Becoming the teacher: Graduate pre-service teachers’ experiences of reading and understanding the text of teaching

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Author’s Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work that has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on how Graduate Diploma Primary pre-service teachers experience the process of becoming the teacher. It argues that this graduate cohort of teachers come to teacher education with previous experiences of teachers and teaching, life histories, dispositions and a complex personal life that inform the process of becoming. Understanding the teacher self, leading to the development of an identity as the teacher and the dispositions that enable the individual to cope with the difficulties and complexities that becoming the teacher entails are a focus of the research.

The context of the study is a school of education within a mid sized Australian University. The study is informed by a social constructivist theoretical approach coupled with a literacy model borrowed from the work of two literacy theorists. A framework for reading and comprehending the text of teaching is developed to enable an understanding of the process of becoming the teacher. Four case studies are developed to explicate the story of each individual utilizing three interviews throughout the two semesters of their program. Drawings of themselves as the teacher they envisioned themselves to be and a graph of their year provided rich data enabling a telling of each story.

The research builds a picture of the experiences of four graduate diploma pre-service teachers as they negotiate the development of an identity as the teacher. The findings indicate that becoming the teacher is a deeply personal process undertaken in the contexts of others. It is complex and difficult work particularly for mature aged pre-service teachers who have much in their lives other than their teacher education program. It is about reading the text of teaching and not only developing understandings about the text but also being able to transform that understanding into new ways of working within a school and classroom.

A teacher education program that emphasizes the personal and that has a collaborative and collegiate connection with schools is proposed in order to enhance the possibilities for successful outcomes for pre-service teachers.
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I would also like to acknowledge my friends and family, most especially the book club girls and the French contingent for their support, and my dad who believed I could do this. To the four pre-service teachers who gave their time and energy to my research - thank you. Finally to my children, nothing is ever gained by wishing it were so; it takes hard work and persistence.
Preface

The preface contains a list of the three research publications presented as Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

Publications

Chapter 4 (Article 1)

Chapter 5 (Article 2)

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Chapter One
Introduction

In September 2013, Tim Minchin, an Australian musician, comedian and entertainer gave an occasional address at a Graduation Ceremony in an Australian University. In this address he implored the graduates to become a teacher, not just any teacher, but an amazing one, because, as he put it, “Teachers are the most admirable and important people in the world and sharing education with others is of paramount importance” (Minchin, 2013). In exploring how an individual becomes the teacher, although important to keep in mind Minchin’s words about the importance of the role, I must acknowledge that becoming the teacher is not a simple process: despite the best intentions, prospective teachers face many difficulties.

It is my intention in this thesis to develop understandings about the experience of becoming the teacher in an Australian University. Specifically, I focus on Graduate Diploma pre-service teachers, that is, those individuals who have an undergraduate degree and who have come to teacher education either directly from their previous degree or from workplace experiences. These pre-service teachers bring to their program a variety of experiences, coping mechanisms and knowledge of what teaching is, based on previous life experiences and personal histories. I begin with the assumption that understanding more about the developing teacher, and how what has occurred in the past connects with the developing knowledge of teaching and teacher’s work would provide me with rich data about the process of becoming the teacher. In turn this knowledge would provide opportunities for teacher educators to
more finely focus teacher education programs to support pre-service teachers to become the teacher they aspire to be.

Of course no individual becomes the teacher in isolation. From a socio-cultural perspective the context in which a person operates is inextricably linked to their development. Exploring the contexts within which pre-service teachers experience becoming the teacher will enable me to gain understandings about pre-service teachers development as they negotiate the process.

Teaching is a complex and complicated business that “has no fixed formula or recipe” (Arends, 2000, p. 21). The work of teachers involves knowledge of curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, ethics, child development (physical, emotional and social), knowledge of systems and how they work, knowledge of families, and the wider school community and knowledge of the self as the practitioner (See Churchill et al, 2013; Groundwater-Smith, Ewing & Le Cornu, 2011; Kauchak & Eggen, 2011; Marsh, 2010; Whitten, Barker, Nosworthy, Sinclair & Nanlohy, 2010). Hoban (2000) suggests, “teaching is about developing a balance among many elements such as curriculum, teaching strategies, assessment, different children, parents and community expectations and resources, that interact as system” (p. 28). How teachers do their job is now public property. Everyone has been to school and therefore has a self-informed view of what should occur in schools. Indeed as Groundwater-Smith, Ewing and Le Cornu (2006) suggest, many of the commentators in the mass media and in the community in general hold “a simplistic view of teaching as a process of transmission” (p. 23). That is that teachers teach and
students learn. This belief can cause issues for pre-service teachers who come to teacher education with a misconception of teaching.

Teaching, as those in the profession know, is not a mechanistic transmission of knowledge from teachers to students. It is a dynamic, complex, complicated interpersonal relationship that changes with different students, schools and classrooms (Hoban, 2002). Atkinson (2003) describes the teaching process as “a series of conscious actions, unconscious processes, interactions and conversations, impulses and responses, planned activities, disruptions and unexpected events and situations” (p. 380). Learning to be the teacher and to teach is a multifaceted, multilayered experience. Texts written for prospective teachers make this clear. A cursory glance at the table of contents in any of these preparatory texts allows us to see the depth and range of learning expected of prospective teachers. Chapters on the developing learner, dilemmas in teaching, curriculum, managing the classroom, the learning environment, the inclusive and multicultural classroom, assessing and reporting, behaving ethically, planning and preparation and working with parents are some examples of the diversity of the role (Arends, 2000; Churchill et al, 2013; Groundwater-Smith, et al, 2011; Marsh, 2010).

1.1 Background to the study

As a course advisor in a school of education located in an Australian University, I have spent many hours with pre-service teachers counselling, cajoling, listening and advising them during their program. Over time, it became apparent that their ideas of what teaching is, what teachers do, and what was happening in their lives as students were informing their developing teacher self. Those things happening in their lives,
such as illness, death, birth, job loss, failure in professional (field) experience or assessments, relationship breakdown, poverty and more were having an effect on the way they negotiated the pathway to become the teacher.

The vision pre-service teachers have of themselves as the teacher, informed by their personal history, and of teaching is often an ideal view of who they will be. This vision might be influenced from their experiences with outstanding teachers, or their own early difficult experiences with a teacher. For some pre-service teachers it maybe because they view teaching as an altruistic profession where they might make a difference in a child’s life, or because want a career where they have time to spend with their own families.

The one-year program for the Graduate Diploma Primary in one Australian University caused me to wonder whether the pre-service teachers change their pre-conceived notions of teachers and teaching during the time of their program. More than anything, though, I am interested in the person who is on the journey to become the teacher, to investigate the developing teacher self, the persona that is the becoming teacher. How does the individual deal with this year (one and a quarter years of study in two semesters)? What particular attributes does the person bring to the program, enabling them to deal with any issues that may arise? How ready do they feel to walk into a classroom and become the teacher? What parts of the course helped them feel prepared?

This study is motivated by my interest in teachers and teaching. My own career as a teacher stands before me as part of the background to this research. Not that I believe
that my career should be seen as a template for others, far from it. Rather, the idea of reviewing my educational experiences is so that my observations and experiences of myself as the teacher and the contexts in which I operate, and which will affect consciously or unconsciously the way I approach this research process can be brought to the fore.

1.2 My story

As a child I remember setting up classrooms or hospital wards with a number of toys as students and patients. It seemed for a long time that medicine might be my chosen pathway but when the decision had to be made it was teaching that became my career of choice. I am not suggesting that at 17 I chose this career over the medical profession because of altruistic reasons. More, it was because at the time I could receive an income enabling me to study without adding to the financial pressure of my parents who had two more children to support. However, the choice turned out to be the best possible one for me. I loved it then, and still find the whole process of teaching and learning to be utterly fulfilling. I have had my ups and downs and have wondered what possessed me to continue in such a profession during the many changes that have occurred and still occur. But in the end, it is a career where I feel that I can contribute and where my understandings, knowledge and skills can be used to assist pre-service teachers for their future work.

I have taught in urban, rural and remote locations in both primary and secondary schools and have worked within the state system, the federal system and not-for-profit organisations. I have embraced the open classrooms of the 1970s and have been inspired by psychologists such as Abraham Maslow, and Carl Rogers and by the
writings of Paulo Freire. I have worked as an education consultant in the 1980s with First Steps, a developmental literacy program, and in the 1990s took on leadership roles in schools and participated in the beginnings of testing regimes that now dominate education in Australia. I have been part of consultancy groups working as part of the push for ‘quality teachers’, as if somehow the teachers of the past or of the present do not possess such expertise or capacity, and I have continued to advocate in these forums for teachers and their work.

I believe in the child as the centre of the teachers’ work and know that without appropriate nutrition, shelter, and safety the child’s learning is compromised (Maslow, 2011). What happens outside the classroom affects what happens inside the classroom and this fundamental belief is carried into this study. Philosophically my interest in humanist psychology is translated into a socio-cultural view of the world as I have experienced more of what it is that education is, and has to offer. For me, the movement from an individual student-centred approach to an approach informed by the context in which the individual lives and operates is one that is symbiotic. Both the individual and the context of that individual come together to form the whole. The notions of social construction perspectives in this research are about the unique experiences (Patton, 2002) of the individuals involved. It will be seen throughout this study that these theoretical positions inform the research. It is part of who I am as an individual, teacher and researcher and cannot be divorced or set aside for another view of the world. In a sense I am taking responsibility not just for my own story but that of the participants as well (Strong-Wilson, 2006). As a participant observer and researcher I am involved in the context of the individuals who were part of the research and inhabit my own context and that informs the
research “since each of us experiences from our own point of view, each of us experiences a different reality”, (Krauss, 2005, p. 760).

1.3 Definition of terms
In this research, there are several terms that need to be defined, to reveal their meaning to the participants, the research and the researcher. The participants in the study are otherwise called pre-service teachers and are enrolled in the Graduate Diploma of Education Primary Program. The term differentiates them from those who are teaching (in-service teachers) and accentuates their process of becoming the teacher. The term becoming as used in this research describes the process moving from being a pre-service teacher to becoming an in-service teacher. What Britzman (2003) described as the process of being “shaped” and “shaping” (p. 49) by and within the contexts such as the personal, the social, and what ‘is happening’ in the pre-service teacher’s life, or as Dunne, Prior and Yates (2005) suggest, “The individual is constructed through participation and positioning within multiple discourses” (p. 31). Becoming the teacher is an iterative process within multiple contexts and can be problematic as the individual moves towards the developing teacher self.

The developing teacher self is defined by Rodgers and Scott (2008) as being predicated on the development of understandings about the meaning of teaching. They go on to suggest that these meanings inform the process of developing an identity as the teacher. In becoming the teacher, the individual is developing understandings about teaching and education, therefore informing the process of identifying as the teacher or developing an identity as the teacher. The term identity
can be described in terms of Gee’s (2000) definition of a ‘certain kind of person’, that is, an individual who takes on the “state”, “position”, “individual trait” and “experiences” of a certain kind of person (p. 3) - in this case that of the teacher.

Throughout the thesis, there is reference to ‘the teacher’ the pre-service is becoming. My use of the definite article ‘the’ is designed to emphasise that which the individual aspires to be and is working towards becoming. However, in Chapter Four (Glass, 2007), Chapter Five (Glass, 2012) and Chapter Six, (Glass, 2011) it will be seen that the article ‘a’ is used on some occasions in reference to becoming a teacher or developing a teacher identity. Because this research was developed over several years it became clearer to me that it was not a generic teacher that the individual was becoming but rather something specific and personal.

Other terms, such as ‘text’ and ‘context’, are explained more fully within Chapters Four (Glass, 2007), Five (Glass, 2012) and Six (Glass, 2011) but suffice to say here that text refers to the written and visual, the social and to the text of teacher education. Context also describes those elements that have an affect on the developing teacher self. By this I mean life history, the social and what is happening in the life of the pre-service teacher.

As part of the research process, I was interested in why an individual would choose teaching, particularly given that they had studied in another learning area. Unlike those enrolling in a four-year Bachelor of Education, enrolling in a one-year Graduate Diploma program means that although the pre-service teacher may have considered another career, or had been working in that area, she/he had now chosen teaching. Of
course the pre-service teacher may have found no work in their chosen career and teaching was the second option, or that she/he felt a change was required. To try and make sense of this, and to begin the research, I conducted a pilot study to discover why Graduate Diploma pre-service teachers had chosen teaching.

1.4 Pilot study

In 2004, I surveyed 130 Graduate Diploma pre-service teachers both Primary and Secondary in the first lecture of their first education unit of study. The questions asked were brief:

- Why do you want to be a teacher?
- Do you feel you understand what teaching entails? This question included a choice between a) very little understanding, b) a satisfactory understanding or c) a very good understanding.

The responses to the first question fell overwhelmingly into two main areas. The first reason given for wanting to be a teacher was ‘making a difference’ and concerned shaping and influencing young lives, helping children become passionate about learning and contributing to society through the education of its children. The second major reason was previous experience of teaching or caring and working with children. Presumably previous experience had enabled the pre-service teacher to ‘know’ that teaching was a profession they could take on successfully.

The responses to the second question indicated that nearly 80% of the pre-service teachers surveyed felt they had a ‘good’ or ‘very good’ understanding of what teaching entails and nearly 20% indicated they had a ‘satisfactory’ understanding. Almost all of the surveyed pre-service teachers felt they had some understanding of
the work of teachers, ranging from a ‘very clear’ understanding to a ‘reasonable’ understanding.

To sum up the results of the pilot study, the respondents’ reasons for wanting to be a teacher were: as a way of making a positive change in a young person’s life, and previous experience in a teaching or care giving role. The respondents’ confidence in knowing about the work of teachers may have been a further reason for their decision to pursue a teaching career.

These responses informed the subsequent work I have done in the study to find out how individual pre-service teachers experienced becoming the teacher, given that the reasons for selecting teaching as a profession were so clearly articulated in the cohort surveyed. The experience of becoming the teacher in my work with similar groups of pre-service teachers, indicated that it is a complex business involving not just theory and practice, but interpersonal skills, knowledge of child development, family theory, curriculum knowledge, the capacity to know oneself, and to be persistent in the face of difficulties.

1.5 Context

In this study the focus was on ‘what happened’ to four pre-service teachers as they navigated the process of becoming the teacher in a one-year Graduate Diploma of Education Primary program. These pre-service teachers were older than those enrolling in an undergraduate teacher education program, had an existing degree and had worked in another occupation/profession before deciding they wanted to enrol in the Graduate Diploma Primary Program.
Because of my role in the School of Education as educator, academic chair and researcher, I had some pre-suppositions about the issues and difficulties these pre-service teachers might have, but I wanted an in-depth understanding of how becoming the teacher unfolded for each of them. The idea of acquiring knowledge about individuals was an exciting prospect. Why teaching? What have they experienced in their own schooling? What do they assume about teachers and teaching? What does the word teacher mean to them? How do they envision being the teacher? Does the course meet their expectations? How do they deal with difficulties in their lives? As can be seen by my questions, I was curious and keen to delve into the participant stories of what it meant to become the teacher.

I assumed that the narrative of their lives over the twelve-month period would allow their voices to be heard. However, in my reading of the research literature I was influenced by the work of literacy theorists and researchers Alan Luke and Peter Freebody: in particular the four resources model of learning to read. I decided to adopt and adapt the model developed by Luke and Freebody to explicate the practice of the reader to frame a reading of the process of learning to teach. I describe my adaptation in detail in Chapter Three. Much research has explored teacher education but to explore through the adaptation of a model of learning to read is a novel approach to a complex research problem.

1.6 Research questions

At the forefront of this research was the overarching question: How do four Graduate Diploma Primary pre-service teachers experience becoming the teacher? The
following subsidiary questions were then developed to ‘cast a wide net’ in my exploration of the overarching question. These subsidiary questions are addressed in the three published journal articles Glass (2007), Glass (2011) and Glass (2012) comprising Chapters Four, Five and Six of the thesis and revisited in the final chapter.

Glass (2007) Chapter 4

• What do Graduate Diploma Primary pre-service teachers bring to their programs as understandings and knowledge of and about teachers and teaching?

• What are their experiences of education?

• How does this knowledge and understanding mediate the process of becoming the teacher?

• How useful is the literacy framework as a model to frame understandings about becoming the teacher?

Glass (2012) Chapter 5

• How does the individual cope with learning to become the teacher?

• How does what is happening in the lives of the pre-service teachers act upon the process of becoming the teacher?

• How useful is the literacy framework in developing understandings about learning to be the teacher within a teacher education program?

Glass (2011) Chapter 6

• How do pre-service teachers envision the teacher they are becoming?

• What informs the development of the teacher self?
• How did the use of arts-based methods and narrative inform understandings about the process of becoming the teacher?

1.7 Significance of the research

This study began in the mid 2000s, and since then much has happened in education such as growing control of education processes both in schools and in universities by the Australian Federal Government. The ‘Education Revolution’ (Australian Labor Party national platform and constitution, 2007) has taken the form of national testing in the areas of literacy and numeracy (National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy, NAPLAN), a national curriculum (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, ACARA), Teacher and Teacher Education Program Standards (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, AITSL). The catch cry of ‘teacher quality’ has been attached to many of these reforms, as the government grappled with the notion that Australia is slipping behind other OECD countries in areas of literacy and numeracy (Ferrari, 2010). Much of the blame for this perceived failure is placed squarely on teachers. The AITSL Australian program standards include entry standards for personal literacy and numeracy, and prospective teacher education students must demonstrate that they are in the top 30% of the population either on entry to the course of study, or universities have to prove that prospective teachers have reached the level on exit. Along with this is the focus on a “largely conservative and instrumentalist conception of what it means to teach” (Down, 2012, p. 64), where the technical aspects of teaching such as planning, assessing, management and reporting hold sway (Down, 2012). Within this climate of compliance and standards, pre-service teachers must demonstrate their competence in
literacy and numeracy and also meet the Graduate standards as outlined in the Australian Teaching Standards Document (2011).

From this scenario, it is clear that what is important in teacher education is how students enter the university and their standards in personal literacy and numeracy, and what they have attained on completion of the teacher education course. Although I accept that high quality teachers are important in our education system, I would argue that an input output, technicist model is not the best way to improve the quality of our teachers. The danger is that teacher education in conservative times encourages a technical teaching force (Cumming-Potvin, 2013) and focuses attention on a narrow conception of teaching. What happens throughout a pre-service teacher’s experience of teacher education is significant in terms of the individual’s capacity to become the teacher and it is the process of becoming that is the focus of this research. ‘Becoming’ is more than achieving high levels of personal literacy and numeracy (although important), and more than the ability to implement curriculum, assess and manage a classroom (also important); it is the process of becoming the best possible teacher, which includes the capacity to be a critical thinker in the theoretical, ideological and social aspects of the work that is teaching.

Retention of pre-service and in-service teachers in many teacher education programs is an issue confronting teacher educators both in Australia (Mansfield, Price, McConney, Beltman, Pelliccione, & Wosnitza, 2012; Noble & Henderson, 2011) and elsewhere in Western countries (Fleming, 2011; Vare, Dewalt & Docking, 2003-2004). In my school of education in Australia, many pre-service teachers begin the Graduate Diploma program, but 40% leave before the end of the course (2007 to
The demographics also indicate that in each year only a small number of graduate diploma students complete the course within the twelve months; most take two or more years to finish. The pressure of completing what is necessarily an intense period of study (currently 1.25 years in 2 semesters in the setting of this research), takes its toll on many graduate diploma students. In this research I will explore some of the reasons for this. It may be that as a school of education there are ways of supporting students through difficult times, such as when the intensity of the study becomes too great, or when personal issues impinge on the pre-service teacher’s progress. As indicated above, during the period of this research there have been changes made to school systems and to the education of pre-service teachers. These changes have focussed on the quality of teachers and on the development of the Australian National Teaching and School Leader Standards (AITSL, 2011). In this climate of compliance, the work of becoming the teacher will continue to be problematic. Teacher education faces the dilemma of preparing teachers for the now, and for the future. Assisting pre-service teachers to become the teacher in an era of standards-based learning, but at the same time providing support so that they have the capacity to be critically engaged in all aspects of the work that is teaching is not easily achieved. My research aims to contribute innovative solutions to this difficult task.

