome of a successful practicum experience and hinges on a high level of support and growth in professional learning in all aspects of classroom practice.

A critical factor in a successful practicum experience is the relationship between the student teacher and the mentor. Although there is potential for conflict in the dual role of the mentor as advisor and assessor, most of the participants attributed their growth in confidence as teachers to the daily guidance and support of the mentor in

their placement school. In all three countries student teachers welcomed the immediacy of the mentor's feedback and often prioritised this over feedback from the university tutor. In line with Mifsud's (2018) findings on inconsistencies in mentoring practice, there was evidence from a few participants that the mentoring relationship was strained, however, the majority views concurred with those of Ulrik and Smith (2011) that the mentor is central to a good practicum.

As student teachers faced challenges that sometimes threatened their confidence, it was most often the support and guidance from the mentor that enabled them to meet the challenges and learn from them. The findings in this study did not endorse the claim by Escalié and Chaliès (2016) that mentors should adopt a 'directive' style and indeed, participants valued the gradual withdrawal of 'hand holding' by the mentor as the practicum progressed, which enabled student teachers to develop professional autonomy and an individual teaching style. They learnt to establish their own pedagogical authority by observing experienced teachers and learning from the strategies suggested by the mentor.

Professional learning is a vital element of the practicum and participants spoke about learning in a number of ways. Some had learnt pedagogical authority and how to manage inappropriate behaviour effectively. Others had grappled with differentiation in heterogeneous and inclusive classes, and some had expanded their repertoire of teaching methods and learnt how to use classroom technology. The prevalence of commentaries on these aspects of their practice concurs with findings by Poulou (2007) on the chief concerns of student teachers on practicum. In most cases the mentor was instrumental to the learning process, by providing a safe environment in which student teachers could make mistakes, experiment with new strategies and begin to develop professional autonomy. It was noteworthy that when interviewed at the end of the practicum, many participants already referred to themselves as 'teachers', a sign that perhaps the practicum, with all its challenges, is a kind of rite of passage in which a professional evolution takes place and their teacher professional identity is established.

Evidence-based approaches to assessing practical teaching skills commonly involved

the use of competence rubrics and teaching standards during formal lesson observations. English and French student teachers were acutely aware of the need to evidence competence in all required areas. German student teachers did not mention the teaching standards and although they are used as a framework for guidance at the university stage of teacher education, it is during the second, post university phase that evidencing specific competences becomes commonplace.

The physical and emotional demands of teaching affected all the participants but was most keenly felt by French and English student teachers. Mifsud (2018) also found that student teachers feeling exhausted or out of their depth were common affective experiences. This can be explained both by the pressure of formal observations of their practice, on which their future career rests, and also because they have to submit a number of academic assignments or sit exams whilst on practicum.

The relationship between theoretical and practical learning has yet to be explored in this study. The following chapter will consider the final part of the 3E model: the epistemic identity of student teachers and how knowledge and understanding contributes to their developing teacher professional identity. Participants explain the theoretical content of the teacher education curriculum in their own terms, highlight particular theories that they perceive to be relevant to their practice and comment on the ways in which theory and practice are linked. Finally, they evaluate the balance between theoretical and practical components of their respective programmes.

CHAPTER 8.

EPISTEMIC IDENTITY

8.1 Introduction

The professional identity development of the student teacher is underpinned by professional knowledge and understanding. This knowledge can be categorised as propositional or abstract, and procedural or practical. The latter was the focus of the previous chapter, which analysed how the practicum experience influences the evolving professional identity of student teachers. Practical knowledge builds through the observation of experienced teachers, and may also be informed by the tacit knowledge that student teachers bring with them from their accumulated experiences as school pupils and beyond, forming a strong connection between the school and classroom environment and their future role as teachers. It was shown they may also experience some conflict between this tacit knowledge, including their beliefs about what constitutes good teaching, and the expectations of their practice, expressed by both the university and the practicum school. The practicum presents additional tensions for the student teacher when it comes to the dissonance between espoused theories encountered at the university and the realities of the classroom with its many challenges.

The structure of the teacher education curriculum in the comparison countries places theoretical knowledge before the practicum begins. When student teachers first enter the classroom, they are faced with the task of making sense of the theories they have learnt and seeking to connect theory and practice. This is by no means straightforward and the perception of a theory-practice gap among student teachers is commonplace (Korthagen, 2001; Allen, 2011). The 'knowing that' (abstract, propositional knowledge) and the application of this knowledge in 'knowing how' (procedural, situational) is not guaranteed and many student teachers question the relevance of theory in this inherently practical environment. School mentors clearly prioritise classroom skills and supporting student teachers in meeting teaching standards and competences and may not see it as their role to integrate theoretical knowledge with these skills. For their part, student teachers may treat the theories they have learnt in an 'off the peg'

manner, expecting that for every problem, a theory can simply be plugged in to solve it. As Britzman says, student teachers: “bring to their teacher education a search for recipes and, often, a dominant concern with methods of classroom discipline” (1991: 48). This must certainly raise questions about the value student teachers place on theoretical knowledge and their willingness to explore and reflect on theories that have relevance for them.

If the premise is accepted that theoretical knowledge is important, because it informs practice-related decisions and develops professional understanding, it must therefore represent a key component in the development of the teacher professional identity of student teachers. In the 3E model devised for this empirical study, the assimilation of the theoretical and its connection to practice is termed the epistemic identity. The key questions to be answered with respect to the development of epistemic identity are:

- What types of theoretical knowledge are taught as part of the teacher education curriculum and how does this vary among the three comparison countries?
- How much importance is given to theoretical knowledge in each case?
- How do student teachers perceive theories related to teaching and learning and are theory-practice connections actively promoted by tutors and mentors?

This chapter will seek to answer these questions by way of a comparative analysis of Germany, France and England and how theoretical knowledge in teacher education programmes is used to prepare student teachers for their professional role. The first part of the chapter will contextualise the teacher education curriculum in each country and how educational theories have evolved within the wider academic culture; in particular, it will demonstrate the divergent path taken by teacher education in England, in contrast to its near neighbours in Europe. The second part considers the different types of theoretical knowledge in teacher education and how it is conceived with relation to practice. The third section offers a literature review of theory and practice in teacher education and the findings of empirical studies on this issue. The final section analyses the perceptions and experiences of the student teachers in this research study, which theories they consider most useful or relevant to their practice, and if and how explicit connections between theory and practice are made by the university tutors and school placement mentors.

8.2 The teacher education curriculum in Germany, France and England

8.2.1 Germany

Historically, the study of the education sciences was located within the faculties of philosophy and the emerging humanities and social sciences. The approach to education knowledge was closely connected to the notion of *Bildung*⁶² and the hermeneutic tradition and the connection of this academic knowledge to the practice of teaching was not considered:

“In both France and Germany, for example, there was no such aspiration; the dilemmas of theory and practice were ‘resolved’ by the establishment of very different types of institution based on different conceptions of educational knowledge.” (Whitty and Furlong, 2017: 18-19).

These ‘very different’ institutions were the *Pädagogische Hochschulen* (teacher training institutes), whose sole function was teacher preparation. These specialist institutions were integrated into the universities⁶³ from the 1960s onwards and the teacher education element was to be reconstructed to locate itself within existing university faculties of social sciences and philosophy (Schriewer, 2017:83). Despite the progressive education movement of the 1970s and some pilot projects on different models of initial teacher education⁶⁴, the professional identity of the teacher in Germany remained firmly grounded in traditional didactic, teacher-centred approaches to classroom practice. It was not until the publication of the first PISA study (2000) that there ensued a ‘veritable flood’ of suggestions for reforming teacher education (Terhart, 2004:87).

Terhart claimed that it was essential that any reform to the teacher education curriculum should strengthen ‘pedagogic professionalism’ (Ibid) and re-evaluate the

⁶² For a detailed explanation of the concept of *Bildung*, see the section on Germany in Chapter 2.

⁶³ Baden-Württemberg is the only federal state to retain the institution of *Pädagogische Hochschule*.

⁶⁴ A notable example is the ELAB project in Niedersachsen (Lower Saxony) where a one-phase, integrated model of initial teacher education was introduced, but ultimately blocked by the *Deutscher Philologenverband* (German Philological Society) who saw it as a threat to the privileged status of grammar schoolteachers.

place of educational science and its application. He advocated a new approach that ensured student teachers would acquire a:

“dual habit [-] of practical abilities and a capacity for scientifically-informed, theoretical reflexivity, sensitive to the particular case” (Ibid, p.90).

Federalism guaranteed the autonomy of the universities, however political pressure and media attention on Germany’s poor performance in PISA resulted in an agreement by the KMK to introduce national teaching standards. The duration of the practicum was gradually increased, and standards were linked to appropriate theoretical knowledge. The Bologna agreement meant that initial teacher education was modularised, and the time constraints imposed for undergraduate and Masters studies moved the now semester long practicum to the Masters phase of study. Thus, the undergraduate phase prioritised the study of two subject disciplines, together with educational science, and the Masters phase concentrated on subject didactics, the semester practicum and the dissertation. The adaptation of the didactic triangle below summarises the theoretical knowledge curriculum student teachers are taught:

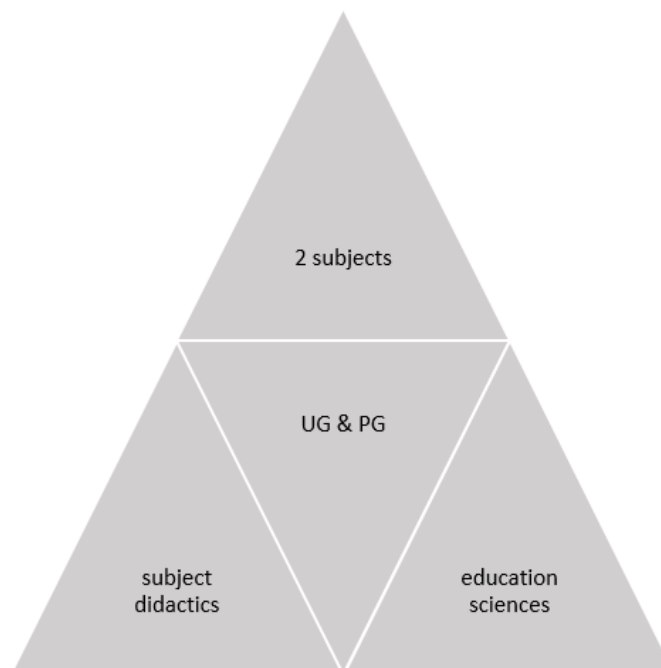


Figure 10. German teacher education: theoretical curriculum

8.2.2 France

There are clear parallels between the place of theory in the teacher education curriculum in France and Germany. In both cases educational science as a field focused on pedagogy developed slowly, firmly rooted in philosophy and then located within the research fields of psychology and sociology. In France, the establishment of a separate discipline emerged in the post-war period, however, as with Germany, this was not linked specifically to initial teacher education or the practice of teaching. Historically there existed a tension between the institutions for training primary school teachers (*instituteurs*), and secondary teachers, who were located in the universities and firmly anchored in academic disciplines (Malet, 2017; see also the contextualisation in Ch.2 of this thesis).

An early empirical study by Foster (2000) on initial teacher education for secondary teachers indicates that not much had changed with regard to the highly theoretical curriculum. Despite the parity of status of primary and secondary teachers introduced by the 1989 Education Act⁶⁵ and the location of their training in the newly created IUFMs, the different cultures in the two sectors prevailed. The academic tradition for secondary teachers resisted the idea of including pedagogic skills and understanding in the curriculum, in what Asher and Malet term a ‘latent anti-pedagogism’:

“This ran quite contrary to the secular and universalist principle of transmission of knowledge on which secondary education in France had built its legitimacy and its prestige, which was conceived as being destined for the privileged few.” (Asher and Malet, 1996:276).

Student teachers interviewed by Foster (*ibid*) bemoaned the theory-heavy curriculum and the insufficient time given to classroom skills. The introduction of practicum blocks in 2002, alternating with study at the IUFM, had the potential to promote the connection of theory and practice. In a study by Bertone et al (2009) neither the abstract knowledge emphasised by the university tutor, nor the supportive but

⁶⁵ 1989 Loi d’Orientation of Lionel Jospin paved the way for the establishment of new initial teacher education institutions called IUFM (Instituts Universitaires de Formation de Maîtres) responsible for the preparation of both primary and secondary teachers.

practical advice offered by the school mentor, helped to bridge the theory-practice divide. In any case the first year of initial teacher education is almost entirely given over to preparation for the competitive exam and this further compounds the problem of linking theory and practice. The Concours exams themselves prioritise the written assessment of subject knowledge over pedagogical knowledge, which is mainly examined orally.

New teacher education institutions were established in 2013 (ESPE⁶⁶) and there were moves to make the competitive exams include more assessment of pedagogy and teaching (Cornu, 2015). Concurrent to the creation of the ESPEs, the Ministry of Education introduced a national framework for the Masters in Education (MEEF) together with a set of teaching standards or competences. Thus, there seems to be a drive to achieve greater cohesion between the theoretical and practical aspects of the initial teacher education curriculum. In 2016 the ESPEs were transformed into the INSPEs⁶⁷ and the curriculum has settled into a pattern that still devotes most of the first year to preparation for the competitive examination, but has a second year where the weekly timetable is shared equally between the school practicum and the university studies. There are variations in the weighting of different elements of the programme, however the content of the curriculum is broadly the same in all the universities and the second year comprises: Practicum and related contextual studies (no.3 below), didactics and pedagogy of the subject to be taught (Nos. 1 and 4), research methods and pedagogical project No.2) and a foreign language. Of these, didactics and pedagogy represent the largest element in terms of both hours and credits. The example below is taken from the 2019/20 MEEF curriculum at the INSPE Toulouse. The modules listed are generic to all student teachers:

⁶⁶ ESPE: École Supérieure du Professorat et de l'Éducation.

⁶⁷ INSPE: Institut National Supérieur du Professorat et de l'Éducation.

Table 2. A typical Teacher Education Curriculum in France

Master 2	Module	Hours	ECTS
1	Planning and teaching a class	24	3
2	Professional practice research	12	14
3	Practicum	24	38
4	Subject didactics	126	13

8.2.3 England

The theoretical component of the teacher education curriculum in England is in stark contrast to that of Germany and France and highlights that, both historically and ideologically, the three countries come from what Schriewer and Keiner propose are: largely divergent intellectual worlds [and] divergent intellectual spheres of reference” (1992:51). Education science (including pedagogy) did not develop as a discipline in its own right but has always been linked to initial teacher education, as a type of applied educational science. In his seminal work ‘Does Education Matter?’ Brian Simon asks why there is no pedagogy in teacher education in England. He explains that in the late nineteenth century there had been some links between psychology and education, particularly with regard to understanding the link between learning and memory. Simon suggests that this historical legacy meant that teachers in fact “built up a coherent system of pedagogy, even if the word was rarely used in Britain.” (1985:39)

During the 1960s and 70s, as the Higher Education sector grew, universities tried to establish a strong academic position for educational theory (Kuhlee and Winch, 2017), however, Simon claims that this resulted in an unsystematic approach to the theoretical part of the teacher education curriculum, which he terms ‘pluralism run wild’(ibid). Whitty and Furlong (2017) suggest that the lack of an established academic curriculum for pedagogical theory jeopardised the traditional higher education location of teacher education.