1.8 Methodology

In research there is a close link between epistemology, theoretical frameworks, methodology and method (White, 2011). As a researcher, I am seeking to describe and understand how participants inhabit their world rather than to measure what is causing their behaviour. My interest is in the social and cultural aspects of pre-
service teachers’ worlds and so the theoretical constructs within this setting are by nature fluid and non-linear. As suggested previously, the methodological focus of the research grew out of the desire to ‘know’ the individual and in doing so acknowledging that the approaches grew out of the theoretical traditions of interpretivist inquiry, hence social constructivism and interpretative theory are the appropriate frameworks for exploring the experience of a small group of graduate diploma pre-service teachers.

Research design requires conceptual organisation to elucidate what is assumed and to develop a framework for the gathering of data and to display the findings of the research process. The researcher in developing such a framework must be conscious of “capturing and honouring multiple perspectives” (Patton, 2002, p. 102) for it is here that interpretations about the consequences of particular ways of operating within the world can be developed. As a teacher educator with an interest in literacy, and particularly with the process of learning to read, I have decided to use a literacy model as a framework to inform the research as I engage closely with the individuals under investigation. My hunch being, that learning to be the teacher has similarities with learning to be the reader.

Freebody and Luke (1990) and Luke and Freebody (1999) developed their model in response to the continuing debate about whole language, critical literacy and phonics-based approaches to learning to read. Their model implies that to learn to read, the individual must know the letters, sounds and construction of language and bring to the reading process existing knowledge, understanding and experience. Learning to read is also the developing ability to reconstruct and create new understandings,
knowledge and skills and to understand that others create text, with particular worldviews and understandings.

Reading and understanding the text of teaching is at the core of this research. Therefore, it is important that pre-service teachers learn the what, how and when of teaching. That is, what to teach, how to teach, when to teach, how to assess, how to manage behaviour, how and when to report to parents and the wider education community. Importantly, pre-service teachers also must recognise that what they bring to the process of becoming the teacher (as experience of teachers and teaching and their life history) acts upon the process. But none of this is sufficient: the capacity to create new understandings, new structures, and to have an understanding that education and teaching like all texts is constructed in particular ways are also necessary ingredients.

In situating the research within a social constructivist, interpretivist inquiry, with a focus on the “essential experiences, perceptions, explanations, beliefs and worldview” (Patton, 2002, p. 132) of those involved, a case study methodology was deemed appropriate. As Yin (2009) explains, when the research questions deal with the “how or why some social phenomenon works the more the case study approach is relevant” (p. 4). To develop an in-depth picture of each participant, the case study approach enabled “a purposeful sampling” and allowed the “collection, organisation and analysis of data” (Patton, 2002, p. 447). As Stake (2005) suggests “case study is not a choice of method but rather a choice of what is to be studied” (p. 443). In the case of the four participants in this research indeed this is so.
The analysis of data gathered is necessarily an iterative process and necessitates the condensation of data into themes and sub-themes in an attempt to understand and tell the story of each participant in a way that honours their narrative/story. It entails coding and recoding data to explore themes and to understand the case before the researcher. In constructivist research the multiple dimensions of human life constructed by the individual are explored along with “implications of those constructions for their lives and the lives and interactions with others” (Patton, 2002, p. 96).

The qualitative research process follows the contexts of those participating in the research. Each person holds her/his truth to be so for them and the researcher’s analysis and own world-view connect with the views of the participant in the telling of their story. It is necessarily a construction of a truth and there may be other versions, “Multiple readings are always possible of any text” (Dunne, Pryor & Yates, 2005, p. 91). In this research, my analysis and understandings of what is expressed through the words and pictures of the four participants is presented.

In the present research, four volunteer participants were involved in a series of three interviews over the twelve months of their education program. The interview questions were based on the framework developed to inform the research, and included open-ended questions about the pre-service teachers’ previous experiences, life history, their capacity to deal with difficulties, and what was happening in their lives. The interviews were held at the beginning of the year before the program began, in the middle of the year after the first professional placement (field experience), and at the end of the academic year. As part of the first and last
interviews, the pre-service teachers were asked to draw their vision of themselves as the teacher. In the final interview the pre-service teachers were also asked to graph their life satisfaction over the twelve months. The two arts-based techniques generated rich data that may otherwise have remained hidden from the researcher.

1.9 Outcomes of the study

My purpose in this study was to develop an understanding of the experience of four Graduate Diploma primary pre-service teachers as they navigated their way through an intensive program of study to become the teacher. More particularly I explored what these pre-service teachers brought with them as understandings and knowledge of teachers and teaching, what was happening in their lives and how this affected the process of them becoming the teacher. Many students begin the program, but many do not finish. In our school of education over a period of five years (2007-2011), approximately 50% of the original enrolment managed to complete their program. Another 10% either deferred their studies or enrolled but did not complete, and 40% as suggested earlier, withdrew. Noble and Henderson (2011) suggest that retention is an issue for many pre-service teachers in their first year of study, and Fleming (2011), whose research focus was non-traditional entry students agreed. Noble and Henderson and Fleming’s research made some suggestions as to why retention was an issue, such as the quality of relationships within the school of education and family background of the pre-service teacher. My research, with its focus on the experiences of graduate diploma students, will add to existing knowledge about why pre-service teachers withdraw from their program.
The outcomes of this study will also contribute toward an understanding of the conceptual framework, the processes and issues facing pre-service teachers and the implications for schools of education as they prepare the teachers of the future.

1. Conceptual framework

- Develop understandings about the use of a literacy framework to explicate the reality of pre-service teachers’ lives as they learn to read the text of teaching;

2. Processes and issues

- Develop understandings of the process of becoming the teacher for this particular cohort of students;
- Identify issues that may contribute to the difficulties many pre-service teachers have in completing the program;

3. Implications

- Develop suggestions as to how schools of education may provide support mechanisms for graduate diploma pre-service teachers;
- Identify how the process of becoming the teacher prepares pre-service teachers for the work of teachers and teaching in the future.

1.10 Delimitations and limitations of the research

Using a literacy framework based on the work of Freebody and Luke (1990) and Luke and Freebody (1999) is a novel way of framing the experience of four Graduate
Diploma of Education Primary pre-service teachers. This framework enables the cases of the four participants to be explored with foci on four elements:

- **Personal history** - what pre-service teachers bring to the process of becoming, such as dispositions and knowledge of teaching and teachers, the technical skills of teaching.
- **Understandings of the fundamentals of teaching** - what to teach, how to teach, knowing about learners and the link between theory and practice.
- **The social act of teaching** - relating to the real world and understanding the social relationships that are part of the work of teachers and transforming what has been learned to fit new environments.
- **Critical reflection** - developing understandings about the self, and how the becoming teacher is constrained and afforded by what is valued by the university and the wider community.

Another focus is that the knowledge constructed through the research is co-constructed with the participants and that it is their voice that is heard, albeit through a lens constructed by me as the researcher. I have tried to be faithful to the voice of the pre-service teacher but I acknowledge my interpretation of the voice and the drawings of that person are constituent parts of this voice. In this research, voice is used to “signify something unique in the individual” (Britzman, 2003, p. 17) and as she suggests it is the struggle for pre-service teachers as they try to “construct a ‘teaching voice’ from available discourses” (p. 18). The story of each pre-service teacher gives voice to their struggles to find their professional self within multiple contexts.
Another limitation to be considered is that it is the voice of only four pre-service teachers; however I contend the findings represent the realities of this cohort of pre-service teachers. In using case study as both a process and a product of the research I have endeavoured to paint a clearer picture of the process in which these pre-service teachers are involved.

1.11 Thesis overview

In this chapter I have presented the outline for the thesis and the framework for developing understandings as to how the research will be presented. The reader is introduced to the idea of exploring the experience of four pre-service teachers enrolled in a Graduate Diploma of Teaching Primary Program. Understanding this experience is important when considering why some students feel unable to complete the program, despite their capacities to be successful as demonstrated by the successful completion of an undergraduate degree. Their reasons for coming into teaching and what they bring to the program as understandings of the work of teachers and teaching itself may well help those of us in Teacher Education to better support these pre-service teachers as they grapple with the problems of managing the workload in this intensive teacher education program. The chapter has also outlined the key focus of the research and the research questions to be answered. The definitions and terms that are key to the research are also explained.

In Chapter Two the focus is on the literature that informs the study. Because the thesis is a hybrid, with three of the chapters as published journal articles, much of the literature is reviewed in these articles. However, in Chapter Two the literature is
further scanned in terms of the reasons why individuals choose teaching and an
explanation of what is the work of teaching. Literature has been included on the
developing teacher self and teacher identity and the idea of visioning what that self
might be, which has been reviewed in terms of the descriptions and also the visual
representations of that vision. In this chapter, I have also explained the framework
upon which the study is based and investigated literacy and teaching as an
explanation for how the teacher self develops.

Chapter Three describes the context, design and the process of the data gathering.
The participants are introduced and the process by which their participation was
sought. In this chapter the discussion of the research process is presented and builds
on the previous chapter so that the literature can be seen to inform the data gathering
process of interview, drawing and graphing as part of the case study approach.

In Chapter Four the first of the participants is introduced, as is the literacy framework
by which the study is informed. In this published journal article (Glass, 2007), I
focus on Tom and his developing teacher self. I portray his confident, focussed vision
of himself and follow his development throughout the year until the final rendition of
himself as the teacher. I also share my understandings of some of the difficulties
faced by Tom as I answer some of the research questions, most particularly 'how do
his experiences of education, teaching and teachers and his life experiences mediate
the process of becoming the teacher?'

In Chapter Five, the second published journal article (Glass, 2012), I introduce all
four participants, Fern, Cara, John and Tom. In this article, my interest is in how the
teacher self is formed by focussing on the multiple contexts within which each participant operates. The literacy framework is used to structure this process and has been further refined from the previous chapter’s rendition.

In Chapter Six (Glass, 2011) my focus is again on an individual – in this case John. The focus is also on the data gathering of interview, narrative, and arts based inquiry. John’s year is fraught, although none of this was captured in the interviews and it was not until the final meeting when a graph of the progress of the year was drawn that a more realistic picture of John’s experiences was uncovered.

Finally in Chapter Seven, the threads of each of the previous chapters are drawn together. It is in this chapter that the findings are described and where the connection with the literature is outlined. It is also where the use of the literacy framework as a means of structuring the research is analysed and where a suggestion for a more nuanced Graduate Diploma Program is described. I close with a conclusion and recommendations for future research.
Chapter Two

Conceptual considerations

2 Introduction

In this chapter it is my intention to outline the general conceptual underpinnings of the thesis and to describe the main thrust of the work, namely to develop understandings about the experiences of Graduate Diploma Primary pre-service teachers in a one-year program as they begin the journey to become the teacher. To limit the research scope, I examine the relevant themes from the literature to define what it is meant by teaching, why people choose to become the teacher and how the becoming process unfolds for pre-service teachers. I assume that the development of the teacher self is a focus of pre-service teachers as they develop their understandings of what it is to be the teacher. I use a literacy-based conceptual framework, narrative and arts-based methods to understand how pre-service teachers envision themselves in the belief that this approach provides a novel opportunity to gain insight into how individuals become the teacher.

Because this thesis has been developed via publication, part of the literature review and conceptual underpinnings are in the three published articles that are included as chapters three, four and five. However, in this chapter the main thrusts of the research focus are outlined.

Since Lortie’s (1975) seminal work, ‘School-Teacher: A sociological study’, until the present time there has been a great deal of research in education about the experience of pre-service teachers as they navigate their way through a variety of programs and
courses (Coughlin, 2001; Lim, Ieridou and Goodwin, 2006; Mansfield, Wosnitza & Beltman, 2012; Utley & Showalter, 2007; Weber & Mitchell, 1995). These pre-service teachers bring to their program of study a variety of experiences of teaching and teachers as part of a life history that also has an affect on the teacher they will become (Billett, 2009; Black, 1999; Botha & Onwu, 2013; Britzman, 2003; 2007; Ewing & Hughes, 2008; Hammerness, 2003; Olsen, 2011; Scott, 2005). There is concern at all levels of education about the capacity of beginning teachers to stay in the profession in the long term, and although this is not the focus of my research, it is acknowledged that my research outcomes have a bearing on this issue. Recent work in Australia on resilience in pre-service and beginning teachers has identified the development of skills across four dimensions: professional, emotional, social and motivational. These skills include “self-efficacy, problem solving, emotional management, help seeking and life/work balance” and added to this “opportunities for students to experience and critically reflect on the wide range of teaching contexts and the diverse nature of teachers’ work” (Mansfield et al, 2012, p. 2). The outcomes of this research indicated that individuals needed to develop these capacities to stay in the profession. Further, work with beginning teachers by Johnson, Down, Le Cornu, Peters, Sullivan, Pearce & Hunter (2012) has identified several issues about what it is that keeps these individuals in the profession and that builds their resilience. Issues such as understanding that the work of teachers is difficult and time consuming, and that building relationships and developing a teacher identity is at the core of teachers’ work. Helping these pre-service teachers to understand school culture and the systems that support them, providing interventions in schools and in university courses, may help their capacity to become resilient in the face of a constantly changing political environment and its subsequent effects on education.
In much the same way as becoming the teacher is a sometimes difficult, iterative process, so is the work of designing a study and becoming a researcher. It is a non-linear and sometimes difficult process (Dunne, et al, 2005). Researching is a process that can look deceptively simple from the outside. To understand the work of a researcher requires being embedded in the research and finding ways of understanding what is happening. It is as Dunne et al (2005, p. 14) describe “a social process and it has social and affective dimensions and consequences”. To research the experience of four Graduate Diploma Primary Education students necessitated being part of the social process of research and acquiring an understanding of the conceptual considerations in an attempt to build a story that allows a space for this particular research, or as White (2011) explains, “provide a framework upon which the remainder of the thesis will rest” (p. 192).

As foreshadowed in Chapter one, I outline the framework for understanding the process of becoming the teacher. This framework is based on the work of literacy theorists Freebody and Luke (1990) and Luke and Freebody’s (1999) four practices of the reader; the latter provides a device within which the reading of the text of teacher education, or more precisely, becoming the teacher is enabled. Within this framework, themes developed from the literature are embedded.

The themes emerging from the literature, and drawn from the research questions, focus on the following aspects of the experience of becoming the teacher:

- What is teaching?
- Learning to read, learning to teach
• Why choose teaching?
• How does life experience and personal history have an effect on the becoming teacher?
• How does envisioning the teacher assist in the process of becoming the teacher?
• What is meant by becoming the teacher?

2.1 What is teaching?

It seems an obvious question to ask, about what seems to be an obvious occupation. But in fact teaching is a contested space and has different meanings for different stakeholders in education. Whether they are involved directly in the process of teaching or are the children being taught and their families and carers, or are on the periphery such as politicians, business leaders and policy makers, all have a view of what teaching is. To teach according to the Macquarie Dictionary (1981) is “to impart knowledge of or skill in; give instruction”, while teaching is “the act of one who teaches” (p. 1173). Those of us who teach know that it is all of this and so much more. Teaching is a complex and complicated business that involves knowledge of curriculum, pedagogy, child development (physical, emotional and social), knowledge of systems and how they work, knowledge of families and the wider school community and knowledge of self. It is the capacity to change, to be flexible, to take on shifts in emphasis in schools as governments and others make decisions about teaching, curriculum and the way children should be taught. As Hoban (2002) states “teaching is about developing a balance among many elements, such as curriculum, teaching strategies, assessment, different children, parents and community expectations and resources, that interact as a system” (p. 28). It is
“complex work that looks deceptively simple” (Grossman, Hammerness & McDonald, 2009, p. 273)

The politicising of schools and teaching has highlighted education as an area for media interest, and as Groundwater-Smith, et al., (2006) suggest there is a view that teaching is about transmitting information – a view perpetrated by many in the mass media and in the general community. Christopher Pyne, when the opposition Coalition's education spokesman in Australia, was advocating more old-fashioned teaching in the classroom: "more practical teaching methods based on more didactic teaching methods, more traditional methods rather than the child-centred learning that has dominated the system for the past 20, 30 or 40 years" (Hurst, 2013). Katharine Murphy (2013), national correspondent of the Age newspaper, surmises that “Hearing Pyne talk more extensively about his portfolio (hooray) made me nostalgic for some of my best teachers who made me sit on my backside, stop talking and write notes until my hand ached”, as if the best teachers were those who caused physical pain and this was a positive outcome of teaching. Arguably these views of teachers and teachers’ work are simplistic in nature and belie the reality of life in classrooms. Those of us who teach know that these understandings are not reflected in reality and that teachers and students are involved in much more. This gap between what educational research indicates about teaching and that advocated by politicians and the media provides an uncertain space in which prospective teachers can become confused and apprehensive about what teaching might mean for them.

Teaching is certainly not a mechanistic transmission of knowledge from teachers to students. It is, as Freire suggests not a transfer of knowledge but “re-creating that
knowledge” (2011, p. 69). According to Hoban (2002), it is a dynamic, complex, complicated interpersonal relationship that changes with different students, schools and classrooms. The process is described by Atkinson (2003) as “a series of conscious actions, unconscious processes, interactions and conversations, impulses and responses, planned activities, disruptions and unexpected events and situations” (p. 380).

To describe what teaching is, entails describing the complexity of human interaction, societal expectations, the care and nurturing of young people within a teaching/learning environment that is often dictated to by those who do not do the work of teachers. Although our politicians, business leaders and some educators would have us believe that teaching is, as described above, a simple transmission of knowledge, it is clear that in our rapidly expanding world transmitting knowledge has limited (if any) value. The rapid pace of change in technology, and the expansion of knowledge at unprecedented rates (Johnson, Adams, & Cummins, 2012), require an understanding of teaching and teachers’ work that recognizes what is required now to prepare for what will be required in a future classroom. The work of teachers is changing and will continue to change as the use of technologies and the demands of society dictate what is required. The idea that one person can stand before a class and fill each child with the knowledge, understandings and skills needed in life is no longer sustainable.

Reflecting on what teaching is in terms of this research leads to a discussion of what it might be like to learn to be the teacher. As suggested earlier in the chapter, there are themes developed from the research questions and from the literature to help
answer the overarching question ‘How does an individual understand the experience of becoming the teacher’? To enable an understanding to occur, and to provide a framework within which to develop these understandings, the following section compares learning to become the reader with learning to become the teacher.

2.2 Learning to read, learning to teach

In much the same way as beginning readers come to the task of learning to read, pre-service teachers come to the task of learning to become the teacher. The process of learning to read text, whether written, oral or in images, has much in common with learning to read the text of teacher education and becoming the teacher. In both instances, it is important to know the mechanics of the process. For the reader it is the letters, sounds, words and the way these fit together to create the story and enable the reading of the story. For the pre-service teacher, it is learning what to teach, how to teach, when to teach, and the way these fit together to create a text so that learning takes place; and for both the reader and pre-service teacher, it is about what they bring to the process of learning to read or teach in the way of previous experiences and understandings. Has the beginning reader been exposed to a variety of oral, written or visual texts? Has the pre-service teacher been exposed to a variety of teachers and teaching experiences and how have these experiences affected learning? The beginning reader needs to understand how to use the text in a functional way, to communicate and to develop understandings about the form and function of the variety of texts they are expected to engage with. The pre-service teacher also develops understandings of the function of teaching and how to relate to the world of the students in their classrooms, the schools, and the wider educational community and to understand that teaching is a social practice. “Literacies – in both traditional
print and multimodal forms – are malleable social and cultural practices…” (Luke, 2011, p. 4).

Furthermore, both the beginning reader and the pre-service teacher develop over time the realizations and understandings that text is constructed by others and that the construction positions the reader in particular ways. That is, the underlying beliefs of the author or producer of written or visual texts or (in the case of pre-service teachers) the University or school will have an influence on the individual’s learning. It is these understandings of how the self is constrained and influenced by the construction of text that can empower the reader to position themselves as both a participant and creator within the reading of the text. “…. literacy entails the naming and renaming, narrating and analyzing of life worlds as part of a problem-posing and problem-solving pedagogy” (Luke, 2011, p. 6).