From the 1980s tighter government controls and a more prescriptive approach to initial teacher education and the promotion of schools-based routes into teaching exacerbated the marginalised role of the universities:

“[-] particularly in relation to teacher education, the traditional contribution of universities to the field of Education has therefore become increasingly marginalised from officially sanctioned definitions of legitimate Educational knowledge.” (Whitty and Furlong, 2017:15)

A further stumbling block to educational theory as a key part of initial teacher education has been the long-standing discourse of teaching as a ‘craft’ and a consequent scepticism about the value of theoretical knowledge for the student teacher. This belief has underpinned the rapid growth of school-based initial teacher education or ‘on-the-job’ routes into teaching. The university-based PGCE developed into its current model during the late 1990s and includes two long practicum blocks in placement schools, together with university studies organised into short intensive periods at the start and between the school placements. Pedagogical and contextual content is generally organised as keynote lectures for all student teachers, with subject studies, including ‘didactical’ or teaching methods in their subject disciplines making up the lion’s share. Partington (1999) cites two empirical studies by Lambert (IOE) and Furlong (University of Bristol) who found that student teachers are critical of the keynote lectures, but are pleased with the balance of the PGCE being weighted towards subject-focused courses. This has resulted in fewer complaints from students about irrelevance of content.

The current PGCE comprises two Masters level modules, including an individual research project. This is pertinent in the light of the 2015 Carter Review of the initial teacher education curriculum, which recommended a research-based approach to the learning of educational theory:

“It is important that trainees understand how to interpret educational theory and research in a critical way, so they are able to deal with contested issues.” (DfE 2015:8)

The rhetoric here is interesting, as it does not state explicitly that educational theory should be *taught* as part of the curriculum, simply that student teachers should be able to ‘interpret’ theory. The individual project, grounded in research, is similar to the ‘*Mémoire Professionnel*’ in France and the dissertation in Germany.

In summary, there is a clear division between the theoretical component of the teacher education curriculum in France and Germany, and the curriculum in England.

In the former countries, theories of teaching and learning have developed from the fields of humanities and social sciences, and consequently education science has established itself as an academic field within universities that is quite separate from teacher education. For student teachers in these countries, education science is taught over an extended period, before, during and after the practicum. By contrast, education science in England did not establish itself as an academic field away from teacher education. Student teachers have a short, intensive block of theory before starting the first practicum, and again between the first and second practicum.

The way that codified knowledge in teacher education is conceptualised and integrated in the curriculum has long been the focus of literature on the subject. In the review of texts that follows, this theoretical knowledge will be the first focal point and followed by literature dealing with the question of whether theory and practice are linked in the teacher education curriculum and, if so, the role of teacher educators and other actors in facilitating this connection.

8.3 Education theory and the education sciences

8.3.1 What is education theory?

What is the purpose of theoretical knowledge in initial teacher education and what knowledge is most useful or relevant, given the complexity of the teacher's work and the diversity of contexts and situations they encounter on a daily basis?

Within current literature many authors refer to early, classical categories of knowledge conceived by Aristotle and Plato: Episteme, Techne and Phronesis (see for example Korthagen, 2010; Loughran, 2006; Kemmis and Smith, 2008 and Eisner, 2002). Episteme refers to factual knowledge derived from scientific methods and expertise, which Korthagen and Kessels (2001) call propositional knowledge and Loughran (ibid.) terms 'theory with a capital T'. This knowledge is generalisable and non-context specific and therefore links to what the British sociologist Basil Bernstein (1924-2000) refers to as 'vertical' knowledge (1999). Examples from teacher education include theories of learning, child development and pedagogy. It might also include education laws and legal responsibilities of the teacher.

Techne comes closer to practical knowledge and refers to the use rules to make reasonable decisions about a course of action. It also underpins the technical-rationalist school of thought about teaching and might include knowing how to select appropriate methods for a lesson or planning a logical sequence of lessons. Where the predominant view of teaching is that of a craft, as in English policy rhetoric, these rules are likely to take the form of prescriptive statements about how to teach a certain subject within the National Curriculum.

Like techne, phronesis is about making sound judgements, but involves a more reflexive element which suggests that actions are to be reviewed and evaluated, so that future actions can be changed to improve practice. Reflective practice has been a paradigm in teacher education since the 1980s, and encouraging student teachers to reflect on their practice should mean that they develop autonomy in their teaching decisions. It is this 'knowing how' that connects most strongly with the 'knowing that' of episteme and where the epistemic identity should inform and connect with the evolving, practitioner identity of phronesis. In Bernstein's (1999) terms, this is where the vertical, non-contextual knowledge connects with the horizontal, contextual and situational knowledge, in other words where pure knowledge, that can be seen as offering generalisable perspectives, links with applied knowledge in the specificity of the classroom situation.

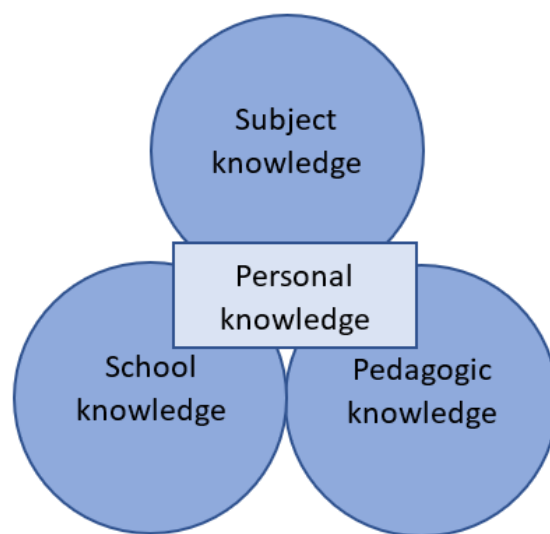


Figure 11. Banks model of the teacher education curriculum (2005)

Authors exploring the content of theoretical knowledge in teacher education refer to three categories: knowledge of the subject or subjects to be taught, knowledge of these disciplines within the school curriculum and pedagogical knowledge. The latter is encompassed within the term 'educational sciences' and knowledge of the subject as articulated in the school curriculum as 'didactics' or what Shulman (1987) terms 'pedagogical content knowledge' (for an in-depth analysis of the relevance of Shulman's theory, see Abell, 2008). Figure 11 above has been adapted from a model of the theoretical content of the teacher education curriculum as proposed by Banks et al (2005:94) and illustrates the interconnection between these types of knowledge in developing teachers' professional knowledge.

The model acknowledges that connecting the three types of knowledge is the tacit or personal knowledge developed over time by the student teacher. This personal knowledge includes past knowledge and experiences of education, beliefs about teaching and ongoing experiences acquired on the practicum. In the 3E model of this study, this highlights the importance of a cohesion between the emergent, evolving and epistemic identities that combine to produce a competent practitioner with a strong sense of teacher professional identity. Writing about the development of professional competence in German teacher education, Keuffer (2010) suggests that such competence can be summarised as the combination of cognitive abilities (professional knowledge) and personal beliefs, values and motivation towards teaching.

Gordon and O'Brien (2007) endorse the role of theoretical knowledge in teacher education as providing student teachers with a 'frame of reference and a language with which to name and critically analyse many of the problems they face daily' (p.122). This raises the important question of whether teacher educators, or indeed the constraints of the teacher education curriculum, create sufficient opportunities for this critical analysis. Criticisms of university-based teacher education focus on the issue of academia being akin to an 'ivory tower', the preserve of abstract theoretical knowledge, which:

‘perpetuates a class hierarchy where the only work deemed truly theoretical is work that is highly abstract, jargonistic, difficult to read and containing obscure references’ (ibid, p119).

The challenge for teacher educators in all three comparison countries is to recognise that they have a responsibility to help student teachers view theoretical knowledge critically, and to demonstrate how this knowledge is linked to their classroom practice. The next section will take up this theme of connecting theory and practice and present findings from several empirical studies on the teacher education curriculum.

8.3.2 Empirical studies of theory and practice in the teacher education curriculum

Empirical studies focusing on the connection between theory and practice in teacher education are mostly one country studies. Comparative studies on this topic are relatively rare and therefore the findings from the epistemic identity component of the 3E model in this comparative study will provide original data and new perspectives on this topic.

Studies by Mattsson et al (2011) in Sweden and Sjølie (2014) in Norway found that student teachers generally have a narrow conception of theory and a limited understanding about how theory translates into classroom practice. Mattsson et al (ibid.) interviewed fifteen students in Sweden who had previously completed their teaching practicum and found that although they could name some key theorists, they were unable to explain the theories themselves, or how these translated into classroom practice. Some expressed the view that the theory was introduced too early in the programme or that they needed more time for reflection. Teacher educators tended to favour a particular theory, but did not demonstrate how theory could be applied in practice. There seemed to be a greater awareness of didactic theories among these participants than pedagogical or learning theories. Despite these criticisms, the study did find that engaging in theories had a positive effect on the development of teacher professional identity in student teachers, in as much as they discovered theories that resonated with their experience:

“our respondents did however report about having become more conscious of their own identity when considering different theoretical perspectives, although we perceive that they tend to identify with theories that suit their own experience or are understandable for them” (Mattsson et al, 2011:160).

Student teachers in Norway expressed similar views to those in Sweden and struggled with connecting theory and practice, in particular with pedagogical theories, which they felt were not relevant to the real world of teaching. Sjølie (2014) found that they looked for one theory that would explain practical issues and found it difficult to manage the plethora of different views or theoretical perspectives. Tang et al (2012) researched the epistemological beliefs of student teachers and found that as student teachers progress through a programme, they recognise the fallibility of theories and begin to move beyond what they have been taught to develop their own theories as they gain more practical teaching experience:

“As students increasingly conceptualise knowledge as uncertain, they move from being a passive recipient of fixed factual knowledge to an active agent in creating their own knowledge” (p.258-9).

This finding corresponds to Korthagen’s (2001) model of ‘realistic teacher education’, which he proposes should *begin* with the practicum and practical knowledge, and then introduce theoretical knowledge, by encouraging student teachers to seek out theories that connect with their experiences, and then analyse these in the light of existing theories. In an early study with eighty-one student teachers in Scotland, Drever and Cope (1999) devised a written assignment to elicit their perceptions of theory in relation to their teaching practice. Their findings concur with those of Korthagen and indicated that students started from the context of their practical experience and selected theories that fitted this experience. Their perception of the programme of study was not one of the coherent development of theoretical understandings and practice, but more as a ‘series of tasks or tests’ (p.106). Students also reported that the need to fit into the school community meant it was difficult to engage in critical reflection:

“In asking students to become reflective at the critical level, therefore, we are asking them to behave in a way which is neither exemplified by the models which they see in the school’s community of practice, nor valued by that community.” (ibid: 99)

The suggestion in the above citation that schools do not value critical reflection on theories of teaching and learning links to the findings of this study that mentors do not see it as their role to promote the connection of theory and practice with the student teachers they are supporting (see Chapter 7). The perception of the teacher education curriculum as a collection of independent, unrelated units of study led Carrinus et al (2017) to carry out a large-scale comparative study across five countries (including the Nordic countries and the United States), of students' opinions on the coherence of their respective programmes, both between modules and between university and school placement. Although student teachers reported 'reasonable' coherence between courses, there was a less positive response with regard to the connection between the university and school as locations of teacher education. The authors refer to this as the difference between conceptual and contextual coherence and they conclude that teacher educators need to make more explicit links between theory and practice, by modelling the attributes of good teaching in their own teaching.

The authors cited above make a distinction between teacher education programmes that promote reflective practice as a means of encouraging theory-practice links and autonomous teaching decisions, and those that prioritise a competence-based approach. Drever and Cope (1999) noted that there was no reference to reflection in the Scottish teaching competences. A review of the professional standards in the three comparison countries indicates that there are standards that require student teachers to reflect on, or evaluate their practice. The Teachers' Standards in England (DFE, 2015) highlight two ways of improving practice, firstly Standard 4 (Plan and teach well-structured lessons) states that teachers are to: "reflect systematically on the effectiveness of lessons and approaches to teaching" and Standard 8 (Fulfil wider professional responsibilities) makes a link with professional development: "take responsibility for improving teaching through appropriate professional development, responding to advice and feedback from colleagues." The latter standard is evidence of the importance of accountability in education and, though couched in positive terms, clearly refers to the system of internal inspection of teachers' work by departmental heads and other senior leaders.

The French rubric of competences devotes Compétence CC14 to the ‘analysis and adaptation of professional practice’ and requires student teachers to: “Take a step back in order to carry out a reflective analysis of his/her strategies and activities.” Competence 10 in the German standards (KMK 2016) concerns the understanding of teachers that their work should be subject to: “constant learning and further development of their professional competence.” Only the German standards include theoretical knowledge linked to the relevant practical skills. Thus, this competence states that student teachers must: “know methods of self and external evaluation in the context of the development and assurance of teaching and school quality.”

Before the findings of this research study are presented, the problem of the theory-practice gap in teacher education will be discussed in relation to relevant literature.

8.3.3 Bridging the theory-practice gap

“Teacher education has continuously been criticized for being too theoretical, too abstract and having too little focus on the actual practice student teachers will be confronted with after graduation, resulting in what is known as ‘praxis shock’” (Canrinus et al, 2017:324).

Literature relating to the difficulties experienced by student teachers in connecting theory and practice can be divided into three main categories: student teachers’ expectations of how educational theories can be used, the structure of the teacher education curriculum and the role of teacher, and empirical studies conducted with student teachers on this topic.

When they embark on their practicum, the theories they have learned can result in student teachers having developed an idealistic or utopian view of teaching and learning and the relationship between teachers and pupils (Berner and Isler, 2015). The dissonance or disconnect they experience as they ‘straddle school and academia’ (Loughran, 2006; Sjølie, 2014) can produce disillusionment and frustration in their practice. Britzman (1991) suggests student teachers have a vocational view of teacher education that means that they look for what she terms ‘magic recipes’ from the theoretical element that can be transferred directly into practice. Expectations of the classroom founded on portrayals of ‘ideal’ classes by teacher educators compound

this problem and mean that student teachers are not adequately prepared for the 'messiness' or complexity of teaching;

“[-] the university-promoted theories, often dispensed in a language separate from the student teaching reality, appeared more like speculative idealism than concrete realism.” (Britzman, 1986:443)

Consequently, they cope by resorting, metaphorically, to 'fire-fighting' in order to survive in the classroom and if a particular method works, they continue to use it without developing further pedagogical understanding as a result (Beyer, 1987).

Allen (2011) says that students embark on their teacher education programmes already anticipating that there will be a theory-practice gap between the university and the school. She is critical of teacher education programmes that 'front-load' theory and proposes that this merely reinforces this expectation, resulting in student teachers creating a mental delineation between the university, as purveyor of theory, and the school, as the locus of the practical. Making reference to Mead's theory of symbolic interactionism, she suggests that the lack of connection between the two environments means that student teachers become more attached to the practical environment, because it represents the location where they will work as teachers, and therefore they will tend to copy the behaviours they observe there, and abandon those learned at the university.

How the content of the teacher education curriculum is organised may also play a role in the theory-practice gap experienced by student teachers. The discussion of theoretical knowledge in the three comparison countries has shown that teacher education in France and Germany has developed from a strong epistemological culture grounded in scientific, abstract knowledge. In France there exists what Asher and Malet (1999) term an 'epistemocracy' in higher education, that prioritises knowledge of the subject discipline, with didactical and pedagogical knowledge coming much later, and even this often remains abstract and propositional. In Germany, subject knowledge has also taken precedence and Terhart (2004) argues that because university departments have the autonomy to pursue their own research interests, there will inevitably be a conflict between the orientation towards theoretical knowledge, and the orientation to the teaching profession and its practice.

In England, the organisation of theory into short intensive blocks, particularly at the beginning of the programme, reinforces the theory-practice divide in the way that Allen describes (ibid, 2011).

In her study of how professional knowledge is fostered in teacher education, Heilbronn (2008) suggests that there are two models or approaches, which she calls the 'standards or competence-based model' and the 'reflective practice' model. The former considers theoretical knowledge (knowledge 'that') as universally applicable and able to be replicated and observed on numerous occasions and in different situations. It focuses on a procedural version of knowledge that fails to take into account the individual qualities, character and emotions of the teacher and Heilbronn aligns this with a technical rationalist model of teaching. If there is an advantage to the competence-based model, Keuffer (2010), reviewing the German context, says that it has forced universities to consider the relationship between scientific knowledge and the preparation for professional life.

Heilbronn's (ibid.) second model of teacher education, the reflective practice model, is endorsed by other authors on teacher education (see for example, Noddings, 2003) as one way to promote the connection between theory and practice. The problem with the concept of reflective practice is that it enjoys many different definitions and that student teachers are often expected to embrace the skills of the reflective practitioner, without specific input on how to develop these reflective skills from teacher educators. In his seminal work on reflective practice Schon (1983) distinguishes between 'knowing-in-action', which might be described as a kind of intuitive approach to practice, and reflection-in-action, which means that the teacher makes constant modifications to practice in response to changing events in the classroom. Schön suggests that this reflection-in-action is synonymous with 'theory-in-action', since it is informed by theoretical underpinning, even if subconsciously.

Reflection-on-action, which is the most commonly promoted practice for student teachers, usually manifests itself as a type of post-lesson self-evaluation and aims to help the student teacher identify aspects for change and improvement in future teaching. Loughran (2006) suggests that reflection-on-action often takes the form of a

'problem' to be solved or a critical incident or situation that needs a more in-depth analysis. He argues that authentic reflective practice depends on the student teacher being able to initiate the process by identifying a specific problem or situation on which to reflect. A key part of the reflection process is the recourse to relevant theories which might illuminate the problem and suggest a solution. Britzman sees this reflection on practicum experiences as crucial in enabling the student teacher to connect theory and practice:

"It is here that student teachers must not only make sense of theory but attempt to experience practice theoretically" (1991:46).

Reflective practice is a broad term and if the skills of reflection do not come naturally to student teachers teacher educators need to devote time to showing them how to reflect (Richert,1990). If this is not the case, there is a danger that the mentor in the school placement may simply direct the reflection, often using the list of standards or competences as a reference point, rather than encouraging self-reflection by the student. This results in the student teacher 'going through the motions' in a ritualistic way, in order to meet the requirements of the course, with the result that the benefits of reflection are lost (Heilbronn, 2008).

The outcome of effective reflection should be 'a gentle ebb and flow' between episteme and phronesis (Loughran, 2006:134). As student teachers make the link between theory and practice and adapt their classroom skills in an informed way, they begin to develop autonomy in their practice. In French literature on teacher education, Gohier et al (2001) insist that student teachers must be encouraged to move beyond mastery of subject knowledge and prescribed teaching behaviours, to make their own choices and teaching decisions. Engaging in reflective practice, particularly in an education culture ruled by standards and accountability, can empower the student teacher, by being:

"a reaction against the view of teachers as technicians who [-] merely carry out what others, removed from the classroom, want them to do" (Zeichner and Liston, 1996:4).

The usual structure of teacher education programmes locates theory at the beginning of the teacher education programme and the practicum as the place where theory

and practice can be connected. It has been shown above that Korthagen's model of 'realistic' teacher education (2001;2010) is a more effective way for student teachers to link theory and practice, since the student teacher starts with classroom experiences, drawing on tacit knowledge in the first instance. Similar experiences over time allow for the development of 'gestalts', leading to reflection and the development of personal theories which can be used to modify future practice. This idea is endorsed by Brandenburg (2008), who stresses the importance of context in the successful connection of theory and practice:

"Therefore, knowledge as phronesis is based on a blending of theory and practice arising within the context of a particular experience" (p.17).

8.3.4 Summary

It is clear from the discussion above, that a theory-practice gap still prevails in teacher education in many countries, including the three comparison countries in this study. Barriers to greater cohesion in the curriculum can be attributed, in part, to the historical development of the academy and the place of education science in universities. In France and Germany this resulted a clear distinction between theoretical knowledge promoted in higher education, and the preparation of future teachers. In both countries the knowledge of the subject discipline was prioritised over pedagogical knowledge. In England there was no such distinction, however education science did not experience a coherent development and the role of the universities was undermined by the introduction of practical, school-based teacher education routes.

A further barrier has been the perception of student teachers that there are two separate learning environments involved in their training, the university for theory and the school placement for practice. Teacher educators have perpetuated this problem to an extent, by not providing authentic classroom examples that can be related to theory and by not modelling the practices they expect student teachers to evidence in their practicum.

The introduction of teaching standards or competences has further jeopardised the connection between theory and practice, by stressing practical over cognitive skills.

The inclusion of reflective practice offers a possible medium for enabling student teachers to link practical experiences with relevant theories, however this is contingent upon them being shown how to reflect and to be given the time and support from both tutors and mentors to do this in an authentic way, that promotes critical thought and autonomous decision-making. In the following section, the findings from participants from the three countries in this research study on the theory-practice question will be analysed in the light of the above literature.

8.4 Research findings

In order to ascertain how student teachers develop a sense of epistemic identity during their studies, participants in this study were asked to describe the academic content of the university programme and then to evaluate the extent to which connections between theory and practice are promoted by all those involved in teaching or supporting them. The findings will be organised as follows: the content and structure of the programme at the university, the identification and perceived relevance of theories and the role of tutors and mentors in helping them to link theory and practice. As in previous chapters, the findings from each country will be analysed first and then the similarities and differences from a comparative perspective will be presented and conclusions drawn.

8.4.1 Germany

Recent reforms have moved the semester practicum to the Masters phase of teacher education⁶⁸, however, there are some assessed education science modules during the BA phase. German student teachers described the content of their university programme in terms of pedagogical theories, didactic methods and seminars designed to accompany the practicum. Comments on pedagogical theories were expressed as a continuum, from being interesting of themselves, to being considered a waste of time. Some participants said that the examination following education science modules had forced them to read about pedagogical theories, but that it was quickly forgotten once

⁶⁸ Federal states have introduced this change to the structure of the curriculum at different times.

the exam had been passed. Even those who acknowledged that the lectures were interesting, expressed concern that they were disconnected from the real world of teaching:

Up to now – and I know others share this view – the theoretical pedagogy at the university doesn't really help us for our studies – and for the job later on. You have to learn a lot by rote and naturally a few weeks later you have forgotten it. [-] It must be better linked to practice from the outset. (Johannes)

In the first semester I had sociology and child psychology, but I don't remember much, lots with tables and diagrams. So very abstract, and then I had to take an exam. (Lauren)

Few German participants could name a theorist or theory that they had found particularly relevant, and examples from their classroom practice or explanations of why a theory might be relevant were mostly absent. One student spoke with enthusiasm about Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences and some others recalled that they had learned about constructivism. One student teacher said that she found constructivist approaches relevant to the teaching of geography and history, but neglected to explain why that was.

The structure of a concurrent programme, where theoretical modules are taken well before the practicum begins seems to cause concern for student teachers and reinforces the perception of the theory-practice gap. Several participants anticipated that there would be more didactic theory in the Masters phase, which they expected would be helpful for their practice, and that there would therefore be a closer connection between theory and practice at that point in the programme.

Nevertheless, one student teacher who had already experienced didactic theory lectures expressed the view that didactics are highly subjective and that every teacher has their own view about how teaching methods work in the classroom. The one aspect of the course organisation or structure that was viewed positively by several participants was the seminars to accompany the semester practicum. These sessions ran concurrently with the practicum and included tips on lesson planning and suggestions for improvement, in discussion with the university tutor and a peer group and this was clear evidence of an attempt to link the two environments of university and school. None of the student teachers suggested that any theory was integrated in

these discussions, although elements of teaching methods or didactics were clearly part of the overall discussion. This might indicate that student teachers have a narrow conception of theory and thus do not always recognise that underpinning theory (knowing-in-action) may inform their practice, albeit subconsciously.

The accompanying seminars for the semester practicum – I could take a lot away from those, although I'm convinced that a lot happens intuitively. Sometimes theory isn't really necessary and I ought to spend more time on it. (Anne-Marie)

Some participants thought that the programme should be re-structured so that practical experience and theoretical learning were concurrent throughout, with part of the week in the university and part in the practicum school.

One semester (practicum) is too little and they could integrate it better, with one or two days in the school, so that you can apply it (theory) and I think we would remember it when we have to apply it and don't just learn abstract things. (Lauren)

Teacher educators and mentors in the school support student teachers in different ways. Mentors appear to consider their role as that of a practical skills guide and thus, do not promote the connection of theory with practice. University lecturers responsible for teaching theories do not encourage these links either, according to the participants. Some commented that the use of case study classes is good in principle, but that these are generally 'ideal' class scenarios that are not representative of the real world. When students challenge teacher educators in asking for more practically relevant content, they might be met with a cool response:

We often complain that there is almost no connection between theory and practice. There are lecturers who have never worked in a school and they tell us about theories and we say that it is totally different in practice and just won't work, but there are some who don't want to accept that. It happens so often. There are some younger lecturers who can see that a bit better. (Doris)

The assessment of theory modules is by examination, whereas there is a requirement to write reflective reports on the practicum, beginning with the orientation practicum in the Bachelor phase, in which the students simply observe. The expectation that they can reflect on what they have witnessed and suggest how it could be improved, was seen as premature by the participants:

You have to write long reports, even though you can't reflect on what happened without being able to judge what you might have done differently or if you would do it the same. Therefore, I think the actual practicum should start much earlier in the programme. (Johannes)

Thus, this potential opportunity to connect theory and practice has been misguided, since the student teachers have yet to gain the practical experience of teaching that would enable them to reflect meaningfully on practice. The view expressed by the student teacher above is interesting, as the practicum originally took place during the undergraduate phase, however, since student teachers struggled with insufficient subject knowledge for secondary teaching, it was moved to the M1 year.

In conclusion, it seems that student teachers in Germany embark on their studies with the expectation that the teacher education curriculum will focus on theories that will be of direct relevance to their future role in the classroom. Some find the theory interesting per se, however they are critical of the lack of explicit links to practice. The more pragmatic among the participants expressed the view that theory would only make sense after years of experience in teaching and would need to be revisited. Overall, the participants' inability to name and explain any theory they found relevant endorses the evidence that students cram for exams, but do not absorb the theories in a way that promotes the application of individual, independent links between the theories and their practical classroom experience. Some accept the status quo, but others believe that restructuring the programme to achieve better integration would facilitate the connection, especially if teacher educators use real life classroom examples, rather than portraying a somewhat idealistic view of teaching and learning situations.

8.4.2 France

The responses of French student teachers shared much in common with those of their German counterparts. The content of the university programme was described in general terms, making reference to the social sciences, such as psychology and sociology and also to didactic theory. Within the participant group only one student teacher made reference to a specific theory, although this had been learned whilst on a visit to the German partner university and not at the French institution. The student

called this theory 'head, heart, hand' and referred to the importance of learners of being able to learn a new concept by using all five senses. Otherwise the participants spoke of theory in broad and historical terms:

In France you really journey through the great pedagogues of history. (Joanna)

Most participants were critical of the theoretical content of the programme and the amount of 'education jargon' that was used, however, others found some sessions interesting, although believed that it would be some years before they could see it come to fruition in terms of understanding how the theories apply in practice:

The tutors are interesting, and I can't reproach them and in some years perhaps it will make sense. (Felix)

Much more reference was made to seminars that had a practical focus, for example, participants cited oral communication, classroom management and teacher authority as being of particular relevance. These were only offered in the M2 year and the structure of the programme was a cause of concern for all participants. The M1 year is largely dedicated to the preparation for the competitive *Concours* examination and focuses predominantly on knowledge of the subject discipline.

The majority of time is spent preparing for the Concours in April to June (Olivier).

There's lots of pure knowledge [-] that we won't use later. (Claudette)

There were things we had to learn to pass the Concours which I will never use. (Nathalie)

The content of the M2 year clearly has more connection with the teacher's professional role, although the timetabling of some sessions were thought by the student teachers to come far too late to be helpful, since they start teaching at the beginning of the academic year. Some had started to see some connection between theory and practice, but believed the programme needed re-structuring to avoid experiencing a sense of inadequacy when they begin their first teaching on practicum. There is more didactic theory, but as with the German participants, the French student teachers felt that they were presented with models of 'ideal' classes, which was not supported by their practical experience:

The tutors who accompany the practicum are quite neutral in terms of theory. They tend to give advice based on a model class, which doesn't correspond to the reality. (Hugo)

The nature of education culture in France means that Republican values are considered essential learning for student teachers, however there were criticisms of the amount of hours devoted to such topics:

I had some courses that I will personally never use, especially – and we all agreed – the philosophy course last year on laïcité⁶⁹ which lasted about twelve or fourteen hours. And for what? (Nathalie)

The competitive examination dominates the M1 year, however some participants were aware that reforms to the M2 year had resulted in a greater emphasis on research for teacher education students. The *Mémoire Professionnelle*⁷⁰ has the potential to serve as a reflective document and therefore offer a medium for connecting theory and practice. In reality it is 'more a research-based assignment than reflections on practice' (F5), where subjects are suggested by university tutors, keen to comply with the academic requirements of Masters level study for evidencing research skills.

There were mixed responses with respect to linking theory and practice and it was evident that the practicum was considered the focal point for professional learning, whilst the university was often perceived as a quite separate, theoretical environment. One participant had completed teacher education studies in both France and Germany and drew parallels in the experience of both countries:

Generally I think theory and practice are kept apart in France and Germany and I think that's a shame. (Joanna)

I can't say I've had a good experience [-] lots of theories that we can't connect with action. [-] I think there is a chasm between theory and practice. (Hugo)

⁶⁹ *Laïcité* refers to the status of French teachers as representing the State, which is entirely secular and was separated from the Church by the Law on 9th December 1905.

⁷⁰ *Mémoire Professionnelle*: Professional Portfolio.