As mentioned previously, the model that informs the framing of this study was developed by Freebody and Luke (1990), and Luke and Freebody (1999) both educators with a focus on critical literacy education who have been active participants in the debate about approaches to the teaching of reading in Australian schools. This debate, which centred on whole language (or naturalistic approaches), phonics based (behaviourist approaches) and critical perspectives (critical literacy pedagogies), has continued to the present. The Freebody and Luke (1999) model explicates understandings of the process of becoming the reader; it suggests that all aspects of the reading process are important and that all aspects should be taught together rather than in a hierarchy of levels of understanding.
However, Freebody and Luke acknowledge that the beginning reader may spend more time learning the fundamentals of text (letters, words, sounds), just as I would contend that the pre-service teacher is also focused on learning the fundamentals of teaching (how to teach, what to teach and so on). However, to be unable to develop the capacity to recognise how texts position the reader, to not realize that what you bring to the process as previous experiences influences the reading process, and to not be able to create new text from the meanings established means that the individual is not an efficient reader and does not have the capacity to grow and develop as the text confronting them increases in difficulty. A non-reflective reader of text, whether it is the written word or the text of teaching, will soon find that their capacity to understand and deal with the complexities of the text, will mean they are unable to continue in the learning process. It is imperative that the pre-service teacher understands this complexity and realises that “No single component will of itself fully enable students to use texts effectively” (Freebody and Luke, 1990, p. 8).

### 2.3 Literacy as a framework

More recent definitions have viewed literacy as an ability to understand or read what is happening in the world, the social realm (Anstey, 2002; Kalantzis & Cope, 2012; Lankshear, 1997). Freebody (2007) suggests literacy is about understanding the relationship between symbols and meaning, using cultural knowledge, using a variety of texts depending on the requirements, and critiquing texts to understand how any text presents a particular view of the world. Literacy is no longer viewed as the province of the printed word; it has been appropriated and used in a number of fields to explicate understandings about complex issues. We read about different literacies, such as science and mathematics literacy. Science educators view literacy as
complex understandings about various sciences across a number of fields, such as higher order thinking, attitudinal, societal and interdisciplinarian (Holbrook & Rannikmae, 2009), so that the general public have sufficient literacy about science to make informed choices and decisions (Dillon, 2009). Similarly, mathematics literacy is described as “the knowledge to know and apply basic mathematics in our everyday living” (Ojose, 2011, p. 90). Ojose goes on to assert that “A mathematically literate person can estimate, interpret data, solve day-to-day problems, reason in numerical, graphical, and geometric situations, and communicate using mathematics” (p. 91). In other fields, such as education, it is reading the school as a text, that is, understanding the school’s context, culture, codes and function, and knowing when and how to utilize these understandings (Groundwater-Smith et al, 2011). Luke and Woods (2009) refer to texts as a way of making possible different worlds with “identifiable ideological interests and consequences for individuals and communities” (p. 2).

Literacy is more broadly viewed as being about understanding, and applying that understanding in the social world rather than a singular focus on the written word. In terms of being able to read, literacy can be seen as understanding the fundamentals as well as having the capacity to understand what it is that the reader brings to the reading space, how to translate that reading into new activity, and developing an awareness of how all that we read is constructed in particular ways and for particular purposes.

As foreshadowed above, I have selected the literacy model (Table 1 on the following page) outlining the four practices of the reader (Luke and Freebody, 1999) as a frame through which to understand the process of learning to read the text of teaching. The
framework is introduced in Chapter Four, Becoming a Teacher: Tom’s story (Glass, 2007) and further developed in Chapter Five, Understanding the text of teaching: Complexities of comprehension (Glass, 2012). Table 1 (from Glass 2007) is my first iteration of the framework based on the literacy model and is included here as a point of reference for the reader.

Table 1: A comparison of the four practices of the reader and a framework for exploring the development of teacher identity

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<tr>
<td><strong>Text participant - Semantic practices</strong>&lt;br&gt;Understanding and composing meaningful texts from within the meaning systems of the context. What the reader brings to the text as previous experiences.</td>
<td><strong>Practice of teaching</strong>&lt;br&gt;Recognising and using the knowing the fundamentals of teaching. How to teach, what to teach, knowing about the learners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Code breaker</strong>&lt;br&gt;Recognising and using the fundamental features of a text.</td>
<td><strong>Personal history</strong>&lt;br&gt;What the pre service teacher brings to the teacher education context as beliefs, dispositions and experiences and how these act as filters for the understanding of the teacher education process and practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text User – Pragmatic practices</strong>&lt;br&gt;The social act of using text in a functional way to communicate, and to understand the relationship between form and function of various genres.</td>
<td><strong>Social act</strong>&lt;br&gt;Relating to the real world of students, schools, university and the wider community. Understanding the social relationships inherent in the practice of teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text analyst – Critical practices</strong>&lt;br&gt;Develops understandings that texts position readers differently and can both constrain and influence the reader.</td>
<td><strong>Reflective practitioner</strong>&lt;br&gt;Develops understandings about what is valued by the university, community and schools. Knows that teaching is not value free and that all aspects of teacher education reflect particular ideologies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the work of Luke and Freebody (1999) is not recent, it still resonates, most particularly because of the recent political drive to reduce reading to the fundamentals (Murphy, 2013). The letters, sounds, words and sentences, without a clear understanding that reading is an interactive, iterative process, will mean
students do not have a clear understanding of what it is they are reading nor how it is shaping and influencing who they are. In the same way, I contend reducing teaching to a mechanistic transmission model means that pre-service teachers will not have a clear understanding of the work of teachers.

Having outlined the model used to frame the study, in the next section I present the aspects of the process that is learning to read the text of teaching. It is assumed that what the pre-service teachers brings to the becoming as experiences of teaching and teachers, and their capacity to deal with difficulties have an impact on their capacity to understand and deal with the pressures of becoming the teacher.

2.4 Life history

Pre-service teachers come into a Graduate Diploma program with a variety of experiences of teachers and teaching and of life itself. All of us are informed by our past. Our families, culture, birth order, gender, religion, and experiences affect how we view our present situation. In becoming the teacher, past experiences of school, teachers and teaching can be significant. In some research, the evidence suggests that the early images of teaching hardly change, despite the teacher education program. In 1975, Lortie claims that teacher education “is not a dramatic watershed separating the perceptions of the naïve laymen from later judgements by knowing professionals” (p.66). In agreeing with this view, Murphy, Delli and Edwards (2004) compared beliefs about ‘good’ teachers held by second grade students, pre-service teachers and in-service teachers and found “that individuals form beliefs about good teaching long before they enter university courses. These beliefs are highly resistant to change and could be held despite contradictory evidence” (p. 2). In fact their research indicated
that the beliefs of the second grade students and the pre-service teachers were remarkably similar.

Those entering teacher education programs have clearly developed beliefs about teaching and the role of teachers. In quantitative research involving 134 pre-service teachers in both primary and secondary programs Minor, Onwuegbuzie, Witcher and James (2002) found that the characteristics pre-service teachers bring with them as experiences, beliefs, attitudes, knowledge and dispositions influence and affect how they experience their teacher education program and are highly resistant to change. Darling-Hammond (2011) claims that “learning experiences are influenced by home languages, cultures and contexts” (p. ix). Billett (2008) in his work with apprentice hairdressers makes the point that personal histories inform the development of dispositions that become so much part of the individual that they are “almost unconscious attributes” (p. 169). Although he believes that dispositions can be changed through careful work with those involved in a particular profession (S. Billett, personal communication November, 18, 2009), he asserted if the previous experience was a powerful one, then the likelihood of the individual being able to build dispositions that differ from those they have developed over their lives is compromised. This has powerful implications for the work of becoming the teacher.

In Britzman’s (2007) work on the conflictual nature of becoming the teacher, the point is made that the past history of school and education has a profound effect on that process. She suggests that, “growing up in schools permeates our meanings of education and learning” (p. 2). Scott (2005, p. 66) also notes that “preservice teachers draw on prior, personal experiences as learners, such as preferred learning
styles and attributes of teacher, and that these experiences are fundamental to their formulation of beliefs about teaching and learning”; however she contends that it is possible for pre-service teachers to make changes to these beliefs:

it is important to include information about teachers’ work within preservice teacher education programs, (so that) the preservice teachers may understand ways to adapt to the complex expectations of teaching before they become responsible for student learning (p.68).

Although there is widespread agreement amongst scholars that past experiences of teachers and teaching have an effect on the teacher the pre-service teacher is trying to become, it is argued by some that it is possible to make changes given appropriate interventions. Beattie (2001), Billett and Rose (1997), Billett (2008), Cook (2009), Sleeter (2008), Scott (2005) have all suggested there might be ways of making changes to the dispositions individuals bring to their teacher education program. In fact, Scott makes the point that in her large-scale Australian study of first-year and graduating pre-service teachers “factors other than personal experience as learners influenced intentions to teach” (p. 87), and that more recent experiences seemed to influence their beliefs about themselves as teachers. However, Olsen in a study of six secondary English graduate teachers in California suggests that beginning teachers face difficulty reconciling their long-held beliefs about themselves as the teacher with the current reality of their teaching lives. This study would seem to suggest that these beliefs were held throughout their teacher education program and were resistant to change.

In research concerning critical family history, Sleeter (2008) argues that sharing the stories of our past experiences can open possibilities for change as the individual
becomes aware of the “multiple strands that make up history” (p. 122). She suggests that life history research can serve as a place to begin the path to self-understanding. However, this comes with the caveat that these life stories must be informed and critical. In a similar approach, Scott’s (2005) research indicates that sharing memories of learning and reflecting on whether these are appropriate for meeting the needs of students now and in the future could assist the pre-service teacher to develop an awareness of what it is they bring to the teaching process. Although these are useful approaches, Billett (1997) in his work with apprentices argues that the activities individuals engage in need to be authentic and that “direct and indirect guidance by experts and others permits the learner to participate in joint problem-solving and gain access to the beliefs and values of culturally significant knowledge” (p.24). He believes that it is through this interaction that the appropriate dispositions can be developed.

In supporting these views as laudable and necessary, I think it may be a requirement to consider that in a Graduate Diploma Primary program of one-year duration it is difficult to find the time necessary to engage in conversation and to share critical stories of the past to understand the future. Despite the suggestions by several researchers that changes can be made, Billett (1997, 2008) makes the point that it might be more difficult if the early experiences are embedded and therefore difficult to shift. Strong-Wilson (2005) argues that both pre-service and in-service teachers need the opportunity to pay attention to the ‘niggling doubts’ that are part of their life story. Dispositions informed by life histories can be resistant to change, particularly if the early experiences were personally confronting and powerful (Billett, 2008). As Sleeter (2008) suggests “our stories are our own” (p. 121) and therefore individual,
but as also noted, biography is not useful in supporting pre-service teachers to develop understandings about themselves unless a critical lens is applied. Probing, challenging questions may need to be asked of pre-service teachers so that changes to beliefs and attitudes can be made and it is here that the niggling doubts may be uncovered. Building on the work of Sleeter (2008), Billett (1997; 2008; 2009) and others, a focus of this study is the influence life history has on the formation of the teacher self.

As stated above, pre-service teachers bring to their programs of study a past history rich in experiences, and they also report that positive prior experiences of teaching and learning were important motivations for choosing teaching as a career (Richardson & Watt, 2006). In the next section, I focus on the reasons that pre-service teachers give for selecting teaching and consider how this can have an effect on the developing teacher.

2.5 Why choose teaching?

As outlined in the introduction, I conducted a pilot study in 2004 in which 130 Graduate Diploma in Education Primary and Secondary students were surveyed. From their responses it was clear that these individuals had two main reasons for wanting to be the teacher. The first was a wish to make a difference to children’s lives, by imbuing them with a love of learning and a thirst for knowledge. The second reason was because they had experienced and enjoyed working with children in some form or another (parenting, sport coaching, tutoring, working as an education assistant, among others) and felt that this experience had influenced their decision to choose teaching as a career. Many of those surveyed reported they were
encouraged by others who had observed them working with children, and had suggested that they would make a good teacher. These findings were similar to those of Johnson (2004), Kauchak and Eggen (2011), Olsen (2008), Tyler and Stokes (2002), and Richardson and Watt (2005; 2006). In a large-scale research project across three Australian universities Richardson and Watt (2006) found that the highest rated reason for choosing teaching was “perceived teaching abilities, intrinsic value of teaching, and desire to make social contribution, shape the future, and work with children/adolescents” (p. 44). However, one point of difference between these findings and responses to the survey was that encouragement by others was not seen as important. Similarly, Tyler and Stokes (2002), found the most frequent response was around “making a difference” and “giving something back to the community” (p. 16). Thus wanting to enter the profession of teaching because of the desire to make a difference in a child’s life, to imbue a love of learning, and because of a perceived capacity as teacher drove these prospective teachers to enrol in teacher education programs. Olsen’s (2008) study of first year teachers found that previous experience of teaching and family and personal experiences of school were their main reasons for wanting to enter teacher education.

However, these reasons for becoming a teacher, although laudable, can lead to difficulties when the reality of the becoming challenges the images that pre-service teachers have of themselves (Alsup, 2006; Britzman, 2003; Cook, 2009, Fenimore-Smith, 2004). Alsup (2006), in her work with secondary school pre-service teachers in the United States of America (USA) has suggested that the challenge for them is “combining personal beliefs and sense of self with a professional identity that in our (western) culture is often very narrowly and rigidly defined” (p.36). While in a study
of ten first year secondary English teachers in the USA, Cook (2009) argues that the conflict begins with the self. Britzman (2003) would agree that there can be a ‘crisis’ when the pre-service teacher is faced with the uncertainties of experience in learning to teach, whereas Fenimore-Smith claims that “teachers’ visions of themselves as teachers can be disrupted by the complexities of the task” (p. 237). Other researchers hold similar views. Kauchak and Eggen (2011) found American pre-service teachers to be optimistic and idealistic and that the reality of classrooms was confronting to them. Moss (2013) suggests that many Australia pre-service teachers start their programs with beliefs about teaching formed from previous experiences and that a critical perspective is required if change is to occur. Similarly Murphy et al (2004) believed that pre-service teachers in the USA have beliefs they hold to be true without the benefit of evidence and that this evidence must be provided to enable them to understand what they bring to their programs. Again Scott (2005) has similar ideas, that pre-service teachers’ views of teaching cannot be left unchallenged. In agreeing that this is so, I would side with Sleeter (2008, p. 116) that time is important in challenging existing perceptions and understandings about teaching: “It seems that length of time in an education program and the amount of field experience are important factors in the development of pre-service teachers’ beliefs as they progress through the teacher education program”. For pre-service teachers in more intensive programs such as the Graduate Diploma Primary program, this development may prove to be difficult. An outcome of this research is the opportunity for teacher educators to build into pre-service education the space for reflection and an understanding of the developing teacher self.
The intensity of a teacher education program, the transforming of ideals and theory into practical classroom lessons, the professional practice in classrooms filled with diverse populations of students, the sheer scale of the work can lead to difficulties in the process of becoming the teacher. Britzman (2007) suggests that the “sense of self and our sense of the world is profoundly affected by having to grow up in school” (p. 2). As previously noted the images that the pre-service teachers bring with them to the process of becoming the teacher can be unrealistic and so the vision they have of themselves requires a critical exploration. “Seeing the stereotypical images of teaching and teachers (...) can work to break the normative reading of the stereotype of teachers and teaching” (Weber and Mitchell, 2004, p. 18). In the next section I examine the literature about the development of visioning the ideal to assist pre-service teachers to bridge the gap between the ideal and the real without losing a sense of what it is they value.

2.6 Envisioning the teacher

For pre-service teachers to develop understandings of what it is they bring to their program of study and what they think teachers do and are, they need to engage in visioning. This visioning allows the student to use words and pictures to realize the teacher they see themselves as becoming. The research on visioning suggests words and pictures can help teacher educators “to assist new teachers to understand and deal with the gap between their hopes and their practice” (Hammerness, 2003, p. 10). In a study based in Columbia University, Lim, Ieridou and Goodwin (2006) began with the premise that images created by pre-service teachers gave them the opportunity for “rethinking and challenging existing habits of thinking” (p. 5). Further, work by Utley and Showalter (2007) also in the USA, indicated that the drawings and
descriptions provided insight into the way pre-service teachers perceived themselves, whereas Weber and Mitchell (1995, 2004) emphasise that images provide opportunities to see what is tacit, that is, those elements of understanding that have not been fore-grounded through the narratives told by pre-service teachers. By facilitating pre-service teachers’ visioning, teacher educators can unpack the image and assist pre-service teachers to understand where there may be dissonance in the vision and the possible reality. As suggested by Ewing and Hughes (2008) “Arts-informed inquiry encourages reflexivity” (p. 516) and it is in this reflection that understandings develop. The studies by Hammerness (2003), Fenimore-Smith (2004), and Britzman (2003) discuss the views pre-service teachers have of themselves and how this affects the process of becoming the teacher. In the research undertaken by Hammerness (2003) and Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, Bransford, Berliner, Cochran-Smith, McDonald & Zeichner (2005), it was the past experience of the pre-service teachers that could impinge on what was happening in the classroom. If the reality of the classroom did not meet their vision of what it should be, difficulties could arise. Hammerness (2003) asserts there are three ways that vision could help pre-service teachers: 1) by making the vision real and assisting the pre-service teachers to understand their beliefs; 2) by teacher educators helping these neophyte teachers understand what they believe and what they want to achieve, and 3) by making the vision explicit so that the dissonance between the dream and the reality may be alleviated (Hammerness, 2003).

In her research on teacher education and the cultural myths of teaching, Fenimore-Smith (2004) discusses Britzman’s (1991) myths of teaching in her work with teacher education students and teachers and the school experience. Fenimore-Smith works in
a triad to support the pre-service teachers so that they are able to unpick for themselves their myths. Britzman’s (1991) work identified three myths: 1) “everything depends upon the teacher”; 2) “the teacher is the expert”; and 3) “teachers are self made” (Fenimore-Smith, 2004 p. 227). It is Britzman’s belief that if these myths are allowed to be the focus for pre-service teachers, difficulties can occur.

Some literature (Lim et al 2006; Utley & Showalter 2007; Weber & Mitchell 1995; 2004) argues that drawings can assist pre-service teachers to develop understandings about their vision of themselves as the teacher and as suggested by Mitchell, Dillon, Strong-Wilson, Pithouse, Islam, O’Connor, et al “the significance of the visual in being and in becoming” (2010, p. 54) should not be understated. As part of my research, I facilitate the four participants to draw the teacher they are becoming as a strategy to assist them to deconstruct this vision.

The vision pre-service teachers have of themselves as outlined in narrative accounts developed by Beattie (2000), indicate that the creation of the professional self and teacher identity is unique to each prospective teacher. For each individual, “what has to be learned is intimately connected to what is already known” (p.19). This idea that development of the teacher self is an individual process is echoed in Britzman’s (2003) work in which she explains:

learning to teach is not a mere matter of applying decontextualised skills or of mirroring predetermined images; it is time when one’s past present and future are set in dynamic tension. Learning to teach - like teaching itself - is always the process of becoming: a time of formation and transformation, of scrutiny into what one is doing, and who one can become’ (p. 31).
The process of becoming is the focus in the following section and as suggested by Freire (2011) “in order to be, it (the individual) must become” (p. 84). That is to be the teacher, the pre-service teacher must become the teacher.

2.7 Becoming the teacher

In defining becoming in this context, I have drawn on the work of Britzman (1991, 2003). In an ethnographic study of learning to teach, she focussed on the experiences of two secondary pre-service teachers participants in schools and their struggle while “still beholden to the university and mentor teachers. Learning to teach while teaching others” (Britzman, 2003. p. 20). Britzman describes being and becoming a teacher as a process of drawing on the past and present and coming to know what it is to be ‘a’ teacher. Becoming suggests a state of flux, a position where the individual is constantly moving towards something other than what they are in the present. It also represents the notion that ‘becoming’ is not a linear process and that there are multiple contexts in which we become something we are not at the present moment.