We have to learn a lot of grand theories but I think a lot of learning goes on at the placement school. Theory is not directly linked to practice[-] Everything I've learned has been in the practicum. (Felix)

The commentary from the French student teachers endorses the view (see Allen, 2011 above) that the two environments of university and placement school are seen as quite separate from each other. Where content was considered relevant, participants described sessions on classroom skills such as classroom management, lesson planning and constructing a scheme of work. Although there was clearly a perception that much of the university content was directed towards formal examinations, accounts of practicum experiences suggest that this might be a misperception, and there is some evidence that student teachers have absorbed theories which are then applied in their practice. This evidence goes beyond tacit knowledge accumulated prior to teacher education, however the fact that they are not cognisant of the application of theory suggests that much could be done to improve the theory-practice connection. One participant expressed hope that plans for reform would provide an opportunity for establishing a closer link between theory and practice:

Most of the sessions are very interesting. I think they plan to revise it next year, but it takes years to implement it. (Emilie)

In fact, the next reform of teacher education will come into effect in 2021/22 and aims to boost recruitment of teachers by making changes to the nature and timing of the competitive examination.

8.4.3 England

English student teachers on a postgraduate university course have a very different experience from their European counterparts. Educational theory is taught in intensive blocks, beginning with five or six weeks of study before the first practicum, and a further block between the first and second practicum. It was therefore important to hear the participants' perspectives on the content, how it is structured, and whether it facilitated a closer connection between theory and practice.

The majority of student teachers had a clear recall of the initial theoretical content of the curriculum, citing philosophy, pedagogical theories, learning theories, history of

education and behaviour management among others. One theory that was named specifically by a number of participants was constructivism. Opinions on how helpful this theory was in practice were mixed. One participant said she did not understand it at the time it was taught, but then observed it in her placement school and has since gained a better understanding. Another participant felt that constructivist approaches dominated the learning theories lectures, but without practical examples to draw on:

[-] they're really trying to push this constructivist approach, but at no point did they tell us how to develop an activity in the constructivist style. (Chloe)

There was a clear expectation that lectures and seminars would be directly applicable to classroom practice. Thus, some of the more philosophical keynote lectures on education, such as its purpose for society, were less well received, however, in general the view of the theoretical content was positive for most of the participants and many felt challenged by the presentation of opposing theories and broader educational topics.

I, hand on heart, love what the course tries to do here. The course leader discusses theory and poses abstract questions and I love that. I think it's crucial to becoming a teacher. (Andrew)

I really quite enjoy the theory. I think it's more relevant than a lot of my colleagues do. (Sebastian)

There are multiple sessions from different experts and 99% have been really helpful. (Emma)

English student teachers were all too aware of the structure of the programme, using terms such as 'front-loaded with theory,' and the knowledge that they would be in their first classroom within a matter of weeks meant that they were perhaps more demanding of the need for relevance in the theoretical elements, with a clear link to practice. Despite the very positive response regarding the theoretical content, some felt that the broader, historical and philosophical sessions should be replaced with classroom-focused content. Others believed the theories would make more sense further into their teaching experience. Even those who expressed that they liked learning theory, did not consider that it was linked to practice:

The initial stuff was at a very, very high level and intellectually stimulating [-] but when we got into the classroom, all of that, to a large extent, seemed so far removed. (Adam)

The course is front-loaded with a lot of theory. I don't know how accurately that prepared us for the classroom itself. I think we learnt a lot on our feet. (Damian)

That theoretical body of work has helped us to be better teachers in a way. There have been some keynotes related to education, but not to teaching practice and I'm not sure about the purpose of them. They could have been replaced with something we could use in the classroom. As someone who is focused on improving my teaching, they were not applicable. (Emma)

I think it (the programme) is well balanced, because they prepare you before you step into the classroom. You need to start applying it. (Lewis)

The mixed perspectives expressed by the student teachers cited above indicate that they see the value of the theoretical content of the programme but were quite circumspect about its relevance for their classroom practice. Some believed they would be able to apply theories during the practicum or at a later stage in their teaching career. Others saw the written assessments as a vehicle designed to show understanding of the theories. Once again, the participants commented that the mentor in the placement school did not consider it as part of the role to link theory and practice. The post-lesson discussion with the observing university tutor included some relation of theory to practice, however, some students felt that achieving the teaching standards was a greater priority or that the tutors were detached from the real world of the classroom:

The mentors in both placements were not making any bridges between theory and practice. The university tutor a bit more; the conversations were academic but he was out of touch with today's secondary classroom. (Chloe)

There is a huge divide between theory and practice. The university preparation versus the school saying: 'these are the tasks for today'. Even though the university tutors are really invested in making us thorough teachers, they also have to tick boxes. (Andrew)

The above citations indicate that there is still a perception of the university and the school as two distinct environments and that attempts to connect theory and practice are thwarted by the perceived roles of those supporting student teachers, together with the state regulation of the quality of teachers through standards.

During the first placement students spend one day a week back in the university. Participants commented positively on this time, as an opportunity to reflect on the previous week at school and the discussion of critical incidents with tutors and peers. This has the dual purpose of reducing the isolation that some student teachers experience in the placement school and creating opportunities for them to discuss their practice. They also spent part of the day in subject specialist groups, preparing and evaluating activities and most found this particularly helpful, although they would not have used the term 'didactic methods.' The structuring of the programme to allow alternating university and school experience would seem to be a tangible way of connecting theory and practice and supporting student teachers in the early days of their practice. Following a short intensive theory block after the first practicum, there is no further alternating between the two locations in the second practicum and so this connection is lost.

8.5 Comparative Analysis

The historical development of education science in higher education provides an important backdrop to the comparative perspective of teacher education and the theory-practice divide. In Germany and France, the privileged place of the discipline in academia has resulted in a development that is quite separate from teacher education, and this has exacerbated the theory-practice problem. Commenting on the German situation, Pritchard notes:

“None but a minority of professors have experienced in person what it is to transform educational theory into classroom practice, and it is difficult for them to promote in their students a synthesis which has eluded them existentially.”
(1993:363)

This citation epitomises the situation in teacher education, where university lecturers have generally not been classroom teachers and do not see it as within their remit to connect 'pure' knowledge with its applied version. In England, the issue is more policy-related than academic, with the government promoting an image of teaching as a 'craft' and on-the-job training in schools overtaking the more academic, university route into teaching. Having said this, the theory-practice gap seems to exist for student teachers in all three comparison countries, no matter what the content or

structure of their programmes might be. The content of the teacher education curriculum in all countries consists of some combination of subject study, education sciences or pedagogy, and didactic methods, also known as teaching methods. In all three countries, study of the subject discipline predominates at undergraduate level.

In Germany there are some modules in education science at the Bachelor stage, but most of the educational theory comes in the post graduate phase, as in France and England. In terms of structure, the theoretical elements precede the practicum in all countries, except in France where the two elements run concurrently in the M2 year. The other two countries offer seminars specifically designed to support the practicum. These seminars are generally taught by university staff that have previously worked as teachers and it is therefore perhaps no surprise that they are noted by participants as being of particular relevance for their practice.

Figure 12 below indicates the relative weighting of different elements of the teacher education curriculum in the three comparison countries and how the theoretical components balance with the practicum during the post-graduate phase. In each case, the number of credit points (ECTS) allocated to each element is shown.

It should be noted that this is not representative of the entirety of the curriculum in each case, but reflects the key common components mentioned by the student teachers during the interviews (for example, the French teacher education programme also includes a foreign language and a numeracy project and German student teachers have a compulsory module on German as a Second Language). There is greater congruence between the modules on Education Studies (also called Professional Studies or Education Science) and the research module that all participants complete.

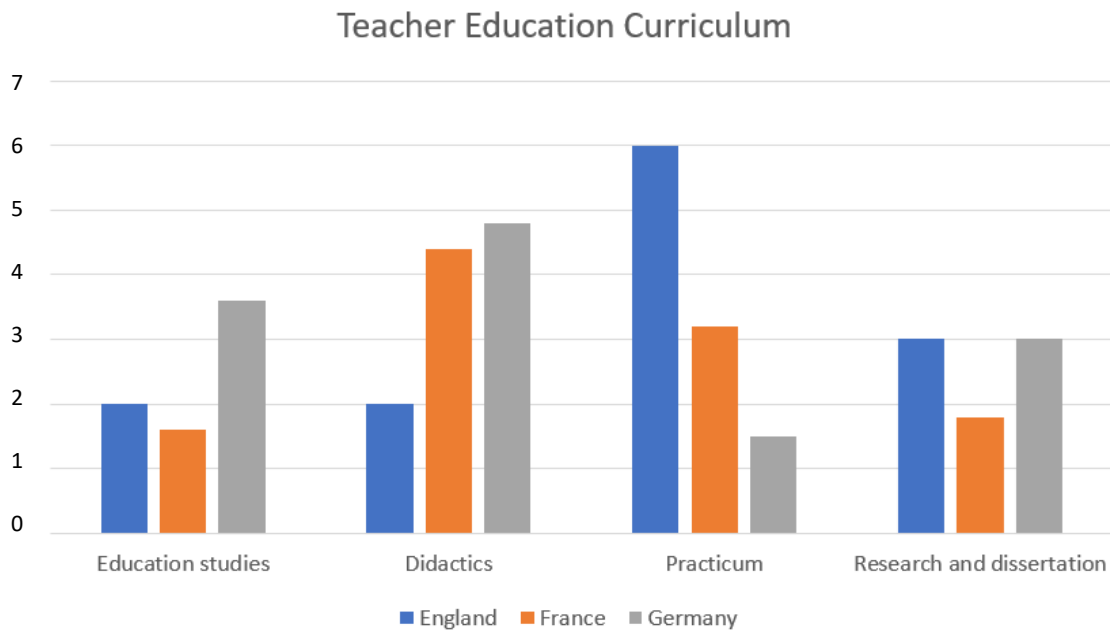


Figure 12. A comparison of the content of teacher education programmes⁷¹

The key divergences are between the weighting of the didactics module and the practicum. In Germany and France, didactics play a more important role than in England, although it is important to highlight that the credits in Germany represent two subject disciplines and therefore the relative weighting of each one would then resemble the English didactic component. The significant weighting given to the practicum in England reflects the prevailing idea among policymakers that teaching is best learnt ‘on the job’, as a craft, as well as the longer duration of the practicum itself. It also demonstrates that the ‘front loading’ of the theoretical component in England (Allen, 2011) into an intensive block increases the relative weighting of the practical component. The lower number of credits allocated to the practicum in Germany can be interpreted by considering the practicum in the university phase as a forerunner to the post-university practicum, when student teachers are in school for an extended period of 18 months to two years in most federal states. How the student teacher participants in this study consider the theoretical part of their programme and its connection to practice will now be analysed.

⁷¹ Sources: www.uni-bremen.de, www.inspe-bordeaux.fr, www.stmarys.ac.uk (2020-21).

There were two similarities in the perception of theory by all participants. Firstly, very few student teachers could name any theories or theorists or give any explanation of the concepts or key principles involved. Secondly, the majority of student teachers in this study did not believe that a connection between theory and practice was promoted in their teacher education programme.

During the interview, participants were asked if they could name any theories or theorists that they found particularly relevant for their practice. Figure 13 below shows that less than half of students in England and France could name a specific theory or theorist. Although German student teachers fared better, in common with the other country participants they could not explain the theory or how it might inform their practice. This finding is in line with the empirical study in Nordic countries by Mattsson et al (2011) who found that student teachers had a very narrow view of theory and though some participants could name theories, they could not explain them. In this study, most student teachers spoke in generic terms about the psychology of the child, pedagogical theory or didactics, but far fewer named a theory or theorist that they believed to be relevant to their practice. Interestingly, in each country there were references made to constructivism as a theory they had heard of, but very few of the participants could explain how it would apply in the classroom.

The data in Figure 13 shows that there are interesting differences between the three countries that warrants further interpretation. Six German student teachers named at least one theory or theorist, in contrast to only two of French participants. The reasons for the inability to articulate conceptual knowledge are structural and perceptual. One plausible explanation in the German case is that student teachers take modules in Education Science during the Bachelor phase and may therefore simply have learnt about certain theories over a longer period than in the other two countries, and may therefore have had more time to assimilate them, at least in name. In France, educational theory is taught intensively, together with didactics whilst student teachers are also in school for half of the week. This may result in a greater focus on the classroom and associated practical skills than on the assimilation of specific theories.

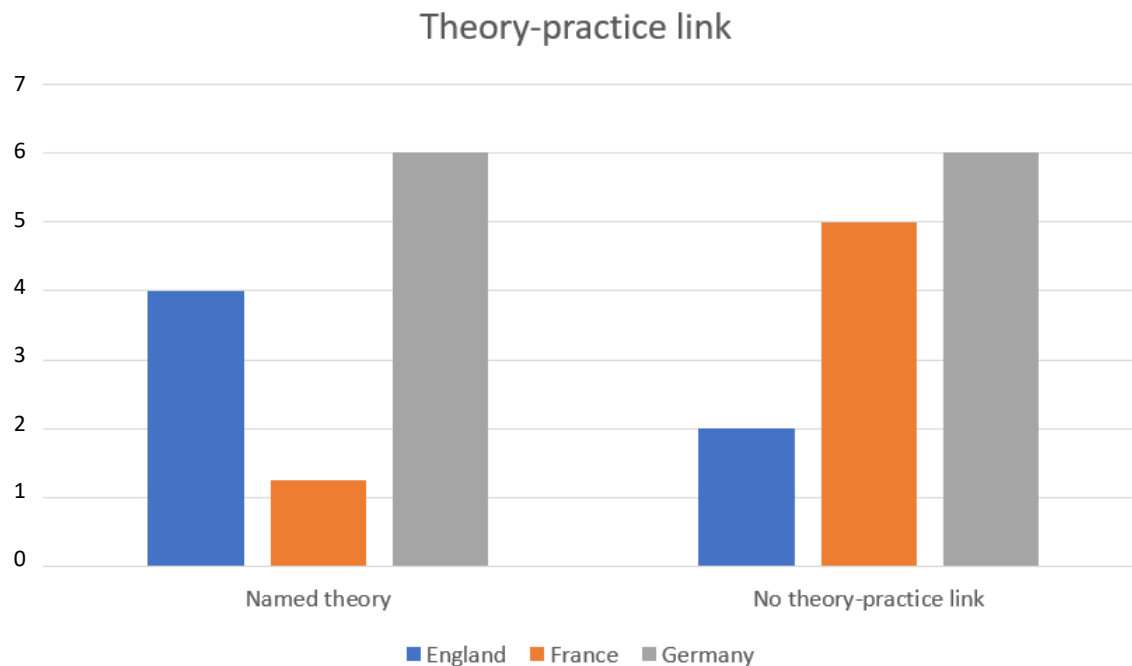


Figure 13. Theory and practice in comparative perspective

It might have been anticipated that the English student teachers would be the least likely to remember theories, given the prioritising of the practicum and the organisation of the theoretical component into short, intensive blocks. The fact that several were able to name a theory or theorist may indeed be attributable to the way the programme is structured. It is possible that student teachers anticipate the imminent practicum and focus more intently on the theoretical part, which they believe will equip them for the classroom. Many of them cited constructivism as an important theory and this therefore endorses the findings of Mattsson et al (2011), that teacher educators promoted particular or ‘favourite’ theories, however they did not illustrate how the theory might be used in the classroom.