For the purposes of this thesis, ‘becoming the teacher’ can be described as developing a teacher self based on understandings about the meanings of teaching, and a developing teacher identity by understanding those meanings (Rodgers and Scott, 2008). To develop identity as the teacher the individual first begins to develop understandings about what it means to be the teacher. To invest the emotional, personal and professional with knowledge about the self as the teacher, enhances the possibilities of understanding the meanings of teaching, and becoming the teacher or assuming the identity of the teacher the individual wishes to be. This identity is influenced by “personal and professional issues but also by social response” (Botha & Onwu, 2013, p. 7).
In this thesis, ‘the teacher self’ and the developing ‘teacher identity’ are not seen as separate entities; they are being developed at the same time, informed by understandings about teaching. Thus ‘becoming the teacher’ is the move from ‘being authored by’ to ‘authoring oneself’ (Rodgers & Scott, 2008, p. 737). That is, the individual negotiates the process of becoming through a university teacher education program and, as Britzman notes “becoming a teacher may mean becoming something you are not” (2003, p. 27). In becoming something you are not, there can be difficulties because the teacher self being envisaged by the pre-service teacher can clash with the reality experienced in schools and in university classrooms. In Britzman’s (2003) study this was true for her two participants as they negotiated the difficulties between the expectations of the school, the university, and those that worked with them. It is what Strong-Wilson (2005) refers to when the pre-service teacher has to come to an understanding of the myths and experiences within schools to understand themselves as the teacher. Gee (2000) discusses identity as “the recognition of the individual as a certain ‘kind of person’ in a given context”. He goes on to say that all people have multiple identities connected to their performance in society. For the pre-service teacher identity can mean that the sense of professional self being developed is not the one they feel is valued in the profession. As the self is mediated by “ongoing participation in social practices and discourses” (Olsen, 2011, p. 161), it must be formed through understanding of learning to be the teacher, as a process of negotiating and mediating multiple sources.

Given the complexity of the work of teachers, I assume that becoming the teacher is also a complex process. Prospective teachers come into the program with ideas of
who they are and what they might become. As Lortie (1975) suggested, teaching is the one profession where everyone has experienced what it is like to be taught and therefore has developed some kind of notion of what it means to be a teacher. However, Lortie goes on to say that, although we have all experienced being taught and have some ideas about what teaching might be, we don’t have any idea of how what we experience as students has been provided for by our teachers. That is, we have no experience or knowledge of the planning, preparation and emotional energy that goes into the doing of teaching; or to put it another way, we only see the enactment of the planning and preparation and have no concept of the work that has gone into what might seem a seamless presentation to the class. It follows that if the work of teachers is hidden from view (Beattie, 2001) prospective students who enter teacher education programs do not know what they will need to do as teachers. So what pre-service teachers envision often come unstuck as they try to navigate the difficulties of becoming something that is much more difficult than they understood it would be (See Alsup, 2006; Britzman, 2003; Hammerness et al, 2005; Rodgers and Scott, 2008). As Hammerness et al found, learning to become the teacher means that pre-service teachers have to rethink their understandings about teaching.

Learning is described by Billett (1997) as a constructive process in which the learner determines “what knowledge is constructed based on the interpretation of circumstances they experience. Therefore, the construction of knowledge is mediated by social circumstances both in the now and in the past” (p. 15). Constructivism is an important element of research in teacher education and much of this work has been done with pre-service teachers. Therefore, constructing knowledge about the process of becoming reflects constructivist views of self-development and identity (Olsen,
Rodgers and Scott (2008) in a review of the literature about the development of teacher identity outlined the following:

that identity is dependent upon and formed with multiple contexts which bring social, cultural, political, historical forces to bear upon that formation; (2) that identity is formed in relationship with others and involves emotions; (3) that identity is shifting, unstable and multiple; and (4) that identity involves the construction and reconstruction of meaning through stories over time (p. 733).

Some pre-service teachers feel they have no control over that becoming, and so it is important that those who work with them help them develop an understanding of who they are becoming and how this is occurring (Rodgers & Scott, 2008).

‘Becoming the teacher’ is about developing the teacher self that is shaped and formed in and with multiple contexts and is formed in relationship with others (Olsen, 2011). It is this teacher self that informs the developing identity as the teacher. As Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) suggest “identity development involves an understanding of the self” (p. 178). It involves the emotional, and the becoming moves and shifts in ways that can be unstable and multiple. The becoming teacher is also “constructed by and through story over time, in ways that make implicit the meaning of the processes of becoming” (Rodgers & Scott, 2008, p. 733). The following explores how these inform and are informed by the becoming teacher.

2.7.1. Multiple contexts and relationships

Becoming the teacher does not just occur in the University or in the school. It occurs in the family, with friends, at the shopping centre; it is about personal history and how this informs dispositions toward learning (Billett, 2009; Black, 1999; Sleeter, 2008); experiences and understandings of teachers and teaching (Coughlin, 2001;
Hammerness, 2003; Hammerness, et al, 2005; Lortie, 1975; Weber & Mitchell, 1995) and it includes what is happening in the personal life of the individual (Allsup, 2006; Billett, 2009). To sum up: becoming the teacher is about the way the individual interacts in the social realm (Murphy, Delli & Edwards, 2004; Olsen, 2011; Rodgers and Scott, 2008). According to Botha and Onwu a person’s identity “is shaped through interactive everyday activities and constituted and mediated in interpretation and narrations of lived experiences” ((2013, p. 6).

For beginning teachers there is not always a clear understanding that becoming the teacher is informed by these experiences or understandings. Pre-service teachers are sometimes unaware that what they bring with them into their program will inform the teacher they are becoming. Their experiences of and with education, their family life, their relationships, their health, being a daughter/son, partner, parent, worker and any other role they might have, all have implications for and toward the teacher the individual is becoming. For the pre-service teacher to successfully become the teacher they want and expect, Alsup (2006) suggests that their life must be in balance. That is, the personal and the professional must be aligned. So for the pre-service teacher, the integration of the personal and professional self means the possibility of discovering “how to move from being students to being teachers” and “to embody a workable professional identity without sacrificing personal priorities or passions” (p. xiv).

2.7.2 Multiple contexts and identity

“Identity is always being made, rather than stable, and it shifts according to context and relationships and therefore varied and multiple” (Rodgers & Scott, 2008, p.736).
Becoming the teacher is not a method. It does not depend on fixed notions of what it is that teachers do; rather, it is about the developing teacher self as the individual navigates the personal, the professional and the outside world. We are who we are because of our genetic make up and ongoing experiences and as Gee (2000) suggests, we work out who we are by interpreting what it means to be a certain sort of person. Becoming is essentially an interactive process and one in which pre-service teachers can find themselves lost if any part of that becoming is out of kilter. Hammerness’s (2003) work with beginning teachers suggests that despite difficulties, if the individual is helped to make small steps toward their vision of themselves as the teacher, then difficulties can be overcome.

Arguably, the developing teacher must develop capacities and strategies to deal with the difficulties that arise as the teacher self is challenged. It is often here that pre-service teachers can come adrift because they feel unable to reconcile the teacher self they yearn for and the self that they see themselves having to become.

Uncovering what it is that pre service teachers believe, and know about teachers and teaching is important so that as teacher educators we can confront, challenge and deepen understandings so that more complex personal and theory-based professional knowledge can be developed. (Hammerness, 2003, p. 53)

Narrative can be the vehicle to generate information to assist both the pre-service teacher and the teacher educator to make sense of how the becoming is being enacted. Beattie (2001, p. 169) describes narrative as “a personal vision of reality that takes account of how it was constructed in relation to others, in the context of family and community, and of the social and cultural systems that provide meaning to an individual’s existence”.

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2.7.3 Identity as narrative

Rodgers and Scott (2008, p. 736-7) suggest that

the most widely embraced way of making sense of identity is through narrative, or the telling of our stories. Identity is both interpreted and constructed through the stories that one tells oneself and others tell. These stories change over time, across contexts, and depend upon relationship.

In my research, the telling of the individual’s story is an important mechanism for revealing each person, and how their developing teacher self is being formed. The stories of the past, the present, and the future all inform the process as the pre-service teacher begins to make sense of the developing teacher they are becoming.

It is through narrative that the individual is able to make progress and find out if the story they have constructed is the story that is providing a sense of reality about the becoming process. The narrative we tell ourselves about a particular situation and where we fit in it, can sometimes be misleading because those previous experiences, our relationships, and the emotion bound up in them can lead us to believe something about ourselves that might be interpreted differently by others. Each story is continually being reconstructed and negotiated; moreover, the story telling assists us to develop a language, become part of society, and have a sense of ourselves, and how we interact with the world (Johnson, 2004). Therefore, it is important that teacher educators provide pre-service teachers with opportunities to share their perspectives and understandings and make sense of their becoming. Without this reflection, or “rescripting” (Beattie, 2001, p. 4) of the stories, situations can occur
that are not helpful for the pre-service teacher and can lead to decisions about their future that does them a disservice.

2.8 Summary

In this chapter I have engaged in a literature review to outline the process of becoming the teacher and developing the teacher self. In terms of becoming the teacher, the work of Britzman (2003) and her understandings of becoming have a valuable starting point. In my research, rather than the focus being on learning to teach and becoming ‘a’ teacher, the focus is on reading the text of teaching to understand the complexity of becoming ‘the’ teacher. The review has promoted the idea that the teacher self is developed within multiple contexts, is social, is unstable and is constructed through and in story. What the pre-service teacher brings to the process of becoming, their political and personal views, their relationships with others, their confusion and emotion, and the stories that help the individual make sense of their developing teacher identity, are all part of the becoming.

The review of the literature focused first on a definition of teaching for the purposes of this thesis, looking at the complexity of the work that is teaching and advancing the notion that teaching is more than the transmission of knowledge. The perceptions that those who are concerned with education have about schools and teaching is gained from their experiences as a student or parent and does not always reflect the reality of the work enacted by teachers. Politicians and others tend to present a simplistic view of what is sophisticated and difficult work.
Why teaching is selected as a profession was then reviewed; and in both a pilot study of Graduate Diploma students in this university and in the work of others (Kauchak & Eggen, 2011; Richardson & Watt, 2005; Tyler & Stokes, 2002) there was general agreement that pre-service teachers choose teaching because of a desire to make a difference and because of a belief that teaching is for them. Other reasons, such as experiences of ‘good’ or ‘bad’ teachers, or wanting a family friendly profession, were also raised (Olsen, 2008; Richardson and Watt, 2006). It was noted that the reasons for selecting teaching could lead to difficulties when confronted with the reality of classrooms.

Closely connected to the reasons for selecting teaching for a future career was a review of the literature focused on experiences of teachers and teaching and life history. I believe this was a particularly important theme; the effect life history and experiences have on the individual’s efforts to become the teacher will be highlighted in this study. Billett’s work (1997, 2008, 2009), which proposes that individuals develop particular dispositions based on their experiences of the world and that these can be difficult to change without time and relevant experiences was particularly relevant in this section. The work of Murphy et al, (2004) Olsen, 2011, Scott (2005), Sleeter (2008), and Witcher Jiao, Onwuegbusie, Collins, James and Minor (2008) supported these notions that pre-service teachers need to confront their beliefs and understandings and that changes to those beliefs were possible but that the pre-service teachers required time to be reflective and share stories. The idea of taking time was important, and in more intensive education programs this could be an issue.
Using images created by the pre-service teachers is one way for them to gain understandings about the process of becoming the teacher. The images also allow the teacher educator to gain a clearer picture of pre-service teachers views of themselves. By developing the idea of visioning further, and including drawings and graphs of the experiences, I will extend the work of arts-based researchers such as Coughlin (2001) and Utley and Showalter (2007) in gathering data about the process of becoming the teacher.

In this thesis, becoming is defined as formation and transformation (Britzman, 2003) of individuals as they move towards becoming the teacher, which concerns the development of the teacher self and teacher identity that is yearned for. Becoming the teacher is informed by multiple contexts and in relationship with others, and can be explicated through story (Rodgers & Scott, 2008). It is also deeply personal.

To make sense of that personal journey, I have outlined a framework based on a literacy model developed by literacy theorists Alan Luke and Peter Freebody (1990, 1999). This framework (Table 1) outlines the four practices of the reader, and is developed to compare these reading practices with the practices of the developing teacher. By using this model to frame the study, I aim to develop new understandings about the experience of becoming the teacher. Literacy as a conceptual understanding is far more than the written word; it can be described as having the ability to read and understand the text of teaching and to be able to write or create new texts based on the knowledge gained and to use those new texts in classrooms with an awareness that nothing is created without a particular purpose. Therefore, a focus of the research is on the capacity of the literacy model to act as a framework
through which to develop understandings of the process of learning to read the text of teaching.

2.9 Conclusion

In this chapter I have outlined the themes in the research. I have defined what teaching is in the context of the research and explored why individuals choose teaching. I have also considered the notion of what it means to become the teacher and to develop the teacher self along with the idea of visioning what it means to be the teacher. The literacy model for learning to read developed by Freebody and Luke (1990), and Luke and Freebody (1999) has been adapted as a framework for understanding the text of becoming the teacher.

In the next chapter, I outline the research process itself and introduce the methodology used to describe the process of becoming the teacher for four Graduate Diploma Primary pre-service teachers. In Chapter three I also describe the research design, with particular reference to the selection of arts-based methods, narrative and the case study approach. I outline the literacy model used to frame the research and argue that the methods of interviews, drawing and graphing add to the credibility of the data collected.
Chapter Three
Inquiry Design

3 Introduction

In this chapter, I explain the research process with a particular reference to what informs the selection of arts-based methods seen through the frame of a literacy-based model of learning to read. I also argue that the case study is a suitable methodology to develop understandings about the process of becoming the teacher. The specific elements of the research process will be discussed, including the data collection methods of semi-structured interviews - narrative, drawings and graphing - and the analysis of the three sets of data.

My research questions focus on the experiences of pre-service teachers enrolled in a one-year course of teacher education. The questions are concerned with how the individual experiences this becoming and how what s/he brings with them to the process influences the teacher s/he is becoming. The overarching question is focused on how graduate diploma primary pre-service teachers experience becoming the teacher.

Much of the following information is included in the three chapters comprising the published journal articles. In Chapter Four, the article ‘Becoming a teacher: Tom’s story’ (Glass, 2007), I present the first iteration of the literacy model used as a framework to describe reading the text of becoming the teacher. In this article the story of one participant, Tom, is told. We are made aware that Tom brought to the becoming process a personal understanding of what it means to be the teacher, and
that Tom’s experiences of teachers and teaching, and his beliefs about the world, informed his reading of the text of teaching.

In the following chapter, my journal article ‘Understanding the text of teaching: Complexities of comprehension’ (Glass, 2012), presents the narratives of the four participants as told through the literacy framework. Here the framework has been developed further to more fully represent the four practices of the teacher. The outcomes of this work include the mismatch of expectations of becoming the teacher, the emotional burden that is part of the becoming, and the impact of what is happening in the lives of individuals on the becoming process. This reading of the text of teaching did not always match the expectations of the participant pre-service teachers.

Building on the previous two journal articles, Chapter six places the focus on one participant, John, and his journey to become the teacher. The article title “There’s not much room for anything to go amiss”: Narrative and arts-based inquiry (Glass, 2011) gives a clue about this next step in the research process. The focus here is on the arts-based methodology and the narrative, as told by John as he became the teacher he wanted to be. In this case, John seemed to have a clear reading of the text of teacher education and was confident of his ‘fit’ for teaching. His expectations of the role of the teacher were being met while on his professional/field experiences and he commented on feeling comfortable in the role. His drawings of himself as the teacher and the story he told about his experiences led me as the researcher to believe that his process to become the teacher was a relatively seamless one. However, once John was asked to graph the year’s experiences, another view of his becoming
emerged. Hidden from view was the reality of his life: the difficulties, both the personal and professional that were impinging on his capacity to be the teacher he wanted to be. As revealed through my use of arts-based methods, John’s reading of the text was being disrupted by what was happening in his life.

3.1 Theory – interpretative, iterative, constructivist

In situating this research within a research paradigm i.e. “basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigation” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 105), I am following the work of humanist psychologists such as Maslow (1943-1970) and Rogers (1902-1987). Their focus on actualization and what is required by the individual to reach her/his full potential has always been a focus in my career as an educator, but other influences, including Jean Piaget (1896–1980) and John Dewey (1859–1952), have also affected me as an emerging researcher. Both Piaget and Dewey developed theories of how new learning was built on previous knowledge and understandings, and both influenced constructivism, which posits that, “learners construct knowledge based on what they already understand” (D’Angleo, Touchman & Clark, 2013, para 5). I have also been influenced by Paulo Freire (1921-1997) and most particularly by his work in the struggle for more humane and empowering teaching practices in which teachers and students learn, question, reflect and make meaning together.

In this research, I wanted to capture the “multiple perspectives” (Patton, 2002, p. 103) of each of the participants. This concept is important because becoming the teacher is done in relationship with others whose perspectives may present conflicting constructions of the reality that is becoming the teacher.
Jackson and Sorensen (2010) define constructivism as social theory “about the social world, about social action, and about the relationship between structures and actors” (p. 164). This relationship with the structures and actors is a focal point of my research. Constructivist research is iterative and interpretative and has at its core the search for meaning. Just as each social actor constructs a different reality, depending upon their experiences and point of view, so does the researcher (Krauss, 2005). It places a responsibility on me as the researcher, to be as transparent as possible as I search for meaning in the complex world of the pre-service teachers in this study.

The study by its nature must be flexible and respond to the needs of the participants in order for the researcher to gain “deep” understandings (Krauss, 2005) of the processes they undergo when becoming the teacher. To understand the complexity of life, and in this case the lives of individual pre-service teachers, qualitative research enables an understanding from the perspectives of those involved (Krauss, 2005). Because the research questions focused on the experience of pre-service teachers in a one year Graduate Diploma Program it was important to me, as the researcher, to be able to interact with the pre-service teachers within the environment of their course. It was my aim to develop understandings about their lives, their experiences, and their understandings and knowledge of the world they were inhabiting. To be in the ‘shoes’ of the other meant for this researcher a naturalistic inquiry path. As the primary collector of data, I relied on participant observations, interviews, drawings and graphing. Such a small sample size allowed for in-depth data collection and a flexible approach to follow the individuals and deal with any emerging issues as the research progressed.
Arts-based methods as part of the triangulation of the data, comprising drawings and graphing to give a clearer indication of how each participant was managing the process of becoming the teacher, were integral to the case study approach designed to understand “complex social phenomenon” (Yin, 2009 p. 4). However, despite my best intentions to capture and represent the world-view of each of the participants, I had to filter this through my world-view, my bias, my interpretation. To gain credibility I needed to make explicit the stories told by the four pre-service teachers.

3.2 The participants

The participants John, Fern, Tom and Cara (pseudonyms) are introduced in Chapters Four, Five and Six – the three journal articles about this study. However, the background as to how these particular individuals came to participate in the study is warranted at this point. As introduced in Chapter One, a pilot study was conducted with two questions about why individuals chose teaching as a career and two reasons emerged from the responses. These indicated firstly, that the respondents believed they could make a difference to children’s lives and secondly, they were confident of their ability to do the work of the teacher. Following this survey, I asked for volunteers who would be interested in being part of further research to find out about the process of becoming the teacher. Initially ten individuals volunteered, but by the time of the first interview only four participants wished to proceed. The main reasons cited for those who dropped out, were the business of the course and the inability of individuals to give time for the interview process. This was not surprising given the pressures pre-service teachers faced in this postgraduate program.
The interview process began with four participants before the beginning of their first semester of study. The four volunteer participants provided a diverse group, with an age range of mid twenties to early fifties. There were two women and two men, and although this did not reflect the gender make up of the course where women were the predominant group (of all students enrolled in the Graduate Diploma Primary program from 2007 – 2012 only 18% were male), they were all enthusiastic and keen to participate. Because the participants were volunteers, gender was not a selection criteria. The youngest participant was Tom, a male English speaking international student on a one-year visa who was in his twenties, and the eldest was Fern a woman in her fifties struggling with a terminally ill husband and an elderly mother. The other two, a male and female, were both in their mid to late thirties with family commitments: Cara, was a single mother with two children and an excellent relationship with her ex husband; while John was married with one-year-old twins and working full time. Fern, Cara and John were domestic students. Each of the participants had a varied experience of school and teachers and of the world of work. As the researcher, I was keen to do justice to the stories each participant shared with me and to understand more fully their process of becoming the teacher.

Of the four participants, only Tom and John completed the program. Tom the international student completed the program in the twelve-month period (a requirement of his international visa), whereas John completed his Graduate Diploma over two years. Both the women discontinued their studies. Fern left after six months and Cara deferred her studies after one year but did not return to the university. The numbers of pre-service teachers discontinuing their studies is of some concern for Australian Universities. In the years 2007-2011, in one Australian University, 40% of pre-service teachers discontinued their study and approximately 50% completed.
The other 10% were either still enrolled or not actively studying at the time. In a report based on the findings of first year experiences in Australian Universities, it was found that 23% deferred or left their program of study (James, Krause & Jennings, 2010). As these students were undergraduates there are points of difference to the graduate diploma cohort in this research. Family commitments, work, care of children, financial issues all contribute to the graduate diploma pre-service teachers’ difficulties when faced with an intensive program of study.

3.3 The approach

From the beginning of the data collection process, it was important to me to be true to the participants’ voice, and to have their words recorded, and to allow the scope to tell their story. Therefore, I chose to interview the participants over the twelve months of their program of study. As an educator with an interest in art, and because of my own classroom practice, I was aware that drawing could provide data that would go beyond that provided in the interview, so I asked the participants to draw their vision of themselves at the first and final interview. At the final interview, they also drew a graph of their experiences over the twelve-month period. The graph enabled the participants to map both the professional and personal aspects of their lives over the period of the research. Also apparent was the need to consider the circumstances of each participant. I assumed the case study approach would provide a structure for the in-depth data gathering and analytical process. As Yin (2003) suggests, “case studies are chosen as the method of research because you want to deal with contextual considerations” (p. 13). I have discovered in my research process, that research with a focus on people and their contexts is non-linear and messy; sometimes it is necessary to draw breath and to look again at what you are doing. In
this instance the case study approach emerged as the most appropriate way to frame the research process.

3.3.1 Case study

In selecting a case study approach to the research process, I was aware of the difficulties in generalizing from a limited source of data; however, the case study can provide a great deal of data about a particular phenomenon and, in the case of this research it can generate “rich and significant insights into events and behaviours” (Brown, 2009, p. 9) that are of interest. The case-study approach suits my constructivist research paradigm because it lends itself to in-depth study of the particular phenomenon of becoming the teacher. Most case studies rely on multiple sources of data gathering, and this one is no exception with its observation, interview, drawing and graphing, which provide several bearings on the individual concerned (Yin, 2009). Stake (2005) suggests that “by triangulating the descriptions and interpretations greater credibility can be gained” (p. 443).

In her review of case study research Brown claims that, “Case studies provide a humanistic, holistic understanding of complex situations and as such are valuable research tools” (2009, p. 10). She goes on to discuss the contribution of researchers in the area of case study methods. She refers to the work of Yin (2009), who believes that if a “how” and/or “why” question is being asked, then a case study is the “preferred strategy” and to Stake (2005) for whom the “the critical factor is that the case is a system with boundaries, and with certain features inside those boundaries” (p. 444). Yin (2009) suggests that the case study approach is relevant when there is “no control over behaviour or events and when the focus is on contemporary events”
The study being undertaken here fulfils these requirements in that it is the process of becoming the teacher that draws the researcher’s interest and the main question being asked is a “how” question. How do pre-service teachers in a one-year Graduate Diploma Primary Education Program experience becoming the teacher?

I now wish to draw attention to my use of the method of drawings. As Weber and Mitchell (1995) suggest in their iconic book ‘That’s funny, you don’t look like a teacher’. Interrogating Images and Identity in Popular Culture, it is often in the images that we see another story or a different truth emerging.

3.3.2 Arts-based methods

Research employing art or arts-based methods is growing in popularity (Barone & Eisner, 2006; Irwin & Springgay 2008; Leggo 2008; Pourchier, 2010). In particular, the use of drawings (Coughlin, 2001; Utley & Showalter, 2007; Black, 1999; Murphy, Delli & Edwards, 2004) has enhanced research on both pre-service and in-service teachers. Others have used film (Stuart, 2006; Tettegah, Whang, Taylor & Cash, 2008; Trier, 2001; Weber & Mitchell, 1995) or video and photographs (Mitchell, Dillon, Strong-Wilson, Pithouse, Islam, O’Connor et al, 2010) to develop understandings about the sense of the teacher self. The visual is helpful in adding to the story of the becoming teacher because it provides further insights into the lives and experiences of each participant.

The pre-service teachers in my study were asked to draw their vision of themselves as the teacher at the first and final interview, and to also track their progress throughout the year on a simple line graph. It was in these drawings and most particularly in the
graph that more detail of the experience of becoming the teacher was revealed. The graphing task induced the participants to reflect on and recall what had occurred during the year and this provided a more complete picture of the becoming process.

The arts-based methods are introduced more fully in the Journal article that is Chapter Six, “There’s not much room for anything to go amiss”: Narrative and arts-based inquiry in teacher education (Glass, 2011). In this article, John’s story is embellished through an arts-based and narrative inquiry.

3.3.3 Reading the text

As outlined in the previous chapter, my research was framed as learning to read the text of becoming the teacher. The framework was developed to reflect on how reading a written text could be compared to reading a situation, a process, a being, or a becoming. The following is a brief outline of this process, which appears in greater detail in Chapter Four, Becoming a teacher: Tom’s Story (Glass, 2007) and in Chapter Six, Understanding the text of teaching: Complexities of comprehension (Glass, 2012).

The four interrelated areas of the framework (See Chapter Two, Table 1), the practice of teaching, personal history, social act and the professional practitioner were the basis upon which the questions (See Appendix 1) were developed for the semi-structured interviews. In the first interview, there were questions about the interviewee’s life history, and experiences of schools and teaching, and questions about the capacity to cope when things got tough and envisioning themselves as the teacher. In the second interview, the questions focused on professional/field
experience and how it felt to be the teacher, putting into practice those things they had been learning. They were also asked if there were any inhibiting factors. In the final interview, the participants were invited to reflect on ‘what had happened’, with questions about looking back over the year, about what was valued, and how the program helped or hindered their development. The final questions were about looking forward to actually being the teacher.

3.4 Research process and methods

In working within the case study methodology, to investigate the experiences of pre-service teachers as they became the teacher, I structured the research in such a way as to obtain rich data about these experiences. In order to obtain information about this process I worked alongside those experiencing the changes. When working with the participants I was mindful of the need for them to feel safe within the research environment. In this regard I had been forewarned and instructed by the University’s Human Research Ethics Committee.

3.4.1 Ethics

Ethical approval was first sought through the university’s Human Research Ethics Committee to conduct a pilot study and to approach individual pre-service teachers for the thesis research. Once this approval was granted, each pre-service teacher was provided with an information letter and consent form; it was made clear that the interviews would be non-threatening and organized in such a way as to suit their student timetables. If at anytime the participants felt they did not wish to continue with the study then they would be able to withdraw without any effect on them or
their program. Although I was a member of the academic staff, I made sure that I had no direct teaching link with the four participants. This was important so that there was no chance of the individuals being intimidated or compromised by my call for volunteers. It was also made clear to the pre-service teachers that all material supplied by them in interviews would be kept in confidence and that their anonymity would be guaranteed.

3.4.2 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted using an interview guide (See Appendix 1) to provide both structure and open-endedness to the questioning. The semi-structured nature of the questions meant that the respondents were invited to be ‘expert’ witnesses to ‘what was going on’. Follow up questions of clarification and probes for examples of what was being described could then be elicited (Patton, 2002).

As the researcher, I was also a participant in the interviewing process and a member of the learning community. Although I taught none of these pre-service teachers, I was obviously a member of the instruction group and this may well have been intimidating. I held the power in the relationship and this affected the way the respondents related to me. As an ‘insider’ in the institution that is a university, but an ‘outsider’ in terms of the researched (Moffatt, George, Lee & McGrath, 2005) it is important to “reflect critically on the self as the researcher” (Schoorman & Bogotch, 2010, p. 210). As interviews are interventions that affect people, it is important I make explicit my own thoughts and feelings (Patton, 2002), particularly given my role in the university. My empathetic approach, my concern and openness were all
part of the process to help make the participants feel comfortable. Because I wanted
to hear from the students their views and feelings about how they were experiencing
the program, it was crucial for me to indicate a caring and concerned approach to the
relationship. I tried to develop a semi-structured conversation where the students felt
comfortable to talk openly about themselves and their experiences. Dunne et al
(2005) suggest that “a less controlled interview requires the researcher’s
consciousness of their position within the production of knowledge, care with the
social and emotional aspects of the social encounter and attention to the practicalities.
(p. 33).” It was these issues that drove me to develop a comfortable atmosphere
where the interviews could take place. I allowed time for the participant to become
comfortable, using ‘small talk’ to ‘break the ice’ so that the sessions were not
interrogations, but rather scoped as friendly conversations about issues that interested
us both.

3.4.3 Drawing
As suggested earlier in the chapter, the notion of asking the pre-service teachers to
draw themselves, was part of my research approach. I had in the past used drawing
as a way of facilitating pre-service teachers’ understanding of the way they viewed
themselves as a teacher and how they understood what teaching meant for them. This
learning had occurred in classes in an introductory unit about teaching. In designing
my doctoral research process, I was reminded of how useful this had been as a tool to
facilitate students’ explication of what it was that each individual brought to the
process of becoming the teacher. In his work with pre-service teachers, Coughlin
(2001) used drawings to “gain insight into how prospective educators understood and
depict teaching” (p. 191), as did Black (1999, p. 3) as she felt that different forms of
representation of teaching and the work of teachers were “enhancing understandings of complex educational phenomena”.

In a similar way, the drawings allowed me as the researcher to gain further insights into the way this particular group of pre-service teachers saw themselves as the teacher and into the influences that informed the images. At the conclusion of the first and last interviews, I provided the pre-service teachers with paper, pens, pencils and coloured pens and asked them to make their drawings. I made it clear to the participants that artistic ability was not a requirement and that the use of non-figurative forms of illustration was entirely acceptable. They were told that I would keep their first drawing so they could view it again at the end of the year after completion of their second image, so that comparisons could be made. However, even with these images I felt there needed to be further information about the work of becoming the teacher, and so a graph of their experiences both professional and personal was added.

3.4.4 Graphing

My use of a graph at the final interview was an innovative approach to the process of exploring the process of becoming the teacher, although I was informed by the work of Elder (1995) whose work in life history helped me make sense of what was happening for the participants. This graph was a way of looking back at the year that had passed and for the participants to consider what had happened. The graph had two lines, one of which was called the ‘life line’, and the other the ‘university line’. The two lines were included to ascertain whether or not there was a difference in the participant’s perceptions about the personal and the professional areas of their lives.
Figure one provides an example of the graph provided to the participants. In this case, Cara, one of the participants indicates her progress throughout the year of the study.

Figure 1: Cara’s Graph of Life Satisfaction

Figure 1 is Cara’s graph of the year as she saw it, both in terms of her life and her University experience. She started the year with high levels of satisfaction toward her career choice, which then fell in the months March to October; then once she made the decision to suspend her studies, an improvement was seen in her satisfaction level. Cara’s lifeline, however, did not begin in such a positive place. She was ambivalent about her decision to be the teacher and had difficulties in her
personal life. Again, when Cara made her life and career decisions her levels of satisfaction rose.

In journal article three “There’s not much room for anything to go amiss”: Narrative and arts-based inquiry in teacher education (Glass, 2011) the graph of another of the participants, John, was displayed. In Appendix 3 and 5, the graphs drawn by Tom and Fern are included. It can be seen that the information in the interviews and the drawings told only part of the story and that it was in the graph that a more complex picture emerged about John’s year of study (See Chapter 6). As part of the triangulation of the data, the graph provided important information that might otherwise have been concealed from the researcher.

3.4.5 Narrative as analysis

All conversations with the participants were recorded so that I did not interrupt the flow of conversation and the recordings were then transcribed verbatim. It was in these transcriptions where the analysis began. They were read many times in an attempt to find similarities or themes emerging from the data and to find a way of telling each participant’s story so as to honour the reality of the individual’s process of becoming the teacher. Although there were some similarities in the stories overall, it was more the individual stories and cases that excited my interest and opened up possibilities of new insights into the becoming teacher. Ewing and Manuel, in their 2005 study of beginning teachers found the narrative to be “an important tool” (p. 2) in developing understandings about their participants’ experiences. The narrative, the telling, the representation of that story were the outcome desired by this researcher. The story coupled with the drawings and the graph provided rich data for analysis.
My wish in writing narrative was to tell the story of the people involved in the teacher education program in such a way that the reader feels they know and can vicariously experience what happened for each of the participants. “Narrative is a way of making sense of the data and represents sequences of events, that they have meaning and that they are produced for particular audiences” (Elliott, 2005, p. 4). This is as true for narratives produced for entertainment by authors wishing to tell a story as it is for researchers wishing to explain or describe a phenomenon they are studying. It might be said that the researcher is also trying to entertain, or at least keep the reader interested, as the story told to the researcher is retold in response to the research questions. As Dunne et al (2005) make clear “In ethnographic research ..., the research texts are intended to provide thick descriptions in which voices from the field speak through/in the research text” (p. 89). Thus to hear the voices of the participants, the voices need to be clearly heard within the narrative.

Narrative has a structure and although not rigid in application, nor in order of presentation, it is as true for narratives written by seven-year-olds as those written by an author such as Patrick White. Narratives are driven by plot and in any plot events relate to each other. This linking could give rise to the idea of causality. That is if an event occurs then something happens, there is a causal link (Elliott, 2005). It is these links that make the narratives of the pre-service teachers of interest. Is what happens in childhood, or in classrooms or in life itself the reason for particular ways of becoming the teacher? Important questions that the narrative goes some way to answering.
The way the narrative unfolds will depend upon the context in which it is constructed and the way events leading to the story unfold. Elliott (2005) suggests “that the sequencing of events can lead to a particular reading of their meaning to each other” (p. 11). Other researchers discuss how becoming is about making sense of the world and that telling a story is one way to make sense of that world (Dunne et al, 2005; Rodgers & Scott, 2008). The move from collecting the stories to the narrative can be fraught because in trying to retell the story of another there is always the possibility that my own story, or view of the participant story seen through my lens can change the story. Moffatt (2010) indicates that there is a reflection back on the researcher and this will have an affect on the way stories are understood and interpreted.

Although I have made every attempt to be true to the story of each participant I acknowledge that as suggested by Dunne et al, (2005), Elliott (2005), Rodgers & Scott (2008), there can be other ways of reading the text. In the case of the narratives of the pre-service teachers, it is my understandings of what they have revealed and how they have told their stories that have been highlighted.

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have outlined the theoretical basis upon which the study was based and have included information regarding case studies and the way data were gathered to tell the story of the four participants as they moved toward becoming the teacher. The four pre-service teachers were also introduced, albeit briefly, given that a more
in-depth introduction will occur in the later chapters. Not all participants did become the teacher, but this process of becoming or not becoming is important when considering how the process occurs. The narratives, drawings and graphs of the participants tell a story about how the becoming worked or did not work and is of great interest in this research.

In the next chapter, I introduce the reader to the first of the participants. I also outline the literacy framework and discuss how Tom (the young man in his mid twenties) develops his understandings of the text of teacher education and how he becomes the teacher. This journal article is the first step in developing the idea of reading the text of teacher education in much the same way as a child develops the capacity to read a written text.
Chapter Four

Becoming a teacher: Tom’s story

4.1 Introduction

In this journal article, I introduce the literacy model used as a framing device for the study. This framework, based on the roles/practices of the reader (Freebody and Luke, 1990) and (Luke and Freebody, 1999), extends their work to look at teaching and teacher education as a text that can be read. Luke and Freebody (1999) are clear that their model is not a method but rather a set, or family, of practices to enable learning to read to take place. In the same way, I offer a model based on the Luke and Freebody work that is also not a method, or a way of becoming the teacher; it is a set of circumstances, roles and practices that can enable the pre-service teacher to comprehend the intricacies of reading the text of teacher education.

I use narrative in this article as a method of inquiry in order to capture the experiences of a pre-service teacher for, as Jane Elliott describes it, it is, “chronological, meaningful and social. Narrative represents sequences of events, that have meaning” (2005, p. 4). In this article I try to make explicit my search for meaning in the work that I am doing with students. As the work is interpretative, constructivist and critical, it is always in process, contextual, constructed and based on past experiences and life history (Britzman, 2003; Labov and Walestsky, 1997; Elliot, 2005) and through the narrative structure some of this complexity can be explicated.
In this chapter I introduce Tom, an international student from an English speaking country. Tom participated with great enthusiasm in the study and made clear to me from the first interview, his commitment to teaching and to his love of community. Told through the framework of Luke and Freebody’s practices of the reader, I have tried to present Tom’s story in a way that assists the reader to vicariously experience what happened to Tom during the twelve months of his course of study.
Becoming a Teacher: Tom's Story

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Becoming a Teacher: Tom's Story
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Abstract: Teaching is a complex business and becoming a teacher can be as complicated as the work itself. Pre service teachers bring to their education programs a variety of experiences, coping mechanisms and knowledge of what teachers do and what teaching is. The developing understandings of teaching and teachers’ work and how the pre service teacher might experience this learning is a focus of this paper. The journey of one pre service teacher is outlined as he develops over the twelve months of a Graduate Diploma Program in Primary Education. What he brings to the program; his understandings of teaching and teachers, his personal dispositions his learning and experiences of schools are described in terms of a framework based on the work of Alan Luke and Peter Freebody (1990,1999). The four practices of the pre service teacher are described in order to understand how these interact and can be used to articulate the experience of the pre service teacher.

Keywords: Pre Service Teacher, Teacher Education, Literacy Framework

This paper is based on my doctoral study of the experience of students in a one year Graduate Diploma of Education Primary Program. The intent of the study is to develop understandings about the process of becoming a teacher. More particularly what do pre service teachers bring to the program as understandings and knowledge of and about teaching and teachers, what are their experiences of education, and how does this mediate the process of becoming a teacher?

The journey of one pre service teacher is followed in this paper as he navigates his way through a year long Graduate Diploma of Education Primary Program. In considering how I would find out about the experience of becoming a teacher I have been influenced by my background as an educator and my work as a teacher of English curriculum. My interest in the developing literacy of young learners has provided a view of learning to be a teacher, from a literacy perspective. “The experience of becoming literate in a particular institutional setting, in a particular locale” (Luke, 1988, p.5), and in this case a particular kind of literacy, that of learning to teach.

To structure the story of the experience of becoming a teacher, I have developed a framework, based on the model for the teaching of reading developed by Freebody and Luke, (1990): Luke and Freebody, (1999). The model which synthesised the skills, growth and heritage and critical–cultural approaches to teaching reading has provided me with a way of thinking about the practice of pre service education. The framework is offered as a way of considering how pre service teachers become readers of the teaching text and how this translates into the experience of becoming a teacher.

Descriptions of teacher education as a kind of text to be read are not new and Groundwater-Smith, Ewing and Le Cornu (2006) in a text for pre service teachers, Teaching: Challenges and Dilemmas, suggest that a school might be viewed as a text, and as each school is different, then the reading of that school will also be different (p.8). I wish to expand on this idea and suggest that it is not only the school that can be viewed as a text to be read in particular ways depending on the context, but also the campus based courses, the life experiences of the individual, the way that person interacts with each element of the pre service education program and how they understand the power relations that are part of the reading of any text.

Luke & Freebody, (1999) make clear that their model is not a method that can be used to teach children to read and write, but a family of practices. They go on to suggest that these practices are not just ‘an aspect of an individual’s history, capabilities and possibilities, but also a feature of the collective or joint capabilities of a group, community, or society (Luke & Freebody, 1999, p3).