In Germany students register for modules on education science, which incorporates pedagogical theories, quite independently of the practicum. They prepare for the end of module examination or formal written assignment by learning the module content, but this does not facilitate the theory-practice link. In France, much of the M1 timetable is devoted to preparation for the competitive examination with only two, short observational practicum experiences. In the M2 year there are modules in

didactic and in pedagogical theory, but these are often led by academics, rather than former classroom practitioners. Examples from practice, where offered, tend to be of model classes, rather than authentic situations. In England, the theoretical element of the programme is presented as an initial, intensive block and students may not have the opportunity to assimilate this knowledge over such a short time frame, leading to a perception that theory and practice are treated separately, in two different environments.

The second aspect to be investigated is the extent to which the teacher education programme and teacher educators and mentors promote links between theory and practice. Allen (2011) proposes that when student teachers begin their studies, there is already an expectation that the theoretical content is 'located' at the university and the practical knowledge in the practicum school and therefore they do not believe they will be linked. The perception of the student teachers in this study is that the theories taught at their respective universities are approached academically and many do not expect there to be a connection with the procedural knowledge of their practice. Some believe that it will require years of experience before they can use theory to inform their practice and others consider that they learn most about teaching on the practicum and that much of teaching is intuitive. This finding endorses Korthagen's (2001;2010) belief that student teachers benefit more if the practicum is placed ahead of the teaching of theories, which encourages them to identify theoretical aspects they need to pursue as a result of specific teaching situations or critical incidents for which they must find a solution. Alternatively, if the practicum is where students make sense of theories, as Britzman (1991) suggests, it was evident that there were student teachers in each comparison country who talked about their practical experience in a way that suggested that some aspects of theories of teaching and learning had indeed been absorbed, even subconsciously, and that these went beyond tacit theories or intuition. This finding corresponds with those of Brante et al, who propose that student teachers begin to create their own theories:

"Student teachers seem not to embrace any one theory in its entirety or to discern differences between theories; instead, they take parts of various theories, and understand and combine them in new ways – their own ways – that diverge more or less from the actual intentions of the original theories" (2015:105).

A key difference between the English student teachers and their counterparts in France and Germany was that a large number expressed positive views of the theories they had learnt, even if the connection to practice was tenuous or absent. They saw theoretical or conceptual knowledge as important for teachers and some acknowledged that there were points of correlation with practice. The reason for this difference might be the historical and cultural development of education science in England, which evolved as rooted in teacher education, rather than as an entirely separate discipline, as in France and Germany (Whitty et al, 2017). It may also be that the curriculum integrates more practice-related elements within the initial theory block, such as behaviour management, which English participants cited as valuable for their forthcoming practicum. It is also possible that being aware that the theoretical part of the programme is short and to be followed by the first practicum gives them a different mindset, intensifying their focus, but also making them more critical of the need to be sufficiently prepared to step into the classroom.

Figure 13 above presents findings on student teachers' perceptions of the theory-practice gap and whether they believe links between theory and practice are promoted. Whilst at least half of German and French student teachers expressed clear criticism of the lack of connection between theory and practice in their teacher education programme, only two of English student teachers agreed with this view and several made specific, positive comments about the value of the theoretical component in preparing them for the classroom. The heavy criticism by German student teachers endorses that of Terhart (2004) and Keuffer (2010), who criticised teacher education programmes for placing too much emphasis on the subject disciplines, and stressed the importance of re-evaluating the relationship between academic knowledge and preparing future teachers for their professional role. An effective relationship between the university studies and the practicum element of the teacher education programme can be termed 'coherence'. The findings of this study mirror those of Canrinus et al (2012) who used this term to elicit the views of student teachers and found that although participants generally believed that there was coherence *within* the university modules, there was not the same coherence *between* the university studies and the practicum.

Reflective practice was highlighted in the literature cited above as one possible medium for connecting theory and practice, as well as mitigating the prescriptive effects of teaching standards or competences. This notwithstanding, there are some differences in the application and interpretation of reflection in the comparison countries. German student teachers engage in largely oral reflection on practice, with their tutor and peer group observing their lessons, and all group members participating in the post-lesson feedback. A further opportunity to connect theory and practice are the assignments that demand theoretically-based reflections on practice, where student teachers draw on experiences from the semester practicum.

The Professional Portfolio in France is also a research project that might promote reflective practice, although this is largely dependent on the choice of topic and whether it is purely theoretical or reflects on a teaching and learning theme. Otherwise, the status of student teachers as having full responsibility for a class means that opportunities to connect theory and practice in discussion with supporting staff are considerably less frequent than in the other two countries. Participants in this study tended to see the portfolio more as a task to complete and less as an opportunity for genuine reflection.

English student teachers complete a practice portfolio (ARF) which contains lesson plans and self-evaluations of teaching. Written assignments are designed to link theory and practice, and the front-loaded structure of the programme and the proximity of the initial theory block to the first practicum means that there is some opportunity to observe how the theory works in action, particularly if this is reinforced by the university tutor in the post-lesson feedback. Conflict arises when the tutor is also expected to focus on which of the teaching standards have been met during the observation. It was also evident from these student teachers that they perceive the mentor's role as that of practical guide, which endorses Richert's (1990) findings, firstly that student teachers should be taught skills of reflection and secondly, that mentors may be too directive in the way they lead post-lesson feedback.

8.6 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to answer three important questions which were posed at the beginning of the chapter, concerning the nature of theoretical knowledge in the teacher education curriculum in the three comparison countries, the importance attributed to each element of the programme and how successfully theory and practice are linked in the eyes of the student teacher participants. It has been shown that although there is some correlation between the findings of this study and those of other authors on the topic, to date there have been few comparative studies and none involving these three countries. The findings therefore offer an original perspective on the student teachers and their understanding of theory and how it connects with practice.

The nature of the theoretical knowledge taught at the university can be categorised as pedagogical and didactical, and it is these two elements that connect the subject discipline with the classroom and pupils. The weighting of the different parts of the teacher education curriculum reflects the education culture of the country to an extent, with didactics and education science being prioritised in Germany, where academic knowledge is synonymous with the professional knowledge required to be a teacher. Similarly, didactical knowledge is central to French teacher education, followed by pedagogical knowledge and research methods. In England, the practicum is the central focus in terms of weighting and illustrates the predominant discourse of teaching as a craft, best learnt on the job.

The structure of the teacher education programme is reflected in the expectation among student teachers, particularly in France and Germany, that theoretical knowledge is located in the university and practical knowledge in the practicum school, resulting in the disconnecting of theory and practice, as reported by Loughran (2006).

How successfully theory and practice are connected by participants in this study was elicited both directly and indirectly during the interview. Student teachers' narratives shed light on how well student teachers remember theories or theorists that they consider as having relevance for their practice. The findings of this study broadly

aligned with others in recognising the difficulty student teachers have in explaining in any detail the key concepts or principles of any theory and how it applies in the classroom. This reinforces the idea that theory and practice are divorced in their minds, partly because of the belief that the university equates with theoretical knowledge and the school with that of practical knowledge, and partly because the actors involved in teacher education reinforce this dichotomy

If the premise is accepted that the purpose of theories of teaching and learning is to inform practice, then it is reasonable to expect that student teachers would be able to recall theories that they believed to be relevant for their classroom practice. The findings were that not all student teachers could remember or name a theory or theorist, although there was a greater recollection among the German participants than among their peers in France and England. Furthermore, responses from all participants indicated that most tended to name any theory that came to mind, very few could explain what the theory involved and none gave explicit examples of how it could be applied in classroom teaching. This finding must surely lead to the following questions: Why are student teachers unable to articulate theories they have learnt? Why do they fail to recognise the relevance of these theories for their practice?

The first question concerns the nature of the theories taught as part of the teacher education curriculum and what knowledge is of the greatest benefit for future teachers. At the core of this issue is the apparent tension between what Malet (2017) calls 'epistemocracy', defined as the elevated position given to academic knowledge over practical knowledge in universities. If the primary mission of teacher education is to prepare confident, competent practitioners, the nature and amount of theoretical knowledge they need is an important consideration. Student teachers in this study expressed the view that much of teaching is intuitive, a view reinforced by the experiences of the practicum. Is this because they are not shown how to 'join the dots' of theory and practice by teacher educators and mentors, or because theory per se does not guarantee improved competence?

The opportunities for making links between theory and practice are oral and written, through post-lesson discussion with the university tutor or mentor, or written

assignments that ask students, explicitly or implicitly to reflect on how theory informs their practice. What appears to be absent in the university curriculum is any reference to authentic classroom examples that illustrate how theory applies. The perception of student teachers is that not enough explicit connection is made at the university in the theory modules and that any examples of classroom situations are of model or ideal classes that do not correspond to the reality of the classroom as they experience it on the practicum. Reforms in all countries have increased the duration of the practicum over the past decade, which brings into even sharper focus the need to improve the connections between theory and practice.

A final vehicle for connecting theory and practice has been the wide recourse to models of reflective practice, the objective of which is to promote critical thinking about classroom practice and to seek solutions to gaps in procedural knowledge by mapping it to propositional knowledge. Two tensions appear to arise in this respect, firstly the expectation that student teachers are inherently reflective, or are allowed the time to develop reflective skills and secondly, that competence-based models of teacher education are often seen as contrary to reflective processes. Student teachers in this study did not generally articulate ways in which they reflected on their practice, although many made positive comments about the post lesson discussion with tutors and peers. Written evaluations of lessons often required student teachers to comment on what they might have done differently to improve their practice, however, this strategy rarely led to the articulation of theories that informed the proposed changes.

Evidence-based teacher education, focused around teaching standards or competences, is a feature of all three comparison countries. The compilation of this evidence of practice inevitably puts student teachers under additional pressure, which detracts from deeper level reflection. Although a number of participants, particularly in England and Germany, said that they felt they had the freedom or were encouraged to experiment in their classroom practice, they were also aware of the need to prove their competence, and that this constrained such freedom when they were being observed or towards the end of the practicum when all standards were expected to be achieved. This was certainly true of French and English student teachers, though much

less so in Germany, where the second phase after university focuses much more on achievement of standards.

“Theories are nothing but powerful tools that provide teachers with a frame of references and guidelines to analyse critically daily problems that they encounter in authentic classrooms settings” (Gordon and O’Brien, 2007: 150).

If theories are indeed ‘powerful tools’ to which student teachers can refer, perhaps the theoretical content of the teacher education curriculum should be re-evaluated for this purpose. It also implies that teacher educators should move away from the idealistic or exemplary classrooms so often used as case studies, and towards ‘authentic’ examples of the classroom which student teachers can be encouraged to analyse critically in the light of their own practical experiences as nascent teachers. The outcome of such a change would be that the development of their epistemic identities will prove to be a stronger influence on the overall development of their teacher professional identity.

In the concluding chapter of this thesis, the 3E model of teacher professional identity development will be revisited and re-evaluated in the light of the findings of this research study and the theoretical framework that underpins it. Key findings will be summarised and the strengths, challenges and limitations of the research evaluated. Lastly, future research opportunities will be identified.

CHAPTER 9.

CONCLUSION

9.1 Introduction

In this research study I set out to investigate the development of teacher professional identity in student teachers in Germany, France and England and the role played by pre-service teacher education in this development. This research is timely, since it was undertaken during a period of rapid change in the education sector more broadly, and in teacher education specifically. Governments in all three countries have acknowledged the increased challenges faced by teachers as a result of the shift in the pupil demographic and the demands of managing social, cognitive, linguistic and behavioural diversity. Their response has focused on both the recruitment of new teachers at a time of shortage and attrition and strategies to improve the quality of teaching, by tightening centralised control and monitoring quality by introducing national standards for teacher education. In the political context, this has coincided with the growth of neo-managerialism and the recognition of the link between an effective education system and economic success. The past two decades have also witnessed the influence of international comparative studies on national policy-making and the drive to improve pupil attainment.

The study accepts the premise that a strong sense of teacher professional identity is essential in facing the challenges of the profession in the 21st century and sought to determine when and how this identity begins to develop among student teachers, in other words, when the journey towards identifying oneself as a teacher begins and the contributory factors that nurture or hinder this process. In order to answer these questions, it was important to elicit the views of student teachers currently in training and to ask them to narrate their experiences of becoming a teacher and how their teacher education programmes have enabled them to locate themselves in the teaching role and the wider teaching community they hope to join. The method chosen to achieve this goal was a blend of the comparative method and analysis of interview narratives.

The case-oriented contrast method within the comparative paradigm ensured a richness and depth to the analysis, as it explored often subtle and nuanced differences between the three countries that might have eluded alternative approaches aiming for broader, statistically-led results. The detail in the narratives resulted in the identification of key themes to be pursued and recourse to literature on these themes revealed both areas of congruence and areas where there was a perceptible gap in the literature. This gap relates to both specific factors affecting professional identity development and, in addition, a lack of comparative research involving student teachers in these three countries. Most pertinent in this respect are the unexpected findings highlighted by the comparative approach and that signal a difference between one country and its neighbours.

The teacher's role also has to be seen as located within a national context, the expectations of teachers in the eyes of the state and their status and value to society at large. This context will also inform the perceived purposes of education and the ideologies that underpin teaching and learning. This in turn will determine how teachers are trained and the structure and content of the teacher education curriculum. This research study is relevant, as it set out to explore the experiences of student teachers during their university studies and to compare these experiences in three countries, with the aim of discovering what specific aspects of the curriculum contribute to the development of their teacher identity. The close up comparative lens drew out the ways in which the specificities of the cultural and educational context affect the development path of future teachers in terms of their teacher professional identity. The wider purpose of this research is therefore to provide an insight into how all the actors in teacher education and education policy-making contribute to this process and in so doing, facilitate dialogue between them with the objective of improving the experiences of student teachers and the embedding of their teacher professional identity.

9.2 The importance of teacher professional identity

If experienced teachers, who can call upon professional experience are finding this new education world difficult to manage, how much more do future teachers need to

be equipped with a wide 'repertoire of skills' (Mattsson et al, 2011) to navigate their journey into teaching and their understanding of all that the teacher's role comprises. This journey can be described as developing an increasing sense of 'how to be, act and understand' as a teacher (Sachs, 2005), and these three attributes make up their professional identity as teachers. In some senses, of course, professional identity is individual and the *being* and *acting* differ according to the personality of the teacher as a person, nevertheless there are expectations of how teachers should work and the knowledge and skills they need to function as competent practitioners.

Teacher professional identity is an abstract, personal and praxis-oriented concept that begins its evolution at school, through an apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975) and continues to develop throughout the teacher's career. It is shaped by experiences, interactions, relationships and events that combine to create the teacher's professional autobiography. Whilst acknowledging that this definition of teacher professional identity is highly individualised, the purpose of this research study is to investigate how teacher education promotes the development of this identity and postulates that if student teachers develop a strong sense of who they are as teachers, they will be better equipped for the complexities of the teacher's role.