The idea of a family of practices is appealing as it suggests that practices are ‘actually done’ and that the ‘notion of family’ suggests that ‘these practices are dynamic, being redeveloped, recombined and articulated in relation to one another on an ongoing basis’ (Luke & Freebody, 1999, p4). In teacher education I would argue that the family of practices inherent in learning to be a reader, are also recognised in the process of learning to be a teacher.
Learning to Teach

The model developed by Freebody and Luke and (1990) and expanded on in 1999 (Luke and Freebody) describes the four practices of the reader as decoding (recognising and using the fundamental features of text), using (understanding text), participating (what the reader brings to the text) and analysing (understanding that text empowers and constrains).

I propose that learning to be a teacher can also be described as a family of practices within the teacher education program. That is, pre service teachers need to know how to ‘read’ the text of teaching and understand that schools and classrooms are a kind of text they need to understand. However, they also need to read the text of university learning and have specific learning in curriculum areas, in assessment, in child development, in contextual understandings, but none of these is sufficient in becoming a teacher. Students also bring to their text a history of educational experience that can either help or inhibit their reading of the text of becoming a teacher. The students’ dispositions, visions of themselves as the teacher and of teaching itself, are filtered through these understandings and experiences of education and the education process, and will ‘greatly influence their subsequent development as both students and practitioners of teaching’ (Minor, Onwuegbuzie, Witcher & James, 2002, p116).

Becoming a teacher is also a display of what counts in education. What is fore grounded, how the program is structured, what assessment procedures are used, what support materials are read, make clear to the pre service teacher what is valued and how they ought to read and understand this text. Teaching is to paraphrase Freebody and Luke (1990, p10) ‘nothing if not social’. Teaching is a social act and the set of social practices developed through the process of becoming a teacher are important for the reading of the text of education. It is “where children, parents, other teachers are fellow voyagers who bring to each interaction individual biographies, lived experiences and perspectives” (McLeod, 2000, p7). Becoming a teacher is about relating to, and in the real world with real world practices.

Finally I would argue that as learners of reading and writing need to develop awareness of the text as a “crafted object written by persons with particular dispositions or orientations to the information, regardless of how factual or neutral the products may attempt to be” (Freebody and Luke, 1990, p13), the pre service teacher must develop the same awareness. The pre service teacher is also involved in the reading of a particular text, one developed by people with particular ideologies, beliefs and values and that the process of becoming a teacher and teaching itself is not value free.

“To be an intelligent reader of schooling one needs to be familiar with the conventions and codes of schools and schooling but not to be blinded by the familiarity. The skilled reader needs to be able to identify the nuances and subtleties of this complex social enterprise” (Groundwater-Smith, Ewing and Le Cornu, 2003, p9).

The discourse of the university, the schools and the wider community needs to be read by the pre service teacher with an understanding that it is not just the development of the teacher education course and the school experience that needs to be understood, but also what each pre service teacher brings to these situations.

The Family of Practices

The family of practices of the pre service teacher are not hierarchical, rather they are overlapping and interconnecting layers that are developed, practiced, negotiated, both individually and in social contexts and understood differently in different situations and contexts (Luke & Freebody, 1999, p4). They are all parts of the whole and are developed at the same time. A pre service teacher needs to learn how to structure a lesson, a program of work, a set of assessment practices and needs to practice these in a real situation. However they also need to develop understandings about what counts in education, what is real in the world of teaching and understand the social practices of the university and the school and where and how these intersect. They also need to be able to look critically at what it is they are doing and learning and acknowledge that nothing in teaching is value free and that they bring to the teaching situation understandings, dispositions and beliefs about teaching and teachers. All of these act as filters for the process of learning to read the text of becoming a teacher.

The table below gives a brief outline of the comparison between Freebody and Luke (1990): Luke and Freebody’s (1999) model for teaching reading and the framework developed to consider the experiences of pre service teachers in the Graduate Diploma of Education Primary Program.
Table 1: A Comparison of the Four Practices of the Reader and a Framework for Exploring the Development of Teacher Identity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code breaker</th>
<th>Practice of teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognising and using the fundamental features of a text</td>
<td>Knowing the fundamentals of teaching. How to teach, what to teach, knowing about the learners.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text participant</th>
<th>Personal History</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding and composing meaningful texts from within the meaning systems of the context. What the reader brings to the text as previous experience.</td>
<td>What the pre service teacher brings to the teacher education context as beliefs, dispositions and experiences and how these act as filters for the understanding of the teacher education process and practice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text User</th>
<th>Social Act</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The social act of using text in a functional way to communicate, and to understand the relationship between form and function of various genres</td>
<td>Relating to the real world of students, schools, university and the wider community. Understanding the social relationships inherent in the practice of teaching.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Analyst</th>
<th>Reflective Practitioner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develops understandings that texts position readers differently and can both constrain and influence the reader.</td>
<td>Develops understandings about what is valued by the university, community and schools. Knows that teaching is not value free and that all aspects of teacher education reflect particular ideologies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Description

Although for ease of reading I have placed the practices in a table, it should not be assumed that they are distinct and that both learner readers and pre service teachers need to develop each practice separately and clearly before moving onto the next stage. Rather these practices interact with one another and influence progress in each part of the model. What pre service teachers bring to the teacher education process, and how they act within it, and in the wider community is important. Each practice operates on and assists with the development of each other stage. They cannot exist without each other. The pre service teacher needs to know how, what and when to teach, they need to know about the children they will be teaching, the families they will encounter, and they need to have an understanding of the theory and practice of teaching. They also need to know about the social act of learning and teaching and how what they do is mediated by a broader political and ideological agenda. They “will define themselves not only through their past and current identities as defined by personal and social histories and current roles but through their beliefs and values about the kind of teacher they hope to be in the inevitably changing political, social, institutional and personal circumstances” (Day, Kington, Stobart and Sammons, 2006, p610). All of this is being developed at the same time according to the experiences they are having, who they are, and their knowledge of, and about teaching.

Inquiry

The example of one pre service teacher’s developing understandings about teaching is framed using the borrowed literacy model. Tom’s narrative provides an opportunity to see whether the Four Practices of the Reader can be utilised in a different context. Framing the pre service teacher’s narrative as the Four Practices of the Teacher and focussing on using the framework to provide an understanding about the experience of learning within a teacher education program may prove to be a useful tool to use in future analysis of pre service teachers’ experiences.

I have used narrative as a method of inquiry to describe the pre service teacher’s journey through the education program. Narrative is a way of capturing or “borrowing other people’s experiences and their reflections on experience in order to be able to come to an understanding of the deeper meaning or significance of an aspect of human experience in the context of the whole of human experience” (Van Manen, 1990, p62). It acknowledges the personal and the professional (Beattie, 2000) and displays some of the complexity of learning to teach. It is ‘about what has been, what is now and what is becoming’ (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p145) in the teaching/learning process. Tom’s story was told over three interviews throughout the twelve months of his course. Open-ended questions were used as I wanted “to find out what is in and on (his) mind, to gather his stories” (Patton, 2002, p341), in order to better understand his journey within the Graduate Diploma of Education Primary Program.
**Tom's Story**

Tom is an international student from Canada. In the province where he lived teacher education courses were very difficult to access and so he decided to travel overseas to complete, what he describes as something he had always wanted to do. He is the elder child of two in his family and the first to go to university. His parents are described in terms of their work, his mother a secretary and his father an odd job man. They have been very supportive of Tom through out his education and always wanted the best for him. In this brief narrative we find out more about his personal history, how he copes with school experiences and campus based learning and we discover the idea of the social act of teaching and how his belief in community and love are almost derailed. We also read a short reflection where Tom looks more closely at his beliefs and the reality he found in a learning community.

**Personal History**

I have always wanted to be a teacher and although I tried for two years at home to get into education, I was on a waiting list so I decided to come here. It is expensive but I have been working three jobs for the last year and a half and I think I’ll be all right. My parents are supportive because I’m the first person in the family to go to university and they see this as a way for me to settle down after spending years travelling.

I guess I wanted to be a teacher because I want to help and really do some good in the world. I want to be involved in community building and I believe it is in schools that this can occur. I’m more interested in Primary teaching because I think by Secondary school it is too late. I remember what I was like and I want to build community and instill feelings of love so that by the time the child is in secondary school, they will be more able to deal with puberty and adolescence. I was so busy being different and being disruptive in the classroom and that made it difficult in secondary school. Good teachers can make a difference and I was lucky to have some great teachers in both primary and secondary school.

The two from my primary school days sent me cards when I went to Africa as an evangelist missionary in year 12, and that was so much part of what they developed in me, that sense of community and caring. I also had two teachers from my final years of high school, who recognised that I needed to do things differently and they devised a different study program for me that I could do by myself. I kind of like being different and I think that everyone has different needs and different abilities and that I will be able to recognise those things because of my own experiences in school.

I want to be the kind of teacher that cares for everyone and develops a community based on love and respect. I want the students to know that I am there for them regardless of what happens and that they can communicate with me. I guess I worry about whether I will be able to manage the class and actually teach or whether I’ll be too focused on the individual student. Although I worry about all of that I think that I will be a good teacher.

**Practice of Teaching**

School based

I love it. I love teaching, even though university courses and assignments and school experience all come at once, it’s great. The students trusted me and even after only two days they were coming to me and not the classroom teacher. They trusted me because of my attitude and openness toward them. I think it is all about love and respect. If you love and respect the students then they will love and respect you.

Sometimes the classroom management was a bit difficult and students can try and take advantage of me, but I think if I set up the class according to my way of teaching then it would be not such a problem. My biggest difficulty on school experience was how I manage the classroom versus how other people wanted me to manage the classroom.

I’m really idealistic and theory oriented and some of my ideas meant I had to back pedal. My mentor teacher was strict but respected my ideas so that I could try things out. I found I couldn’t be the same person all the time and sometimes I had to be hard and not be always open.

I realised how hard it is to plan for everything and that students don’t necessarily learn what you set out to teach and that they are at different levels and you have to plan for that. But it felt so good when the students came to me with their problems and that was so rewarding because if you trust the students then they will trust you.

Campus based

I only learn what I need to learn and I really like the units that made me think and challenged me. I didn’t like some Curriculum Units because they were too hard and I wanted them to deal more with things, like grammar because if you make grammatical errors in your assignments it’s marked down.
It’s hard doing all the course work and making sense of it in the classroom. I didn’t like the way the courses were assessed and believe that an individual assessment would reflect my learning in a better way. There was so much to learn and it was just too much in one year to take in until you’re actually in the classroom. I needed more structured learning about teaching and programming and assistance on the whole theory practice thing. I know I have to have theory but I would like more practical experience as well. Some of the university teachers were excellent and I felt they really cared about me and who I was.

**The Social Act**

If you want to be a good teacher then you obviously have to have the skills that the community wants, and if the community does not support you as a teacher then it is not the place for you. If you don’t value learning or you have problems interacting with others and if you can’t agree with the community values then maybe you shouldn’t be a teacher. That was a frustrating part of all my university classes that some students didn’t share the community values.

It is a problem for me because I value unity and respect and I do have to respect those with different views to me, but I believe you can change the world by being a teacher and can change small communities and that leads to bigger communities and so working with people to achieve this end is so important.

On my long-term placement I had some issues with the closed mindedness of the community I was teaching in. My mentoring teacher gave me a bare pass and said I didn’t do some things, but I know that I did. It was tough in a remote school but I loved working with the indigenous students and I even managed to encourage two students to read.

I had a good friend with me and I really valued his views because we were like-minded and it really helped having him in the town because I was able to talk about issues and clarify my thinking. He was in the high school so there was distance from my experience, but he knew about the town and the problems I faced. Teaching is about justice and that’s what I am teaching about so I know I’m in the right place.

**Reflection**

It has been a bit difficult to connect what I believe about developing community and the real life situation of the school. I believe that love and respect should be what is developed in the classroom and that this is the way to manage the classroom behaviour. In the schools and at the university I did not always see this as being valued. I could understand what my mentor teachers were saying to me about planning, content and classroom management and could see that this had value, but it did not fit with what I believe all the time. It was if I had to be someone else sometimes and that was hard. It was like we had different values. In my own class I can see that I will be able to do things my way and try to develop a sense of community so that the students are supported.

Each school I’ve been to is different and has a different view of the students and different things seem to be valued. Even the mentor teachers seem to be different and have different views on how to treat students. I don’t think some people liked me because I am different, but I believe in myself as a teacher and those beliefs won’t change because of a difficult experience.

I have really made my life one of not fitting in and that is hard. As a white male I have to work very hard to stand aside knowing that to change a system I have to work within the system. I have to be accepted as the ‘other’ and be on the periphery and rock the system enough so that change occurs without being too rocked myself. I’m the one trying to create the change in education; I’m the one trying to stir it up.

In Tom’s story we see his development over one year synthesised into a brief narrative. We read how his history, his experiences with teachers, his beliefs, his dispositions act on, in and around his developing learning. We begin to see to see some of the struggles he faces as a pre service teacher when his beliefs and the real world collide.

Having adapted the literacy model from Freebody and Luke, (1990): Luke and Freebody, (1999) to frame the experiences of Tom as he developed throughout the twelve months of his course, it is useful to look more closely at the four practices of the teacher as they describe Tom and his learning.

**Personal History**

Tom describes himself as a difficult student who liked to be treated differently when in secondary school. He was strongly influenced by teachers in both primary and secondary school who helped him recognise that for him love, respect and a sense of community were important in his life. His family were also important in that they supported his learning journey and encouraged him to be successful. As Beattie (2000) suggests “individuals’ experiences of schooling, their personal biographies and family histories, and experiences of growing up in different cultural environments … accounts for and works with the differences brought by individuals to
teacher education (p3). Tom’s previous experiences influence the way he understands what teaching and being a teacher means for him.

Practice of Teaching

Tom loves teaching, or he loves the idea that children love him. He is not clear about how the campus based study and the experience of a classroom are connected and is feeling pressured within the program. His sense of respect and love are being further developed as he sees reward for this approach to his classroom teaching. Like many pre service teachers he is keen to know how to teach, “to learn the rules and norms” (Darden, Scott, Darden and Westall, 2001, 51). He sees the value of school experience over university theory and that classroom management, programing the whole theory practice thing having more importance than “theoretical understandings and conceptual analysis” (2001, Beyer p152).

Social Act

Becoming a teacher is a difficult and complex business (Arends, 2000, Hoban, 2002, Atkinson, 2003) and Tom has found that in the real world his beliefs about love, respect and the value of community are not necessarily shared by others. His experience in a remote community caused some degree of angst as he battled his belief that he should respect others and their differences, but in reality found this to be very difficult. For Tom, his dispositions, beliefs perceptions and understandings about teaching have influenced his vision of himself as the teacher and, despite the difficulties, he feels that he has an understanding of what teaching is and therefore he knows he is in the right place.

Reflection

In reflecting on his experiences over the twelve months of his program Tom is still focussed on his beliefs about community, love and respect. It is at this stage that his belief in himself as ‘other’ is clearly defined, and it is almost as if by constructing himself in this way he does not then have to consider whether his position in the world might need some rethinking. What is clear however, is that his fundamental beliefs about himself as far as we can judge in this brief narrative are unchanged. His reflective thinking is in terms of his beliefs, rather than a critical reflection. What he says is probably best described as a thoughtful approach to his experience. Tom’s reflection seems to be what Atkinson (2003) described as constructed from within the student’s world-view, and although Tom has reflected on his experience he is fitting the information and learning into his own schema of what teaching is, or what he envisions it to be.

Conclusion

It would appear that Tom has not changed his beliefs about the world, and although he has developed some technical skills to utilise in the classroom, his reading of the text of school and the university have been filtered through his view of himself as the teacher and consequently his beliefs are unchanged. His reading of the text of teaching is described by Groundwater-Smith et al (2006), as “romantic” and even though he speaks of assisting individual students, he sees them in particular ways constructed by his reading of the teaching text (love, respect and community), consequently he is positioned to view what he does and what he understands through this particular reading of the text. He has a sensitivity toward the students, but “a focus on the social dimensions and consequences of educational practice, the ideological meanings of texts and experiences, the power relation in schools and other institutions, and the need to integrate theory and practice in new ways” (Beyer, 2001. P56), although apparent at some level are filtered through his romantic reading of the text and so there is little evidence of a critical understanding at this stage in his development as a pre service teacher.

The framework has helped me make sense of the myriad aspects of the learning of the pre service teacher although it is unclear how the practices assist in describing how the pre service teacher enacts the teaching role. The teacher he is becoming is only glimpsed at, and further work needs to be done on the framework in terms of its fit to the field of education. A focus on the four practices and the descriptors developed, may enable a clearer picture to emerge of the developing pre service teacher. This work will help build the body of knowledge around teacher education and the journey each pre service teacher takes when they embark on their program of study.

“The teacher’s journey continues well beyond teacher education, just as it has begun well before. Teacher educators have a responsibility to acknowledge and to cultivate the knowledges derived from the many “lived experiences” of the journey that supplement the progress of teacher education to inform a teacher’s work, language and power (McLeod, 2000, p9).
References


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Chris Glass is a lecturer in education at Murdoch University's Rockingham Regional Campus. She is involved in teaching in Primary Literacy Education and has an administrative role as the course advisor for pre service teachers in the initial teacher education program and as the academic coordinator of school experience on this campus. Chris has an extensive background in teaching from Primary to Tertiary level and has worked as an administrator and education consultant in rural and remote communities with a focus on beginning teachers. Her research interests are concerned with teaching and learning and as part of her doctoral studies she is examining the experiences of pre service teachers as they navigate their way through their teacher education program.
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4.2 Summary

Tom’s journey as he became the teacher indicated his reading of the text of teacher education. What Tom brought to the process as personal experiences of teaching and teachers and his history as a student, informed his understandings of what it means to become the teacher.

Tom’s love of community and his desire to love and be loved by others overcame many of the difficulties he faced. His sense of building community and belief that you can change the world by being a teacher, was strongly articulated. Even when the remote community in which he completed his final field experience did not support his view of the world, Tom felt that because teaching is about justice and that love and respect should be developed in the classroom, he would continue in teaching and so doing change the community. Tom’s reading of the text was predicated on his previous experiences of education and on his vision of himself as the teacher.

Tom has filtered his reading of the text of teaching through his personal vision and understanding of himself and of his views of what it is that teaching is and should be. The framework used to understand the reading of the text of teaching has allowed for a glimpse of the individual in terms of personal history, the practice and social act of teaching and in Tom’s capacity to be reflexive about the process. Tom felt he was different from most pre-service teachers and positioned himself as ‘other’ (his words) and perhaps in some ways this construction had a protective influence on his capacity to deal with the complexities of the year.
In the next journal article, the framework is presented again with some refinements. It is developed to assist in understanding the process that each of the participants were part of during the twelve months of the research data collection. Reading the text of teacher education for all of the participants was a sometimes fraught process, and in the next article some of those difficulties are described.
Chapter Five

Understanding the text of teaching: Complexities of comprehension

5.1 Introduction

It is in this article that the four participants are introduced and their story told through the framework of the Four Practices of the Teacher, based on the model developed by Freebody and Luke (1990) and Luke and Freebody (1999). Having discussed the initial rendition of the framework in terms of Tom’s story (Chapter Four), in this paper I further develop the framework by refining the elements to better represent the four practices of the teacher.

Mindful that pre-service teachers who enter a one-year Graduate Diploma program have high rates of non-completions, I had hoped that this framework might assist educators to understand how and why this non-completion occurs. The work of Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) has found that the emotional, the stories, being reflective, having a sense of agency and discourse are important aspects in helping pre-service teachers understand and manage the becoming process, but the question of how the individual reacts to the becoming in terms of what they bring to the process is worthy of further investigation.

The four participants were interviewed and a narrative constructed for each of them adapted from the transcript of their conversations. Each narrative was then reviewed in terms of the four practices of the teacher, and it was found that there is so much more to becoming a teacher than is often expected. The complexities of personal lives, what happens, and how each person deals with these difficulties tells much
about their process of becoming the teacher. The four narratives indicate that it is an emotional, difficult journey, and reveals that what each pre-service teacher brings to their course affects the outcomes of their endeavours.
2012

Understanding the Text of Teaching: Complexities of Comprehension

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Understanding the Text of Teaching: Complexities of Comprehension

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Abstract: Learning to teach and learning to read have some similarities in the way the learning is enacted. Drawing on narratives constructed from semi-structured interviews with four Graduate Diploma of Education Primary pre-service teachers, a conceptual framework was developed. The framework included personal history, the technical skills of teaching, social aspects and reflection, to help shape a reading of the ‘text’ of teacher education. This reading revealed that, in this small group of pre-service teachers, reading the text was informed by what was happening in their lives, their personal history and their dispositions towards learning.

Introduction

Despite the apparent initial enthusiasm for the one year Graduate Diploma of Education Primary Program, as indicated by the number of students who enrol in one Western Australian University, many do not graduate. As a student advisor in the School of Education of this university, I became aware of the many influences that governed whether or not a student graduated from the course. Personal circumstances and how the individual coped with what was happening in their lives, their dispositions and their understandings about teaching and teachers seemed to be mediating the experience of becoming a teacher. As a result of these observations I became interested in finding out how the interactions of these elements acted upon the experience of becoming a teacher in an intensive one-year pre-service education program.

Graduate Diploma Pre-service teachers enter university having had an apprenticeship of sorts over many years as students observing the teaching profession. However, their learning differs from that of a real apprentice in that the learning is from a limited perspective and consequently they “underestimate the difficulties involved” (Lortie, 1975, p. 63). Pre-service teachers enter the university with a personal set of understandings, knowledge and vision of what teaching is and what teachers do. They are, as Britzman (2003) suggests, able to be engaged in the reading of the text of the teacher, however, the reading is based on their previous experiences of teachers and teaching and not on the “overwhelming complexity of teacher’s work and the myriad ways this complexity is masked and misunderstood” (p. 27).

Researchers in teacher education have long recognized the influence pre-service teachers’ past experiences and life histories have on their developing teacher identity (Alsup, 2006; Beattie, 2000; Black, 1999; Britzman, 2003; Lortie, 1975; Minor, Onwuegbuzie, Witcher, & James, 2002; Scott, 2005; Sleeter, 2008). Such research suggests that how the individual has experienced teachers and teaching and their life history has more influence over how a pre-service teacher understands teaching than what it is they learn in their teacher education program (Black, 1999).
As well as experiences of, and about education, dispositions and attitudes towards particular experiences (in this case becoming a teacher) are imbedded in life histories (Billett, 1997; Billett, 2009). Who we are, our ability to cope with new or difficult situations, are personal attributes that make up our “dispositions towards learning in a new environment” (Billett, 1997, p.14). The literature suggests that there a number of ways to describe dispositions in education research; from beliefs about “fairness and a belief that all children can learn” (NCATE, 2008, p. 89) and being “passionate, compassionate, fair, flexible, respectful and responsible” (Gallavan, Peace & Thomason, 2009, p. 50) to measurable behaviours, such as, adjusting or revising lesson plans, demonstrating enthusiasm and passion for working with children, and demonstrating commitment to the development of the whole child (Rike & Sharp, 2009, p. 67). However, for the purpose of this paper the understanding of dispositions arises from S. Billett’s (personal communication November, 18, 2009) who suggests,

... dispositions arise through personal history. We have particular experiences that shape our beliefs and values about particular matters. These dispositions then shape how we go on to make sense of, and respond to what we experience.

But what are also important in the developing teacher are those occurrences in life over which the individual has no control, what Billett, (2009) describes as “natural factors”. Those things that are part of the daily business of living and that “mediate what individuals subsequently experience (i.e. construe and construct) and learn through their encounters with the physical and social world” (Billett, 2009, p. 33). Factors such as the aging process, being ill or injured, the birth of a child, a death in the family, or world events, shape how an individual interprets the learning experience. What is happening in the life of the pre-service teacher can have a powerful mediating influence on the process of becoming a teacher. Dispositions, life history, and what is happening in their lives all act upon the process of becoming a teacher or developing a sense of the teacher self. Learning to be a teacher is “mediated by personal, social, and natural factors” (Billett, 2009, p.32).

Emotion, agency, discourse, narrative and reflection (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009) have been identified as important elements in becoming a teacher or developing a teacher identity, but what is not so clear is how the individual’s dispositions toward learning about becoming a teacher and what is happening in their lives act on the process of developing the teacher self.

To capture the experience of the individual becoming a teacher, a conceptual framework derived from the work of critical literacy researchers’ Freebody and Luke (1990) and Luke and Freebody (1999) is used. The metaphor of ‘reading the text of education’ to frame the study has been developed to represent how four Graduate Diploma of Education Primary pre-service teachers negotiated the demands of the university program, schools and the broader community.

The data revealed that becoming a teacher is a complex undertaking and that previous experiences, dispositions and what was happening in the pre-service teachers’ lives shaped the reading and comprehension of the text of learning to be a teacher.

**Reading the Text of Teacher Education**

The word text conjures up for many of us images of books and writing, however in more recent times the word text has come to mean much more than that. It is according to Kincheloe and Steinberg, “more than printed material as it involves any aspect of reality that contains encoded meaning” (1996, p. 184), while Healy suggests that “Texts represent social meanings
specific to societies and their associations” (2008, p. 5). In this paper the definition of text as a set of encoded social meanings is used to explain the text of teacher education. Both learning to read and learning to teach are imbedded in the social and within the text of teacher education there are meanings that the prospective teacher must comprehend. However, this understanding is informed by what has gone before just as in the case of a young reader. If a child comes to school having experienced books and language daily in a warm positive environment then the likelihood of success in reading is much higher. If a pre-service teacher comes to teacher education with a similar view of what teaching is and what teachers do and finds this experience replicated in their study and practice then the likelihood of them being successful is also much higher. This reading is dependent on the individual’s life experiences, how they have related to others, what has been done to them and what they have done to others (Gee, 2001).

However, as Freebody and Luke (1990) and Luke and Freebody, (1999) have pointed out, reading text is not only about the social but also includes the technical aspects, being able to construct text based on previous experiences and understanding that any text reflects a particular point of view. The experiences that the individual has across all aspects of life inform interpretations of the text and “if these experiences are not conducive to understanding the text, then reading difficulties will occur” (Anstey, 2009, p.91). As the learner reader brings to the reading process previous knowledge and understandings so the pre-service teacher does the same. To enable the individual to be a competent reader of the text means being able to crack the code, to understand how to use the knowledge of text, and to be able to read and recognise that particular ideologies and values drive education systems.

Although, reading teacher education as a text is not a new concept (Britzman, 2003; Groundwater-Smith, Ewing & Le Cornu, 2011; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1996; Segall, 2002), using a model that encapsulates the teaching of reading to capture the process of becoming a teacher, provides a strategy to analyse that becoming. It enables an understanding of how the reading of the text of teacher education unfolds and is informed by the social (understanding what it is that teachers are and do in the world), the personal (dispositions informed by life history) and natural factors (what is happening in their lives) for each pre-service teacher.

**Conceptual Framework**

Drawing on the model for teaching reading (Freebody & Luke 1990, and Luke & Freebody, 1999) this framework, like the model from which it is drawn includes the skills or technical aspects, the social and relational, the personal history and critical practices required to become a competent reader of text. Learner teachers like learner readers need to develop the practices of becoming a teacher because “Teaching and learning just isn’t a matter of skill acquisition or knowledge transmission or natural growth. It’s about building identities and cultures, communities and institutions”. (Luke & Freebody, 1999, p. 5).

To understand the experience of reading the text of teacher education, the framework provides a structure within which to read the participant narratives. In a previous paper (Glass, 2007), where one pre-service teacher’s story was told, the framework described here was developed as an analytical tool. Since then it has been refined to more usefully reflect the teacher education experience, and the following, drawn from the work of Luke and Freebody (1990) and Freebody and Luke (1999), is offered as a way of framing the experiences of the Graduate Diploma of Education Primary pre-service teachers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal History</th>
<th>Understanding and composing meaningful texts from within the meaning systems of the context. What the reader brings to the text as previous experience.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Glass (2009) Reading the text of teacher education: The four practices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Technical skills of teaching</td>
<td>Understanding and using the fundamentals of teaching - how to teach, what to teach, knowing about the learners. The link between theory and practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code breaker</td>
<td>Recognising and using the fundamental features of a text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text User – Pragmatic Practices</td>
<td>The social act of using text in a functional way to communicate, and to understand the relationship between form and function of various genres.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text Analyst – Critical Practices</td>
<td>Develops understandings that texts position readers differently and can both constrain and influence the reader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Reflection</td>
<td>Develops understandings about the self in relation to what is valued by the university, community and schools and how this can constrain and influence the developing teacher.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: A framework for exploring the development of the teacher self.

The practices are not hierarchical, but developed together with different emphasis at different times (Luke & Freebody, 1990, Freebody & Luke, 1999) depending on the situation and the requirements of the individual, so that like the learner reader the learner teacher is able to develop the ability to read the whole text of teacher education. To understand how the pre-service teacher begins to understand this text, it is necessary to hear the voice of these individuals as they negotiate the task.

Method

During the University Orientation week at the beginning of the academic year, pre-service teachers from the Graduate Diploma Primary cohort were approached to participate in the research project. Four pre-service teachers volunteered and were interviewed three times during the academic year. The questions asked were loosely based on the framework and were about personal history, experiences of schools and teaching, the reality of classrooms and the capacity to cope with difficulties. The first meeting took place in January before their program began, the second in July after the first major school experience, and the final interview at the end of the academic year. Each participant has been given a pseudonym. The semi-structured interviews were conducted to focus on the ‘lived experience’ of becoming a teacher, because
“Their [the pre-service teachers] knowledge of the social context and their account of the social arena are significant in the research” (Dunne, et al, 2005, p. 27)

To tell the story of the pre-service teachers an abbreviated narrative structure is used. The narrative being concerned with events and things as they are at a particular time provides “snapshots in time” (Beattie, 2001, p.3). It is chronological, meaningful and social (Elliott, 2005), and captures details of how each person has experienced life and learning, both previously and over the time of the study. The pre-service teachers’ narratives are important as they struggle to find themselves and so “finding the words, speaking for oneself and feeling heard by others, are all a part of this struggle” (Britzman, 2003, p. 43). However, a note of caution, it is my telling of each person’s story with my interpretation, and although I have tried to be faithful to the voice of the individual, there is always another telling of any story and events can be interpreted in different ways (Clandinin & Connolly, 2000).

The Pre-service teachers

Fern was in her fifties, married for the second time with two adult children. Fern’s husband was very ill with cancer and she was also looking after her elderly mother. She had come to the School of Education with an undergraduate degree in fine arts having entered university as a mature-aged student via an adult entry test. As a young woman in England her father had refused her permission to attend university and this had rankled her entire life. She had decided on teaching after many years of working in a remote coastal location as an art teacher and manager of a small gallery. Her husband also worked in the art field and together they had travelled around Australia making and selling art works. She found the whole experience of becoming a teacher very difficult and felt that it was beyond the capacity of any person to manage a class of primary children. She felt torn between the university expectations and those of the school and could not find a way forward.

John decided that he wanted to become a teacher as his job, as a missions and camp director for a church organisation did not seem to have room for further growth and promotion, and now that he was the father of twelve month old twins, he wanted a more family friendly occupation. John had a Graduate Diploma in Outdoor studies having studied computing and mathematics in an undergraduate degree and despite the job opportunities in mathematics teaching in secondary schools decided to enrol in the primary program. His experiences with adolescent children had brought him to the point where he felt that it was the early years that mattered in education. He decided to enrol as a part time student as he felt with full time work and the twins he needed to be careful with his time. He had a strong sense of wanting to connect to the wider school community. John felt affirmed by his experiences in schools, but challenged by issues around an assignment mark and his own health.

Cara came to university through an adult entry test and after many false starts studied sociology. She was in her late thirties, a single mother with two children aged nine and fourteen. She wanted to be a teacher to make a difference in children’s lives and to have a regular income for her family. She had experienced a difficult time in her own schooling and felt that schools did not suit everyone, and she wanted to work with those children for whom school was not a good place to be. Cara worked as a TAFE (Technical and Further Education) lecturer, a teacher assistant, a gardener and a photographer to support her family while studying. Her children’s father was returning to New Zealand and Cara was deciding whether or not she should go as
well, so that her children had regular contact with both parents. Cara did not complete any school experiences because they scared her and felt that although teaching was important she felt it wasn’t for her.

Tom was in his mid to late twenties and had an arts degree. He was an international student from an English speaking country in the northern hemisphere. He came to Australia to pursue teaching and had worked at three jobs to raise the money to spend a year studying without having to work. Tom was the first person in his family to attend university and his parents had been very supportive of him. He had always wanted to be a teacher and although his own schooling had been difficult due to him insisting on being treated ‘differently’ he was keen to be a teacher because he believed that schools should provide for individual learners. He wanted to change education from within and felt that he had to position himself as ‘other’. Tom was passionate about his desire to bring love and community to the teaching environment. Tom’s partner was studying on the east coast.

In Table 1 the four practices of the learner reader and learner teacher are outlined and the following focusing on the learner teacher, outlines the interactive nature of the practices and the struggles that each pre-service teacher faced as they experienced becoming a teacher.

The Conceptual Framework in Action

Personal History

Personal history and experiences of teaching and teachers have an impact on the teacher the pre-service teacher is becoming (Black, 1999). Understandings of teachers and teaching, the vision of the self as a teacher all act on how becoming a teacher is experienced (Hammerness, 2003). The reading of the text of teacher education will be influenced by past experiences, and by present circumstances. For Cara who had been the rebel student and for whom school was not a pleasant place, the distance between her vision of herself as a teacher was just too great.

(February) I want the classroom to be a fun place where children feel safe.
(July) I’ve been observing a lot (in classrooms) and I just don’t know that I’ve got it. I don’t know that I could be on task for that length of time for that many students.

Her reading of the text based on her experiences meant that she found that what she valued as normal was not recognized and that she felt the normalizing pressures (Sinner, 2010) on her to become the teacher she did not want to be. This was also true for Fern and Tom, although for different reasons. Fern felt isolated and torn between the expectations of the University and the school. Her previous experiences teaching art had allowed her to work in particular ways that were not valued by the school. Whereas Tom despite the efforts of the school to make him ‘toe the line’ was able to maintain his view of himself as the teacher, and not bow to the pressures of conformity. John, however felt that his view of what teachers do and are, based on his experiences were articulated in the schools. This gave him a sense of himself as the teacher as the distance between the reality as he experienced it and his expectations was close. In terms of preparing to read the text, the closer the learner reader is to the text in previous experiences the more likely it is that the individual will be successful in learning to read.

The Technical Skills of Teaching

For many pre-service teachers what they see as teaching is based around what might be called the technical skills of teaching (managing student behaviour, teaching at different levels,
organizing groups, knowing what to teach) and this is what is important and what they believe teaching to be. Having had many years of experience in classrooms there is a sense that the work of teachers and teaching is known, but

“hidden is the pedagogy teachers enact: the ways teachers render content and experience as pedagogical, consciously construct and innovate teaching methods, solicit and negotiate student concerns, and attempt to balance the exigencies of curriculum with both the students’ and their own vision of what it is to know (Britzman, 2003, p. 28).

For both Fern and Cara, although their responses to the school and university were different, their vision of the teacher and teaching was not the reality they experienced.

(Fern– January) I could see myself as being very busy in a classroom as it is very full on and being hopefully, the sort of teacher who is involved with the children.

(November) I don’t want to know the how and when, but the what - where are the guidelines?’ How can anyone work in a class with so many different children and expect to do it well. I had teachers telling me to forget what I learned at university and that the job was hell.

(Cara – January) I’d like to think that teaching is fun and that there’s joy, yes I’d like to feel that there’s a sense of joy.

(November) I haven’t done any pracs (school/field experience) because they scare me. I’ve done a lot of teacher assistant work this year and there’s something highly stressful about the position of the teacher. There seems to be a lot of yelling and raised voices in classrooms.

The reading of the text was influenced by the interplay of their dispositions, past and present experiences and what was happening in their lives and they were unable to enact another reading to understand their experiences differently. Whereas Tom, despite difficulties in his final school placement and what he viewed as ‘poor assessment practices’ in some of his university classes, brought to the reading his sense of himself as ‘other’. This sense of himself as being outside the ordinary and his dispositions toward learning enabled him to make sense of his experiences and to be a successful reader of the text despite the difficulties he faced.

(Tom – July) I found in my pracs (school/field experience) that the kids trusted me a lot more than they trusted the teacher, and if there was a problem even on the second day they would come to me first because of my attitude and my openness. I really try to be open and I find they (the students) really respond to that.

The interplay between the personal and the social allowed him to read the whole experience from his perspective. Although he had a vision of who he was as a teacher, and although this vision was not always replicated he still was able to make sense of his experiences. Billett (2009) suggests that “experiences….are negotiated between the physical and social world and on the individuals’ ….construction of them” (p.38) and it is in this negotiation that previous experiences and what is happening in your life can inform your ability to deal with difficulties.

For John, with past experiences of adolescent children his issues were about managing student behaviour in a primary classroom

John – July I had a bit of a problem with managing behaviour, because I was used to camps where noise and activity is expected. Although at the start it was an issue the kids did settle down with me and I got a bit of respect. I guess I have to get my head around what schools expect in terms of management.
As John suggests, it is about him negotiating the classroom expectations with his past experiences and constructing another way to read the text.

**Social Act of Teaching**

For the four pre-service teachers, the social context of the schools and university were important elements in becoming competent readers of the text of education. Understanding how to negotiate the social worlds and to construct a reading of the text of teacher education requires a personal commitment (or disposition) to the reading. The construction of relationships with children, teachers, community members and the university staff are part of the whole story in becoming a teacher, “…. what we learn through experience is shaped overtime and mediated by the capacity to experience and engage with the physical and social world” (Billett, 2009, p. 34). For Tom, relationships were at the core of his understandings,

(Tom – November) *If you’re going to be a good teacher you obviously have to have the skills that a community wants. For me teaching is about building community based on love and respect.*

Although Tom had some difficulties working in a remote community, his reading of the text was informed by his understandings of the work of teachers, and his belief in love and community. What was happening in his life, and his relationships with the wider community were predicated on his beliefs and dispositions towards becoming a teacher. He was making sense of the text through the lens of his history and understandings about teachers and teaching.

John felt comfortable in the school and university environment. It was what he expected it to be. His previous experiences with students on camps gave him, what he described as a ‘realistic view’ of what schools and teaching were like. He developed good relationships with his mentor teachers, with the students and the wider school community.

John – July) *The school experience was really good and the school reacted positively to me and I had affirmation from the teachers, supervisor and some parents. I can see myself teaching.*

With experiences of teaching and teachers and a life history that valued learning, John’s ability to make sense of, and to interact with the text of teacher education was comfortable for him. Fern, on the other hand found it difficult to connect with the school and her university lecturers. She felt that the teachers viewed the university with hostility and that she was caught in the middle of this and didn’t have the skills or knowledge to deal with any of it. Her reading of the teacher education text was made more difficult because of what was happening in her life and this informed her dispositions towards making sense of becoming a teacher. The personal, the social and the natural factors interrelated in such a way that she was having difficulty making sense of the text she was set to read. In much the same way, Cara’s reading of the text, placed schools as sites of conflict although she felt that teaching was really important

(Cara – November) *I see teaching as the most important profession in the world, absolutely fundamental to humanity, to the human race, to our existence, to our growth, our progress, for us to make any kind of change, but I can’t really see the vision of myself as the teacher, it’s just not there.*

For Cara, her dispositions toward learning to be a teacher, toward developing her reading of the text of teacher education were predicated on her personal experiences as a student in school and as an education assistant. For both Cara and Fern the personal construction of their experiences was shaped by their personal histories (Billett, 2009) and therefore their disposition
toward learning to be a teacher. They read their classroom experiences as places of conflict and did not want to be part of that world.

Critical Reflection

To develop understandings about teacher education and teaching itself requires an understanding of the self and how that self relates to the social, personal and natural aspects that inform the individual’s response to teacher education. What pre-service teachers bring to their teacher education text informs the reading of the text of teacher education. The critical, reflective practitioner is able to understand how the teacher self is being constructed in the teaching/learning process and is also able to see the broader perspectives and agendas of governments and school boards however, “Experience alone does not lead to learning; reflection on learning is essential” (Loughran, 2002, p. 3).