9.3 Methodology

In order to achieve the research aim of making a direct comparison between the three countries, the comparative method was blended with narrative analysis with the objective of identifying common themes in the narratives of the participants, and establishing the differences between them and plausible explanations for these differences. The small number of cases ensured that the nuances of each case were illuminated and that there was a high degree of familiarity with the interview texts. The research design included the identification of orienting questions to scaffold the interviews and guaranteed a systematic approach to the interview process and continuity in terms of the common themes asked to all participants. Although these themes derived from both the literature and professional experience, no hypothesis was postulated and instead an inductive approach was selected, because it offered the opportunity to discover new and unexpected themes. In fact, there were a

number of surprising findings which were not present in the literature and therefore this research study has filled a gap in the research to date. In addition, this study moves well beyond the description associated with the contrast method to achieve an in-depth analysis of the experiences of student teachers in the three countries.

9.4 Tools of analysis

The interviews took place over an extended time period (2015-18), owing to the need to travel between countries to carry out the research. As they progressed I was able to devise a model for analysis that was developed as a result of the content of the narratives and the emerging evidence that teacher professional identity actually develops in three distinct phases, contexts or locations, and the notion that the intersection between these phases of identity development represents the point at which student teachers are most likely to self-identify as teachers.

The 3E model (see Ch.5) is an original design that seeks to synthesise the different aspects of professional identity development expressed in the theoretical and empirical literature within the field. It also includes the unexpected and unresearched aspects that derived from this research study. The overlapping of the circles demonstrates that the phases are not complete in themselves, but influence and inform each other, and in a similar way, the narratives of the participating student teachers were not uni-directional, but moved to and fro during the narration of their professional journey, as both previous experiences and knowledge and understanding gained informed present practice.

9.5 Summary of findings

9.5.1 Emergent identity

The findings of this research study endorse Britzman's idea that the biographies of student teachers constitute 'chronologies of becoming' (1991). It was evident from the narrative data that the journey towards teacher professional identity begins as pupils at school and that a complex web of lived experiences inform both their career choice and their tacit theories of what makes a good teacher. It was found that this

emergent phase had also provided some student teachers with opportunities to work with children and young people prior to their teacher education studies, and that this experience had cemented their career decision in two ways. Firstly, these would-be teachers discovered that they enjoyed being in an education environment and experienced a sense of satisfaction that they believed would continue in their teaching career. Secondly, they were able to recognise in themselves some of the qualities they believed would equip them to be effective teachers. For many of these student teachers, especially the second career teachers, these experiences were arranged with the specific intention of offering them a testing ground ahead of starting their teacher education studies. This means that student teachers are likely to have clear expectations of who they will be as teachers, and as such, they have a *prospective* professional identity based on these personal theories, and some are already self-identifying as teachers.

The literature on career motivation commonly uses a three-factor typology, based on extrinsic, intrinsic and altruistic motivators. This study found that participants referred to these factors in explaining their own motivations, but the comparative lens highlighted some divergences between student teachers in the three countries. Student teachers in Germany and England cited mainly intrinsic factors, such as wanting to work with children and young people or the desire to instil the same enthusiasm for the subject in their learners as they had themselves. French student teachers were more likely to give extrinsic or perhaps, pragmatic reasons for their career choice, based on job security and a stable working life.

There was some correlation between positive role model teachers and student teachers' conceptions of the good teacher, however the cultural context plays a more decisive role in the way different aspects of classroom practice are perceived. Convergent elements for all student teachers were related to using sound didactic strategies to create opportunities for exploring the subject. Divergence was evident in the perceived qualities of a teacher, with German student teachers emphasising the value of an open and authentic teaching style in creating a positive classroom climate and French student teachers underlining the importance of the pupils' respect for the teacher. Only the English participants explained the importance of setting high

expectations for pupils' attainment as a teaching strategy.

9.5.2 Evolving identity

Once student teachers are underway with their teacher education programme, their teacher professional identity continues to evolve and builds momentum once they commence the practicum. The early experiences during the practicum often involve dissonance or 'shattered images' (Knowles et al, 1994) between their own conceptions of teaching, tacit theories of how to be a good teacher, and the real-life experience. Although student teachers narrated highs and lows during the practicum, there was evidence that most made steady progress and grew in confidence, leading to an increasingly strong sense of teacher identity.

The findings from this study confirm others (McIntyre and Byrd, 1996; Tillema et al, 2011; Ulvik and Smith, 2011) in viewing the role of the mentor in the placement school as key to supporting student teachers and providing the guidance they need to become confident practitioners. In all countries student teachers testified to the help they had received and the benefit of regular and immediate feedback on their teaching. Many witnessed a gradual withdrawal of the mentor's direction as the practicum progressed, which they believed coincided with experiencing greater autonomy in their planning and classroom delivery. Many said that they had learnt a great deal in the early days from observing other teachers and had gradually developed their own teaching style as a result.

French student teachers appear to have a different experience of the support they receive from mentors and others. They did not mention being able to observe other teachers and one key systemic factor – having full responsibility for a class – means that the relationship with the mentor is less intensive than in the other two countries, where the mentor is present whenever the student teacher is teaching.

Professional learning was expressed in the narratives as positive experiences and challenges and the meanings attributed to them. Common to student teachers in all comparison countries was the desire to create a positive learning environment through the use of engaging teaching methods and establishing a good relationship

with pupils. The most often cited challenges were managing the class and pupil behaviour effectively and differentiating activities and resources for the diverse and inclusive classes they encountered. Developing pedagogical authority was approached differently in the education context of the three countries, with English and German student teachers prioritising didactic expertise to make learning relevant and engaging and positive teacher-pupil relationships, and French student teachers concerned to establish authority and respect with their classes. In all cases the perception of the practicum was as a rite of passage moving from a student to a teacher identity.

The three countries all use rubrics of standards or competences to assess practical teaching skills, however the awareness of these standards varied between the comparison countries. English student teachers were the most aware of the standards and their importance for passing the teaching qualification. French student teachers were also aware, although the competences do not seem to be at the forefront of their practicum experience. German student teachers made little reference to the standards.

Finally there was evidence from all countries that student teachers had been unprepared for the intensity of the workload when studying and teaching concurrently and many spoke of experiencing stress and physical exhaustion.

9.5.3 Epistemic identity

The last part of the findings of this study revolve around the theoretical content of the teacher education curriculum and how it connects to and informs the practice of student teachers. The weighting of didactical and pedagogical theory varies from country to country, as does the importance afforded to it, however, most student teachers in this study failed to name a theory or theorist and were unable to narrate a connection between theory and practice, or give specific examples. The comparative perspective showed that German student teachers were the most likely to at least *recall* a theory, and although all three countries recognised that constructivism is emphasised by teacher educators, none of them could explain what it was or how it could inform classroom practice. Student teachers in England and Germany also criticised the use of ideal classes in theory modules and suggested that real scenarios

would benefit student teachers by preparing them more effectively for the practicum. Some expressed the view that theories would become more meaningful at a later stage, once they had been working as teachers for some years.

In the following section, themes emerging from these findings will be discussed in more depth, with the aim of identifying gaps in current literature and making recommendations for teacher educators and education policy makers in the future.

9.6 Discussion: implications of key findings

Comparative research presents many challenges, however, the benefits to the field are considerable. In carrying out this research study, I have interviewed student teachers across three different countries and five different universities and transcribed their narratives from the original language. In the first chapter, I made the case for the many similarities in the teacher's role and the complexities of everyday classroom practice and the importance of teacher education in fostering the development of a strong professional identity in student teachers. Much of the existing educational research carried out on professional identity is with teachers, since it is believed that having years of experience will offer a more holistic explanation of how teachers identify themselves. On the other hand there have been serious empirical studies seeking to give student teachers a voice, however, as the systematic reviews by Lawson et al (2015) and Cohen et al (2013) have demonstrated, much empirical research with student teachers is large-scale, using questionnaires or written reflections. Studies tend to focus on one aspect and one country. This study complements existing literature and adds an original perspective to this voice by probing deeply, and comparatively into the experiences of student teachers over a much wider trajectory, and it therefore offers valuable insight not present in other studies.

In this section I discuss the implications of my findings, organising the key themes in line with the 3E analytical model. My focus is on both the themes that endorse other findings and also the unexpected or unsolicited findings, both in terms of incidences of divergence between the countries, particularly where one country stands apart from the others, and areas that have been omitted in the literature. In both cases, the

findings of this research study make an original contribution to the field of teacher education research.

9.6.1 Emerging identity: Have I made the right choice? Motives for becoming a teacher.

Among the copious literature on career choice, there are empirical studies investigating the motivation towards teaching. Sinclair (2008) suggests that intrinsic motives are a predictor of the likelihood of student teachers remaining in the profession. The FIT-Choice tool of Richardson and Watt (2006) is used as an indicator of the belief that teaching will be a satisfying career, and Bergmark et al (2018) cite the role of experiences of teaching whilst at school on career motivation. The findings of this study concur with the literature in many respects. Certainly most of the student teacher participants expressed intrinsic and, in some cases, altruistic motives for their career choice, however they did not express specifically that teaching would be a long-term career, particularly in England, where some went so far as to say that they did not see themselves as remaining in teaching in the years ahead. There are two possible implications here. Firstly, although a secure career choice, English teachers are not employed directly by the state and do not have civil servant status like their peers in Germany and France. Of itself this might not be significant, however, coupled with the demands of stringent government control and monitoring of their work, teachers are susceptible to burn out (Ryan et al, 2017) and the rate of attrition in England currently stands at about 20-25% of new teachers leaving in the first five years, well above the OECD average (TALIS, 2018 gives this figure as nearly 15% for teachers under fifty).

Rothland (2010) suggests that student teachers are more secure in their choice of career if they have had some previous experience of working in an educational setting, but does not offer an in-depth analysis of this aspect. This is likely to be a better predictor of commitment to remain in the profession, as this study found that working in an education environment before teacher education allowed students to confirm their career choice. Thus, although there is plenty of evidence of the role of schooling in the construction of tacit theories of teaching in student teachers, there is

little or no research into the role that previous experience of working in an education environment plays in the verification of the decision to become a teacher. The fact that this phenomenon was an unsolicited response to the open question: *Why did you choose to become a teacher?* indicates its importance in contributing to professional identity development, because it means that student teachers have an awareness of being an educator before they begin their teacher education studies. The comparative perspective on this theme reveals that there are contextual differences between the three countries which are both cultural and systemic.

Culturally, German school leavers expect to take a gap year before university and those considering a teaching career often join the Free Social Year scheme, which offers them experience in an educational setting with a small stipend. Their narratives of these experiences were overwhelmingly positive and their enjoyment of the environment confirmed to them that teaching would be a satisfying career, in line with the German study by Rothland (ibid.). In this case the result was more a by-product of the experience than a deliberate decision to check whether teaching was the right career choice. Systemically, the FSJ scheme awards points or credits that students can use when they apply for a course.

In English schools there has long been a culture of employing teaching assistants to support the teacher in the classroom. The role is well-established and the practice far more widespread than in the two European counterparts. A large number of student teachers in England sought out a post as a teaching assistant, with the specific goal of gaining experience of the school environment and ascertaining whether a teaching career was the right choice for them. In both England and Germany this previous experience resulted in a clear conviction that they possessed the appropriate qualities for teaching and confirmed their career choice. A further significance in terms of the development of teacher professional identity was that many of these student teachers had already begun to call themselves teachers or spoke of the act of teaching in a personal way.

From the comparative perspective, it was pertinent to ask whether French student teachers narrated similar experiences? Once again, cultural and systemic factors

account for the divergence here and reflect the strong position academic study of a discipline holds, and the absence of a tradition of gap year experiences. The former was evidenced by the relatively large number of student teachers who had hoped to continue with academic study of their subject discipline and the subsequent pragmatic, rather than intrinsic, reasons for entering teaching. Very few had therefore had the opportunity to work in an education environment and the direct transition from school to university meant that, on average, French student teachers were younger than their English and German counterparts, and unlikely to identify as a teacher until later in their 'chronology of becoming'. The turning point for many comes in the M2 year, when French student teachers spend half the week teaching 'with full responsibility' and have little or no time to acclimatise, in a kind of 'sink or swim' situation. Evidence from the interviews suggests that the burden of this responsibility weighs heavily on these students and their early experiences in the classroom are intimidating.

9.6.2 Second career teachers: a golden opportunity?

A second unexpected finding was the higher number of second career teachers among the English participants, in comparison with the other two countries. This group can be further subdivided into those who had had a first career spanning eight years or more, and those for whom late entry into higher education offered them a second chance. The narratives of those who had enjoyed successful careers before making the transition to teaching have much in common with the findings of Laming and Horne in Australia (2013) who found that whilst the reasons for career change were complex, they had in common altruistic and intrinsic motives and concluded that this was therefore a 'vocation postponed'. Among the English student teachers were those who said they had always believed teaching might be for them in the future. For others it was leaving behind a career that had been unsatisfying and the desire to make a difference in the lives of young people.

The second group were of greater interest, since they highlight a key difference between England and the other two countries, namely, that the system allows those without a school leaving qualification a second chance to enter higher education. The

Access to Higher Education route enables adults to achieve advanced level qualifications and gain university entrance. The narratives from the two student teachers who had followed this path were poignant and compelling and the commitment to the extended study time required resulted in a high level of conviction that teaching was the correct career choice. Although systems in France and Germany give some opportunity for further study generally, the rigidity of the traditions involved in becoming a teacher make it most likely that any second career teachers have already achieved university degrees. The implication of this finding is far-reaching at a time when recruitment of new teachers is under-target in the three countries and suggests that greater flexibility in these two countries might encourage more second career teachers to enter teacher education.

9.6.3 Evolving identity: Classroom practice: confidence, competence and challenge

The teaching practicum is seen by most student teachers as a pivotal moment in their development as teachers and a time when the support of others, the opportunities for professional learning and the journey towards professional autonomy are critical in the growth of confidence and their identification as teachers. There is no shortage of literature on the practicum, however the focus is often on the role of tutors and mentors, and the relatively small number of empirical studies with student teachers tend to emphasise concepts such as reflective practice. There is a dearth of comparative studies on the practicum from the student teachers' perspective and the narration of this experience offers critical insight into an under-researched aspect of teacher education.

The support of a mentor who is an experienced teacher was highlighted by student teachers from Germany and England as vital for the development of confidence in the classroom and the chance to experiment with different pedagogic approaches in a safe environment. The loss of confidence that resulted from a poor student-mentor relationship demonstrates the significance of the mentor's role in these two countries. Far fewer French student teachers referred to their mentor as a source of support, although some commented on the conflict between wanting to adopt newer

approaches and the traditional view of the mentor. As student teachers in France assume full responsibility in the M2 year, there is less direct interaction with the mentor. What became evident from the interview data was that the mentor's role was seen by both student teachers and mentors as that of a guide in classroom skills, rather than a person who could synthesise the theoretical and practical elements of the teacher education programme. This finding endorses the critical views of Bertone et al (2009), Civaldini and Cartaut (2015) and Foster (2000) who found that mentor feedback was often superficial or inadequate, and that lack of mentor training exacerbates this problem. The implications for the selection and training of mentors is discussed below under recommendations.

An unsolicited response from English and German student teachers was the sense of belonging to a wider school community and the opportunities to participate in school life beyond the classroom. This finding suggests that socialisation in the institution and an awareness of the broader professional role of the teacher can make an important contribution to the development of their teacher professional identity. The implication is therefore that this wider experience should not be left to chance, but be formalised within the teacher education curriculum.

A key concern for all student teachers is classroom management or pedagogical authority (Harjunen, 2009). The approaches adopted in the three countries are clearly linked to the education culture in each case, and once again there is a divergence between France and the other two countries. English and German students believe that positive teacher-student relationships and engaging teaching methods are the foundation of managing the class effectively. In France, the teacher is expected to act with authority and respect for the teacher is paramount. The narratives from the French student teachers demonstrated that they experience stress as a result of this responsibility and expectation that they have to maintain authority and that student teachers in the other two countries, although they also narrated experiences when they felt inadequate as a result of not managing disruption effectively, were more likely to take a pragmatic view or to discuss possible strategies with the mentor. The implication here is that strong, culturally embedded conceptions of teaching are difficult to break, however, French teacher educators could expand didactical and

pedagogical elements of the curriculum to equip student teachers with a wider range of methods and relational strategies.

9.6.4 In the looking glass? Conceptions of the 'good teacher' and the realities of the practicum

Student teachers' beliefs about teaching, their tacit theories and ideas of what being a 'good teacher' inheres have been the subject of several empirical studies (for example, Sugrue, 2011; Moore, 2004), although the methodology adopted has often involved the use of questionnaires with large samples, rather than the more nuanced approach adopted by this study. What is absent from the literature is an exploration of the correlation between student teachers' role model teachers, conceptions of good teaching and the narratives of their experiences on the practicum. When the comparative dimension is added, this offers greater illumination, by comparing these experiences across countries, particularly as all three countries are at different points in their transition towards a recognition of the classroom strategies required to adapt to more diverse and inclusive classes.

The retrospective view of role model teachers might be expected to inform current conceptions of effective teaching, however, it was evident there are key differences between these two images, notably in Germany and England. Whereas student teachers in all three countries described role model teachers who used engaging teaching methods and established a positive rapport with the class, German and English participants valued subject knowledge and didactical expertise more highly in their depictions of good teaching. German student teachers also spoke about teacher personality and an open and authentic attitude as important, but the relational side of teacher-student interaction was absent from the narratives of English student teachers in this respect. French student teachers also referred to the characteristics of the teacher, who should be calm and fair above all. It is pertinent to ask what had changed and why student teachers emphasise different characteristics in the 'good teacher' to their own teaching role models? One likely explanation is that the practicum experience places in the spotlight fundamental knowledge and skills that are not considered by the pupil enjoying a class at school. Strong and secure subject

knowledge was paramount to feeling confident, coupled with didactical strategies to make the subject engaging, and this reflects the lived experience of being in front of a class and needing to gain confidence to plan and deliver lessons that help students achieve.

A common thread in the three countries was the importance of good classroom management skills, however, there were notable differences in the way this was perceived in each education culture or context. In England, student teachers referred to positive behaviour management strategies and linked these to creating a positive learning climate in the classroom. The teacher education curriculum in England includes content on behaviour management and specific approaches that can be applied. The emphasis is on the learner as an individual and the role of differentiated approaches to support individual learning needs. German student teachers talked of the importance of the teacher having 'presence' in the classroom, which was explained as leading and managing the class well in order for everyone to learn. In both these contexts the understanding was on respect being earned, rather than expected, and reciprocal between teacher and students. In France, the classroom culture is one in which the teacher is seen as an authority figure and respect is expected. Thus, although some French student teachers described the pedagogical skills of the 'good teacher' as establishing positive relationships with the class, there was a clear consistency between descriptions of positive role model teachers as having authority or being strict, and good teachers possessing authority as a key asset.

If we compare the 'good teacher' descriptions with the student teachers' accounts of the positive aspects of the practicum, we can verify whether these descriptions were indeed amended (from the role model teachers) as a result of the realities of their classroom experiences. Many of the German and most of the English participants said that being able to build good relationships with students and seeing them engaged in the lesson was a positive element of the practicum. These two groups also spoke positively about being given autonomy to experiment with different teaching approaches and how critical it was for the development of their sense of teacher identity. This is clearly something that could not easily have been articulated as a feature of the model of a 'good teacher' and this has significance for their future

professional role in the current trend towards greater accountability and compromised autonomy and how this is enacted in the three countries.

The experience of French student teachers separates them from the others with regard to autonomy. This was not mentioned in their narratives and this can be explained by the context in which student teachers in the M2 year are treated as teachers and assume full responsibility for a class when they are in school. It also explains their concern with developing and maintaining authority in the classroom, which was mentioned by many as a key challenge. Does this full responsibility accelerate a sense of self-efficacy and teacher professional identity and mitigate the drawbacks of not having previous experience of working in education? Or does it result in a reluctance to experiment, away from the daily support and guidance of a mentor and therefore a kind of constrained autonomy, there in principle, but muted in practice? This theme will be pursued in the future research section below.

What emerges from this discussion is that the practicum is a seminal experience for all student teachers and its perceived value ranks it above other elements of the teacher education curriculum. The changing nature of the pupil demographic and the increasing diversity and inclusiveness of most classes requires some rethinking of the content of the teacher education curriculum and how to prepare student teachers for this eventuality. Even the selective secondary education system in Germany is facing these challenges, since most federal states have reduced from three to two secondary school types, and the consequent increase in those going to grammar school means that differentiated approaches are needed here too. The change in classroom culture is reflected in a change in practice, although at differing paces. In England the emphasis on differentiation and variety of teaching methods came through strongly among the English participants, expressed as what they believed they were expected to demonstrate in line with the teaching standards. In a similar vein, they were acutely aware of the importance of placing high expectations on pupils of their potential for attainment. In Germany the commitment to the tenets of *Bildung* continues, though implemented much more through collaborative problem solving, through working in small groups and a reduction in whole class teaching. In France the strong traditions of encyclopaedism and knowledge transmission are also being challenged, and there is

some evidence among student teachers of a desire to use a greater variety of methods to engage pupils, however, the culture is slower to change than in the other two countries.

9.6.5 A broken record? The recurring issue of the theory-practice connection

Despite the burgeoning literature on the importance of fostering the link between theory and practice for student teachers from authors such as Allen (2011), Heilbronn (2008) and Sjølie (2014), the evidence from the narrative data in this study suggests that this debate still rages. The key factors to consider are structural and perceptual. In all three comparison countries theory comes before practice, rather than adopting a concurrent approach that might make the connection more explicit. The perceptual factor relates to the dual identity of student teachers as students within the academic environment and teachers in the practicum school. Thus, they accept that the university is the locus of academic study and the theoretical, and that the school is the locus of the practical. Since the latter is the most closely linked to the future professional role, the place of theory is often seen as secondary or even, irrelevant. This is exemplified in the inability of many students in the three countries to name a theory or theorist, or explain how it translates to the classroom. The question is, what needs to change for the theory-practice connection to be nurtured in student teachers?

Structurally, a better integration of the practicum and related university modules would avoid the separation of the two components. In England, where the first practicum comprises four days per week in school and one day back in the university, this seems to offer one possible model. However, whilst students provided a positive evaluation of this aspect, there was no specific reference to an improved theory-practice connection. The short, sharp block of intensive theory in the English model meant that theory was more positively received than among student teachers in France and Germany, and adds weight to the argument that the close proximity of the theoretical and the practical component sharpens the focus and adds a kind of anticipatory relevance. In Germany the requirement to rote learn for examinations

resulted in a perceptual detachment of theory from practice, however, the specific modules accompanying the practicum were considered valuable and some student teachers suggested that a more extended practicum with time split between school and university would be beneficial.

It is interesting that the M2 year in France does exactly what the German student teachers are proposing, that is, time split equally between university and school, and would therefore be expected to elicit the most positive response. An M1 year spent largely preparing for the competitive civil service examination and the sense of unpreparedness for the practicum meant that French student teachers felt that relevant theory came too late to help them with their practice.

The key actors responsible for the development of student teachers, the university tutor and the school mentor, could also hold the key to helping them identify theories that inform their practice. Here, the problem is again a perceptual one. Mentors in the three countries rarely receive any training and naturally focus on helping the student teacher to survive in the classroom and to develop confidence. If the mentors themselves, as student teachers, were trained in a version of the current curriculum, in which theory was disconnected from practice, it is unsurprising that they would fail to nurture that connection, or they consider it the domain of the university tutor to do so. University academics teaching on theory modules may be distant from the school classroom and therefore the situation is exacerbated. In all three countries, the tutors visiting student teachers at their placement school are mostly former teachers and there is some evidence in the narrative data which suggests that post-lesson discussion does include references to theory, however, the constraints of also checking what standards have been observed is likely to determine the feedback to a large extent. In this way, the actors in teacher education, probably unwittingly, reinforce the dichotomy between theory and practice that already exists in the perception of student teachers.

Thus, there is a strong case for restructuring the teacher education curriculum to a more coherent model, in which theory and practice are integrated and are experienced concurrently. Furthermore, links between theory and practice need to be

encouraged by both mentors and tutors, enabling student teachers to see how a particular theory is translated into practice. A more controversial issue concerns precisely which theories should be included in the curriculum and to what extent student teachers need, de facto, a broad theoretical framework that goes far beyond their needs as classroom practitioners, yet informs them of the wider educational context in which teaching and learning is located. In fact, this harkens back to the ideological and philosophical standpoints that have influenced the historical development of education in each country, and invariably these traditions resist change.

9.7 Evaluation: what have I learnt and what have been the challenges of the research?

9.7.1 Insider or outsider? The interview process

Even with rigorous protocols and full ethical approval, the use of interviews as a valid method of collecting data is rightly challenged as having the potential to err towards subjectivity, particularly if conducted by those working inside the field of research, which in this case is teacher education. In order to rebalance the interview method, my first step was to acknowledge that this potential for bias exists and to remain cognisant of this fact in every interview. Contrary to the view that researching from the inside may result in greater subjectivity, I believe my understanding of the field contributed to a better outcome in two respects. Firstly, adopting a semi-structured interview technique meant that the purpose was largely to prompt the narration of the student teachers' biographies through broad, open and orienting questions and to take on the role of active listener, rather than directing the respondent. The orienting questions related to the three identity phases of my analytical model of teacher professional identity development, which itself was partly informed from years of professional practice, as well as an extensive interrogation of the relevant literature. Secondly, since the interviews were conducted in the first language of the country in which they took place, having professional knowledge gave me a familiarity with the education-related vocabulary and facilitated a more natural dialogue with the student teachers in each location. The narratives were often compelling and sometimes

poignant, and the privilege of hearing student teachers talk about their experiences enriched my own, and added to my professional learning of how they perceive the process of becoming a teacher.

One of the biggest challenges for a solo researcher is the considerable time required to organise and carry out interviews in comparative research. This naturally places limitations on what can be achieved within the time spent in one interview location and more broadly, within the time frame of doctoral studies. Travelling to other countries also means that there is a pressure to ensure that all scheduled interviews take place and unforeseen circumstances can place that schedule under pressure. I recognise that supplementing the individual interviews with alternatives, such as focus groups, could have added an element of triangulation, but this simply was not possible to organise with the time constraints already present. I learnt that researchers are so often reliant on the good will of colleagues, known and unknown, to secure a viable sample of interview candidates. Although the student teachers were not known to me, using existing networks helped in many universities. France was the most challenging in this respect, since there were no existing networks at the time, and it required perseverance over two years to gain access to French student teachers in one university. New networks established as a result mean that future research would not encounter this problem.

9.7.2 Analysing the data: strengths and limitations of the 3 E model.

The epistemological approach adopted in this study considers identity to be a fluid and dynamic concept that evolves with every encounter, interaction or experience. It also accepts that an individual has multiple identities, depending on the context, situation or role, and that teacher professional identity is one of these identities. Although the 3E model comprises three named identities, these are, in fact, located on a timeline as phases, and represent different facets of professional identity. The model was primarily used as an analytical tool with which to highlight the many factors influencing the development of teacher professional identity. The visual image seems to suggest that the intersection of the three circles is the point at which a

student teacher identifies as a teacher, however it is clear that this is an oversimplification, and that calling oneself a teacher or believing that one is professionally confident and competent occurs at different points for each individual.

The narratives produced by the student teachers in this study represent an individual biography of becoming a teacher recorded at one moment in time, with experiences interpreted by them retrospectively, however, these narratives are not linear storylines. I devised the 3E model to try to capture the complexities of the development of teacher professional identity and the fact that it is different for each person. The use of interconnecting circles recognises that the different elements are not detached from one another but combine in different ways and at different times to develop this identity. Its strengths are that it provides a coherent structure for analysing the interview data and that it allows for focal points that map to the teacher education curriculum, especially the evolving and epistemic identities.

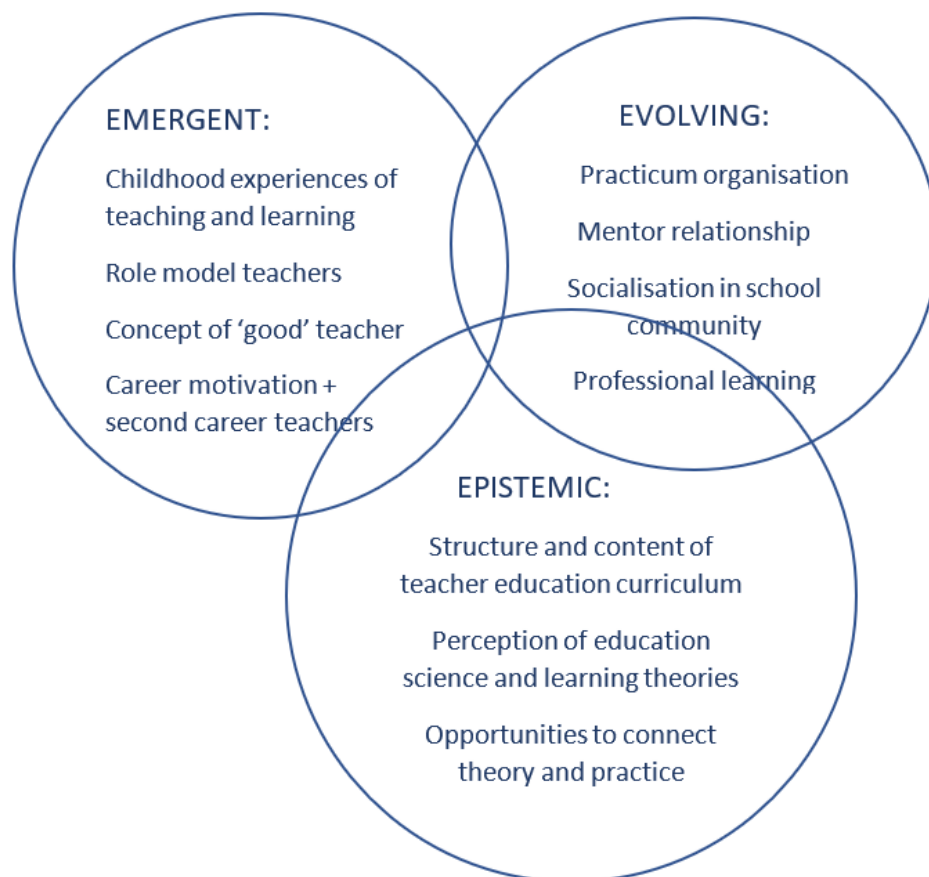


Figure 14. Revised version of 3E model

The headlines within each circle represent the critical aspects of that identity and whilst they are by no means arbitrary, I recognise that there are aspects that could be rephrased and other aspects that could be added. In some cases, this is due to unsolicited responses, for example in the emerging phase, career motivation could be subdivided to include teaching as a second career. In the evolving phase, the term practicum could be supplemented to include such elements as mentor-student relationship and professional learning. The original element 'perception of the value of teachers in society' formed part of the orienting questions in the interview (in fact it was the final question) and elicited some interesting and divergent responses across the three countries. However, it did not align with any of the phases in the model and for this reason, it was omitted from the analysis. I realised that it was the only question that asked for an opinion, rather than a narration of experience and as such, although student teachers clearly held strong views on this topic, I felt it would be better placed in research with teachers who have some professional experience behind them, where the rationale for the response was grounded in this experience. Should I conduct this research today, I would use a more finely-tuned version of the 3E model, such as the one in *Figure 14* above.

9.7.3 Transcription and the challenge of authenticity

The process of transcribing the interviews was perhaps the most challenging part of the research process, for both practical and validity reasons. In practical terms, it took an average of eight to ten hours to transcribe each hour-long interview, plus additional time for checking for accuracy, particularly in French and German which are not my first languages. The responsibility for producing an authentic account of each narrative was considerable but essential, if the texts were to be coded correctly and emerging themes identified. The benefit of listening to a recording many times is the familiarisation with the content of each narrative and a recollection of each individual and their story. I recognised early in the process how important it was to analyse the data as I progressed with the interviews, and to begin the comparison of the three countries concurrently, listening for places where the experience of one group of student teachers clearly deviated from the others, or when unsolicited or surprising responses drew my attention.

9.7.4 Reform agendas wait for no-one!

One interesting feature of comparative research conducted over an extended time period is the ongoing changes to the organisation and curriculum of teacher education as a result of reforms. This was most noticeable in France and Germany. At the time of the interviews (2017-18) teacher education in France was located in the ESPEs and teacher standards (competences) had recently been introduced (in 2013). The following year the institutions were renamed INSPEs and the first debates took place about making a radical change to the nature and timing of the competitive examination. In Germany the semester-long practicum was introduced during the time span of the interviews, and in the federal states in which I was researching and working, new examination regulations were introduced to move the extended practicum to the MA phase of teacher education.

The challenge for the researcher is therefore to keep pace with the reforms and to interpret the narratives within the specific context in which they take place, because this may influence some of the meaning given to those experiences by the student teacher concerned. For example, the earliest interviewees were critical about the lack of practical experience. Later interviewees were more likely to be critical about the perceived lack of connection between theory and practice, because the duration of the practicum had been extended and other issues therefore came into focus.

9.7.5 Limitations of the study

One clear limitation of a small-N qualitative study is that the findings cannot be generalised to the wider target population of student teachers in the three comparison countries. In this respect, a possible solution would be employing a mix of methods, for example, using questionnaires or surveys with a broader reach, that is, a larger number of both participants and universities. This would increase the reliability of the findings, by providing additional data for analysis. The participants spoke at length about their professional journey and although the orienting questions guided the process, in some aspects the content was highly individual and many interesting details were omitted in order to make comparisons. If I carried out a similar study in

the future, I would include some specific case studies of student teachers, in order to add greater depth to the research and further contextualise the findings.

A second limitation concerns my role in the selection of participants. The challenge of securing a viable sample in three countries was considerable, particularly owing to the strict time frames. There was therefore a heavy reliance on the willingness of teacher educators in the different institutions to provide suitable participants. In most cases these colleagues were not known to me and although this resulted in numerically viable groups in terms of the desired sample size, the composition of the sample remained outside my control. The gender balance was broadly in line with the expected composition for student teachers in secondary education in each country, however, if I pursued research in this area, I would ensure that further demographic and ethnic characteristics of the participants, such as age and ethnic background were taken into account. This would enrich the findings, by establishing potential connections between these characteristics and the motivation to become a teacher, as well as highlighting perspectives or expectations of pedagogy and classroom practice that can be attributed to demographic and ethnic factors.

9.8 Recommendations arising from this research study

It is clear that any suggestions as to how this research study might contribute to the wider discourse about the role of teacher education must be tempered by the acknowledgement that the findings are from a small sample and cannot be seen as representative of all student teachers in Germany, France and England. Nevertheless, the level of detail in each narrative and the common experiences they share, should lead to further reflection and action by the various actors working in, and making policy decisions for, teacher education. Thus, the following recommendations are aimed at specific actors: teacher educators, institutions and policy makers, as well as student teachers themselves.

The first recommendation concerns the perennial problem of student teachers straddling two locations, university and school, with two identities - student and teacher - and how this reinforces their ability to relate theory to practice in a meaningful way. The findings from this data set indicate that student teachers would

benefit from a model of teacher education where theory modules accompany, rather than preface, the practicum. An extended practicum with time split between university and placement school would go some way to avoiding the perception that theory and practice are separate entities. One approach that has been used is for student teachers to bring 'critical incidents' from their practice each week which are then discussed in the tutor group. This has tended to focus on practical issues, such as differentiation, but it could be expanded to link relevant theories to classroom situations, prompting reflection on how theory, didactic and pedagogical, can inform practice. The recommendation would therefore be a restructuring of the curriculum to allow for this alternative model.

The second recommendation concerns the content of the teacher education curriculum and a re-evaluation of the theoretical content in the light of the complexities of the teacher's role today. Teacher educators might consider how many theory modules are needed and what theory is of most relevance for student teachers. The findings of this study are that student teachers would welcome authentic examples from the classroom, rather than being presented with an ideal class that is divorced from reality. These real-life examples could be linked to relevant theories and recent research findings. In current times the emphasis on competence-based assessment of student teachers and the application of centrally written rubrics of standards means that theories also have to link to this formal, textual representation of practice. In Germany the standards were written with relevant theories included and policy makers in England and France could follow the same approach. One barrier to such a change concerns the way that policies are made in the three countries. The German federal system means that university academics generally participate in the consultation process and report their findings to policymakers at federal and national level. The high priority placed on academic study and the theoretical offer a plausible explanation as to why theories are included in the standards for student teachers.

The third recommendation concerns the role of those supporting the practicum and the opportunity this presents for making the theory-practice connection. The mentor in the school and the university tutor share responsibility for observing student

teachers in the classroom, however, it is the mentors who support them on a daily basis. The findings suggest that although the mentor is a linchpin in the process of developing a strong teacher professional identity and that student teachers spoke highly of this relationship and what they had learnt from the mentor, post-lesson feedback made little or no reference to appropriate theories. One strategy that might improve this situation is to offer mentors training that includes theories they should know and discuss with the student teacher, as part of their continuing professional development. If mentors were also to attend some of the taught sessions at the university together with the student teachers they are supporting, the idea that school and university are separated in the minds of student teachers would be mitigated.

One final recommendation relates to an unexpected finding that came from the English cohort of student teachers – the number of second career teachers and their evident commitment to teaching. At a time when all three comparison countries are facing teacher shortages, marketing teaching as a second career option and facilitating greater flexibility in the qualification process would have the potential to increase the number of these more mature teachers in Germany and France.

9.9 Ideas for future research

There are a number of potential areas for further research arising from this study and its findings and questions yet to be answered, one from each of the phases of the 3E model. In the emerging identity phase a surprising and under-researched area concerned the role previous experience in an education setting plays in the early development of teacher professional identity. Further research would focus on the nature, timing and location of this previous experience in a comparative context, to ascertain how this experience is selected and why, and how the experience influences perceptions of the future teaching role. The timing of this future research would be particularly pertinent in the French context, as school leavers there are beginning to take gap years in greater numbers, and since there is a requirement to justify the nature of the gap year activity, this might well include activities related to education and teaching. In addition, greater attention to second career teachers would enable recruiters to capitalise on this often untapped source of future teachers.

In terms of the evolving identity phase there are at least two areas for further research. The notion of developing a sense of agency or autonomy as a student teacher is important for exercising professional judgement and taking ownership of a teaching style. The research would ascertain the effect evidencing teacher standards or competences has on this sense of agency. There are questions about whether the standards constrain deeper levels of self-reflection or experimentation with new teaching approaches in order to avoid what Kyriacou (2009) calls 'evaluation anxiety,' by demonstrating what the tutor or mentor needs to observe. There are also suggestions that working within a framework of competences actually empowers student teachers, by reassuring them that they have the requisite skills to be an effective teacher. Whether this empowerment leads to a qualified teacher who then enjoys continuing professional autonomy would be another pertinent question to answer.

An alternative research strategy would be to carry out observations of student teachers on practicum in the comparison countries and explore their classroom practice, didactic and pedagogical approaches, to establish common areas and divergences. This could also link to student teachers' conceptions of a good teacher and how this translates to practice.

The epistemic identity phase offers multiple further research options, however the findings from this study suggest that the central theme of theory in the teacher education curriculum and how it connects to practice should take precedence. If student teachers struggle to name theories, one approach might be an in-depth comparison of the curricula in the three countries, how the theoretical elements are organised and assessed, as well as their proximity to the practicum. From the perspective of the student teachers, rather than ask them to recall theories they have learned during the interview, they could be given a list of theories and theorists from their own curriculum or those of their peers in the other countries and asked which they can identify and why. Whilst the reasons for their recall might not be as a direct result of perceived relevance, it would provide some basis for comparison that could be used to inform teacher educators and those responsible for designing the curriculum.

It is clear from the findings of this small-scale research study that there are further questions that need answering. Returning to the starting point of Sachs model, if student teachers are enabled to develop a strong sense of teacher professional identity and can 'be, act and understand' as teachers, they stand the best chance of becoming confident classroom practitioners, equipped to face all the challenges that await them. Policy makers and teacher educators share the responsibility for making this happen.

APPENDIX 1

LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH

Date

Dear Student Teacher,

I am currently researching the development of professional identity among students on teacher education programmes in England, Germany and France. As part of this research, I am undertaking a project investigating the perceptions and experiences of student teachers in six separate universities.

Why is this research being done?

In the past decade there have been important reforms to the way in which teachers are trained in many European countries and in particular in France and Germany.

Classroom practice has changed as a result and new teachers face many of the same challenges. Professional identity considers how teachers see *themselves* as teachers, as well as how they are perceived by society as a whole.

There has been little comparative research into teacher education in the three countries that form the focus of my study. This is therefore an important opportunity to ask student teachers about their experience of becoming a teacher and to compare these experiences across countries.

I would be very grateful for your participation and hope that you will find that it helps you to reflect on your experiences and practice, as you prepare to be a teacher. Your involvement would be to take part in either an individual interview, which will last for up to an hour and will take place in a quiet, confidential space.

What will happen to you if you take part?

If you agree, I will record some of the interviews and transcribe them later. I am not looking for right or wrong answers, only for accounts of your experiences. Please be assured of the following:

- This research process will be fully confidential. This means that I will not discuss the content of interviews, formally or informally, with anyone else, including any academic staff or other students at your university. Your identity will remain anonymous throughout.
- Any audio recordings will only be made with your permission and will not be made available to any other person and will be deleted before the thesis is complete.

- Where interviews are referred to in the final thesis or during conference presentations, individual responses will be anonymised, to ensure that no one can be identified.

Do you have to take part?

You decide if you want to take part or not and, even if you say 'yes', you can drop out at any time or say that you don't want to answer some questions. I am very happy to answer any questions you may have before consenting to participate, or if you are happy to take part, please can I ask you to reply to me by email at the address below.

The research has been reviewed and approved by the IOE Research Ethics Committee.

Lindsey Waine

Doctoral student in Comparative Education

UCL Institute of Education

Email: lindsey.waine.14@ucl.ac.uk or ljwaine@gmail.com

APPENDIX 2
ORIENTING QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS
(ENGLISH VERSION)

1. Why did you decide to become a teacher? (further prompts: other career options? Why secondary, not primary)
2. Describe your experience of school (what kind of pupil were you?)
3. Please give examples of positive or negative role model teachers
4. What are the qualities of a good teacher?
5. Which of these qualities do you possess?
6. Describe your experience of the practicum. What were the high points and the challenges?
7. Who supported you on practicum? Describe their role and how they helped you.
8. What did you learn on the practicum?
9. How are you assessed on the practicum? (check for awareness of rubrics of standards)
10. How well prepared did you feel for starting your practicum?
11. Can you describe the content of the teacher education programme?
12. Which theories have particularly resonated with you?
13. Have theories informed your practice?
14. Does your programme include the teaching of practical classroom skills?
15. To what extent does the programme encourage you to make links between theory and practice?

APPENDIX 3

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Interviews took place in Teacher Education centres at universities in Berlin, Freiburg, Strasbourg and London.

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Interview	Date	Student	m/f	Location
1	11/03/2015	Johannes	m	Berlin
2	13/03/2015	Silvia	f	Berlin
3	16/03/2015	Doris	f	Berlin
4	18/03/2015	Julia	f	Berlin
5	19/03/2015	Teresa	f	Berlin
6	5/07/2016	Lauren	f	Freiburg
7	13/07/2016	Sara	f	Freiburg
8	13/10/2016	Jannick	m	Freiburg
9	12/01/2017	Olivier	m	Strasbourg
10	19/01/2017	Claudette	f	Strasbourg
11	19/01/2017	Joanna	f	Strasbourg
12	20/01/2017	Nathalie	f	Strasbourg
13	9/02/2017	Marie	f	Freiburg
14	9/02/2017	Kersten	f	Freiburg
15	7/03/2017	Thomas	m	Strasbourg
16	11/05/2017	Marcus	m	Freiburg
17	24/05/2018	Hugo	m	Strasbourg
18	28/05/2018	Felix	m	Strasbourg
19	28/05/2018	Camille	f	Strasbourg
20	28/05/2018	Emilie	f	Strasbourg
21	18/06/2018	Faith	f	IOE ⁷²
22	10/07/2018	Lewis	m	Greenwich
23	10/07/2018	Emma	f	Greenwich
24	10/07/2018	Chloe	f	Greenwich
25	17/07/2018	Damian	m	IOE
26	5/02/2019	Andrew	m	IOE
27	6/02/2019	Tim	m	IOE
28	11/02/2019	Sebastian	m	IOE
29	11/02/2019	Adam	m	IOE
30	4/03/2019	Delia	f	IOE

⁷² UCL Institute of Education.

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