In looking back over the year the four pre-service teachers reflected on what had happened and how they had dealt with situations. In the case of Fern who withdrew from the program after six months it was apparent that the emotional load she carried in her personal life was informing her reaction to the professional. It was too difficult to deal with the complexities of teaching and study and the illness of her husband and mother. Fern was unable to continue.

(Fern – November) It’s been such an odd year starting off with such high hopes and ending up feeling pretty disappointed both study wise and personally. I have a sick old mum and a sick husband who rely on me and I feel as if I’m there for everyone else at the moment and I can’t do anything about it.

The overwhelming nature of the personal, the social and what was happening in her life meant she felt she had no option other than to leave the program. It is in the reflection about the experiences that links are made. “It is effective when it leads the teacher to make meaning from the situation in ways that enhance understanding so that she or he comes to see and understand….from a variety of view points” (Loughran, 2002, p. 38). For Fern leaving the program was the appropriate choice to make.

For Tom looking back was about reflecting on who he was as the teacher. His view that love and community and being ‘other’, were critical to the teacher he was becoming had not changed during the year and despite a difficult final school placement he was still positive about his place as a teacher.

(Tom – November) I want to be other but it’s hard and you have to work at it to stand aside. I mean in order to change a system you have to work within the system so you can’t be too much in the other. My whole life is trying to stay on the periphery, to be the rocker but I don’t want get rocked much because I’m the one trying to create the educational change, I’m the one trying to stir it up.

Tom’s reading of the text predicated on his history, his experiences and what was happening in his life did not change a great deal over the year long course. He continued to place himself as ‘other’ and to spread the message of ‘love and community’. Tom, from the beginning was determined to complete the program successfully and to become what he had always wanted to be, ‘a teacher’. This achievement was for Tom a mark of his success within the program.

As the year progressed John felt that he was in danger of not being able to manage work and family, so changed jobs so that he could work from home. He became ill and for the first time he spoke about issues that were challenging him.
(John – November) I had a virus that has dragged on for months and I have a susceptibility to becoming depressed, having had previous episodes. Depression is one of those things you can slide into gradually.

However he was confident that he would complete the qualification and that with his work from home and with the twins being a little older he would manage the workload. What was happening in his life began to disrupt the John’s reading an understanding of the text. He was still committed to continuing, but ill health, had started to impinge on his ability to connect to, and make sense of what was happening to him.

(John – July) I didn’t get a good mark for an assignment and that was a bit disappointing. I have been sick and with everything, there’s not much margin in my life. When I’m not able to concentrate, or I can’t do a couple of hours in the evening because I’m too tired, the pressure goes up pretty quickly if you’re not on top of everything.

Looking back and reflecting on the year for Cara meant that she continued to think about her place as a teacher. On one hand she was committed because of the cost and time, but on the other she found it difficult to reconcile her feelings of ambivalence towards teaching and schools.

(Cara – November) I think I like teaching and being with the kids, but do I want to be a teacher? I want to be more collaborative, and negotiate more with the kids, but can I be an authority figure in the classroom?

The whole idea of teaching and the work involved in completing the Graduate Diploma were extremely stressful for Cara. Personal decisions about work, family and study were impinging on the teacher she was becoming.

(Cara – November) The course was really stressing me a lot because it never went away. I’d have assignments that never left my head space and sometimes I’d be crying trying to summon the will to sit down and do things which seemed to be so irrelevant in the grand scheme of my life. I always found I put the course last in what ever I did.

For Cara, the personal, her dispositions towards learning to be a teacher and her experiences of teachers and teaching were making the reading of the text of teacher education difficult for her. The meanings she brought to the text were not being reflected in her experiences and she was unable to find another reading to support her view of what teaching should be and she too left the program.

**Reading the Text**

Using the four practices of the teacher as a framework to analyse the experiences of the four Graduate Diploma of Education Primary pre-service teachers has provided a structure within which to develop understandings about the process of becoming a teacher, of comprehending the text. The framework enabled an understanding that becoming a teacher is a complex task and that each person who embarks on the journey to become a teacher has much to contend with. Personal history and experiences of teachers and teaching inform dispositions towards learning to become a teacher. The technical skills, the social aspects, and being able to critically reflect on the process of becoming a teacher are all part of the complexity of the role. The text of education is as diverse as those who attempt to read and make sense of it. What pre-service teachers bring to their experience, as life history, previous experiences and dispositions will mean that each person will have a different reading and understanding. Unless the personal
history, experiences of teaching and teachers and what is happening in the individual’s life is deconstructed, then developing the technical skills, being able to be part of an educational community and being able to critically reflect are compromised.

In using the framework to understand how these four pre-service teachers were becoming a teacher, it was clear that they needed to understand the technical aspects of teaching. They needed to know how to manage children’s behaviour, to plan and program effectively, to have good teaching strategies and to feel comfortable in the school and university environment. This part of the reading is important, but for Cara and Fern the reading was challenged by what they brought with them as understandings of teaching and teachers. It was challenged by what was happening in their lives, those ‘natural’ events over which we have little or no control and by their capacity to deal with these events. For both, their previous history and experience of schools and teaching and the events in their lives informed their dispositions to connect to the learning and to the becoming. This emphasis meant that the four aspects of becoming a teacher were not developed simultaneously and so for Cara and Fern their learning was troubled by the influence of the personal. The ‘balance’ in their lives was disrupted.

There is much to learn from Cara, Fern, John and Tom, and the complexity of their lives. Assisting them to deconstruct this complexity so that they are able to understand their initial vision of themselves as the teacher and know where this vision comes from because “deconstructing identity, personal history, and conceptual systems opens up a “pedagogy of possibility” (Aveling (2001, 46) is necessary work. Helping pre-service teachers read the whole text; the technical aspects, the understanding of self, the ability to relate in the social world and see how it all fits together in the critical whole could indeed open a “pedagogy of possibility” and as suggested by Britzman,

Everyone in teacher education needs the space and encouragement to raise questions that attend to the possible and acknowledge the uncertainty of our educational lives. For in doing so, we can begin to envision the discourses, voices and discursive practices that can invite the possible (2003, p.241).

Allowing pre-service teachers to rely on what they bring to the course in terms of life history, dispositions and knowledge of teaching and teachers to make sense of what they experience, can lead to the development of inadequate readers, unable to comprehend the teacher education text.

Conclusion

Teacher education students enrolled in the Graduate Diploma Primary Program have a high rate of non-completion of the program. This small-scale study indicates that there could be a number of factors for this non-completion. It is clear from previous research and from this study that personal history, and the experiences of teaching and teachers affects the way that pre-service teachers experiencing become a teacher. What is also clear from this study is that dispositions and what is happening in their lives also have an affect on their learning. The personal, the social and natural factors interrelate to inform the individual’s reading and subsequent understanding of the text of education. This small group of Graduate Diploma of Education primary students relied on what they brought to the program to help them understand the text of teacher education and the process of becoming a teacher. Providing opportunities for pre-service teachers to explore the complexities of their lives as they take on the task of
becoming a teacher will enhance the knowledge and opportunities teacher educators have to better support the students enrolled in teacher education programs. Future research on how to explore these complexities within the confines of a Teacher Education Program will provide further opportunities to support pre-service teachers.

References:


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5.2 Summary

In this article, the four participants were introduced and their narrative described through the four practices of the teacher. Personal history, the technical skills of teaching, the relational and reflection were the four practices that were the lens through which the pre-service teachers’ development was viewed.

In the case of Fern, who chose to withdraw from the research project at the time of the second interview, there was much to deal with in her personal life. She was coping with a husband with a terminal illness and an elderly mother, both of whom demanded much of her attention. Fern’s view of what teaching would be like was based on her experiences as a teacher of art and she was very disappointed in the reality of classrooms she experienced during her time in the School of Education. Her own experiences of school had led her to believe that her experiences would be positive. Life history, the reality of classrooms as she experienced them, and what was happening in her personal life meant that she had a particular reading of the text. That reading, filtered through her experiences, meant she was unable to find a positive way forward and decided to leave the course. However, when approached at the end of the year, Fern was keen to participate and to tell her story.

Cara came into the program with an ambivalent view of what might happen. Her own experiences of school were not positive, and she was not sure that teaching was for her. She was keen to be the kind of teacher she had not experienced in her own schooling, but the reality of classrooms for her was also negative. She worked as a teacher assistant but would not venture into classrooms as the teacher. She felt they were negative places where a great deal of conflict occurred. In her personal life
Cara was dealing with relationship issues, being a single parent, working part time, and contending with the teacher education program, and the exigencies of these demands meant that it was the study that came last. Cara’s reading of the text was filtered through these aspects of her life and ultimately she decided to defer her studies while she made decisions about her life.

John, on the other hand, felt that his previous experiences of children and of school were being replicated in the schools where he worked. He felt comfortable with what was happening in the teacher education program. John did feel that there were issues to be dealt with, but generally his reading of the text was positive and reflected his world-view.

As previously explained, Tom had such a strong view of what teaching, teachers and schools should be about that, despite the difficulties he faced, he read the text in such a way that he was able to be positive about his experiences. Tom’s sense of community and his positioning as the ‘other’ seemed to allow him to reaffirm his approach and to deny others’ readings of him. He read the text in such a way as to fit his schema, his approach, his world-view. He remained steadfast throughout the year to his view.

I believe the framework was useful in giving structure to the research. It provided me with a sensitive reading of the complex and difficult work that is ‘becoming the teacher’.
In the next article the focus is again on one participant, John, and on my research methodology, which demonstrates why data sources should be varied. Throughout his interviews, John provided information that gave the researcher a view that all was going well with his teacher education program, and that he was an individual for whom the process of ‘becoming’ was almost seamless. However, I reveal that John’s off-stage situation was full of challenges not reflected in his narrative of ‘what was happening’ until late in the final interview.
Chapter Six

“There’s not much room for anything to go amiss”: Narrative and arts-based inquiry in teacher education

6.1 Introduction

In this article, I focus on narrative and arts-based inquiry in telling John’s story. As noted in the previous article, John seemed to be coping well with the complexities of becoming the teacher, but by probing deeply I was able to unearth some personal issues that impinged on his capacity to deal with the difficulties of reading the text of teacher education.

John, when asked to draw himself in January and November, expressed his vision of himself in figurative terms. In his January drawing John indicates that he is part of the class and no more important than the students he would be teaching, but in November the representation of him is more in charge of the learning journey his students would take. There appeared to be a confidence in himself as the teacher. However, his graph indicated problems John was experiencing and that what seemed an almost trouble free transition to becoming the teacher was in fact much more problematic.

John had health issues and was faced with difficulties at work. His capacity to share domestic work with his wife, including the care of the twins was also playing on his mind. In looking back over the year, I could see that the vision he had of himself as the teacher and his fit with schools was causing no problems, but dealing with issues such as a poor mark for an assignment, his part-time work, his health, and the sheer
intensity of the program were making it much more difficult for him. Ultimately John changed jobs so that he could spend more time at home, and changed his enrolment from full time to part time. These changes helped him to deal with what was happening in his life.
'There's not much room for anything to go amiss': Narrative and arts-based inquiry in teacher education

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Drawings offer new possibilities to develop understandings about how pre-service teachers experience becoming a teacher. It is in drawings that often "those elusive hard-to-put-into-words" (Weber & Mitchell, 2004) aspects of the self appear to add to the developing story of what it is to become a teacher. Using a triangulated approach to the research process of narrative, drawings and graphing, a Graduate Diploma of Education Primary pre-service teacher from a Western Australian University was asked to envision himself as a teacher, and to draw that vision. This vision tells us much about 'the multiple contexts' in which the teacher self is being formed and how the pre-service teacher envisioned, reflected, related to, and felt about the journey he undertook.

Introduction

Pre-service teachers have spent many years as observers and participants in the teaching learning process and have also been influenced by the representation of teachers in film, television and in newspapers (Stuart, 2006; Trier, 2001; Weber & Mitchell 1995). It is the intention in this paper to extend understandings about how the teacher self is formed by focusing on the multiple contexts which inform the process of becoming a teacher. To do this, drawing has been utilised along with graphing and narrative to offer new possibilities in developing understandings about becoming a teacher.

The term 'becoming' is used because it provides a sense of the contexts within which teacher identity is being formed. Becoming is about "continually shaping and being shaped by the dynamics of social practice, social structure and history" (Britzman, 2003, p. 49). These contexts are competing "chronologies of becoming" (Britzman, 2003, p. 70) and each context whether it is the personal or the professional aspects of life, brings with it differing demands and understandings to negotiate. This negotiation is the 'prickly' aspect of the process of becoming a teacher. What pre-service teachers understand about themselves, their life history and how this informs their dispositions to learn, their views of teachers and teaching and what is happening in their lives as they negotiate the university course, the schools and wider community all contribute to perspectives about the teacher they envision themselves to be (Billet, 2009; Minor, Onwuegbuzie, Witcher & James, 2002).

This study focuses on the experiences of John (pseudonym used), one of four Graduate Diploma of Education Primary pre-service teachers, who took part in a research project about becoming a teacher. John wanted to be a teacher because he felt that it would fit better with his life as the father of twelve-month old twins. He believed that his work in a church organisation where he managed youth camps and missions made him a
suitable candidate for teaching. It was in teaching that he would find parent friendly hours and be able to spend more time with his family. During the early part of the study, John expressed general satisfaction with the process of becoming a teacher and felt that his expectations of teachers and teaching were being replicated. He felt that his previous experiences with difficult adolescents had prepared him for the reality of teaching. To understand whether his understandings of his developing teacher self were matched with his experience, drawings and other arts based methodologies were employed to develop insights into the teacher John was becoming.

**Drawing**

As an individual interested in art, I was attracted to the work of researchers who used drawing and images to develop understandings about pre-service and in-service teachers. My own work as an educator of young people—where stories, drawings and other arts based methods were used to help individuals express feelings that may otherwise have been hidden—has guided the methodological choice. This methodology given the name of a/r/tography by Sinner, Leggo, Irwin, Gouzouasis, and Grauer (2006) is described as a "commitment to aesthetic and educational practices, inquiry_laden processes, a search for meaning, and interpreting for understanding" (p.1223). In this study, the aesthetic was not a focus although from the story and drawings, a picture of John that might otherwise have remained hidden is revealed. The use of narrative, drawing and graphing is used to search for meaning, to enquire and to find understandings by interpreting the data.

The study is informed by researchers such as Coughlin (2001) who used drawings to depict pre-service teachers' understandings of teachers at work both before and after an initial field experience, and Utley and Showalter (2007) who used drawings to find out how pre-service teachers viewed themselves as either teacher or child centred mathematics teachers. In a study focused on the images early childhood teachers working in childcare centres had of themselves, Black (1999) involved the teachers in a cycle of talking, thinking, drawing, reading and writing to access information about the everyday work of teachers. Further, Weber and Mitchell (1995) used art as a tool to research the experiences of reflecting on, and being a teacher and to explore how the media portrays teachers, while Murphy, Delli and Edwards (2004), compared drawings by pre-service, in-service and 2nd grade students to develop deeper understandings about beliefs about being a 'good' teacher.

Other art based research has engaged the use of film, in which teachers were portrayed, to encourage pre-service teachers to engage in critically reflective practice about themselves as teachers (Trier, 2001); animation and narrative vignettes along with pre-service teacher narratives to help develop understandings about their sense of self and their developing teacher identity (Tettegah, Whang, Taylor, & Cash, 2008); while Stuart (2006) used visual arts-based approaches to the work of addressing the perceptions of pre-service teachers views on HIV AIDS to develop understandings for their work in schools. The use of art-based methodologies within the field of teacher education provides a richness of meaning where " images can convey multiple
meanings that can be used to evoke the complexity of our work and the contradictions that are inherent to it" (Weber & Mitchell, 1995, p.18).

**Graphing**

The notion of graphing the personal and professional trajectory of the individual over the year of the Graduate Diploma program of study has been developed to add to the data collection process. This was to triangulate the data collection to capture multiple perspectives (Patton, 2002) and to verify if what was told in story, and what was drawn were replicated in the graph, using 'a/r/tography' as the method of data collection.

The personal hand drawn graph extends the idea of the visual representation of the differing contexts within which the individual endeavours to become the teacher he/she envisions. Emerging from the work of Bandura (1995) and Elder (1995) where the notion of (in this case) the developing teacher self is based on the idea of life trajectory where the interplay of changing lives and changing social worlds predicate how the individual's life will unfold. The graph provides a visual representation of John's professional and personal growth. Work, study and family inform and act on the life course of the individual and it is important to understand the past if we are to have any hope of understanding the present (Elder, 1995).

In this study rather than looking across a life span we are looking back over the twelve-month period of the research and it is in the narrative that we find how what has occurred during the life of the individual has acted on or been influential in the idea of becoming a teacher. The narrative with the graph and image of the teacher he wants to become, flesh out the developing teacher and help the researcher to get closer to the real person and his experiences. Consequently the vision of himself as a teacher and the graph of his levels of life satisfaction during the period of the study provide further information about how the individual becomes a teacher, for "we are always in the state of becoming and are shifting our position to deal with the contingencies of the different pulls" (Dunne, Pryor & Yates, 2005, p.168). The vision we have of ourselves at any time is informed by the differing contexts in which we reside at different times in our lives.

**Narrative**

The narrative as part of a/r/tography, is important in telling the story of this pre-service teacher, as it is chronological, meaningful, social and tells of the series of events that have meaning and that are produced for a particular audience (Elliott, 2005). John's story provides information about him that describes his life as he looks back and as he experiences what is happening now. However, individuals will define themselves according to how they want to be seen by others because "the narratives of lived experience—the story, or what is told—are always selective, partial and in tension" (Britzman, 2003, p. 35). The teller of the life story divulges only what it is that they wish to share with the listener. To make sense of who we are, the narrative is important because it is through the telling of story that our "identity is both interpreted and constructed" (Rodgers & Scott, 2008, p. 737). The relationships we develop in the
contexts in which we live and work and the time we spend in these contexts affect the story being told (Rodgers & Scott, 2008). For John, the telling of his narrative changes during the year of the study as the circumstances of his life change and as the teacher self he is becoming is formed and reformed.

The narratives, drawings and the graph tell much about 'the multiple contexts' in which the pre-teacher self is being formed. This self that is negotiated and dynamic and dependent on context, people, objects, tools (Gee, 1997) and that influences the way John envisioned, reflected, related to, and felt about the journey he undertook. His unique trajectory is informed and constrained by his personal history, dispositions towards learning, and what was happening in his life and they all have an important effect on the teacher he is becoming. In this interpretative study, the data provides rich descriptions of one pre-service teacher experiences.

In working with John during the twelve months of the study, it became apparent that the multiple contexts within which he was becoming a teacher were informing that process. For John, becoming a teacher seemed to be without difficulties as he negotiated the experiences of the past, with what was happening in the university, the school and in his personal life. His stories and his drawings seemed to indicate that he was negotiating the differing contexts with ease. It wasn't until he drew a graph to outline the contexts of the personal and the professional that a different story became apparent. It was here that the vision of himself as the teacher and the multiple contexts in which he was situated began to be seen more clearly. As father, husband, worker, student, and prospective teacher, he began to describe the pressure of the competing demands on him emotionally and physically. It was where those aspects of himself—which may previously have remained hidden—were brought to the forefront through the use of an arts based inquiry. The emotional, the physical and the intellectual are aspects of the self that must be in balance for the pre-service teacher to make sense of who they are becoming (Alsup, 2006). Developing an identity as a teacher, becoming what he thought he should be within the contexts in which he lived and worked, were tensions John was trying to negotiate.

The development of teacher identity has been the focus of a great deal of research which has explored how pre-service teachers become a teacher from a number of perspectives: beliefs (Alsup, 2006; Coughlin, 2001; Minor, Onwuegbuzie, Witcher & James 2002; Murphy, Delli & Edwards, 2004; Scott, 2005), visioning (Britzman, 2003; Fenimore-Smith, 2004; Hammerness, 2003; Lim, Ieridou & Goodwin, 2006; Utey and Showalter, 2007), reflection (Loughran, 2002), narratives, (Beattie, 2000, 2001; Elliott, 2005) personal history (Sleeter, 2008) and social and cultural connections (Hoban, 2004). In a seminal work, Rodgers and Scott (2008) have drawn together much of the extant work and outlined the main findings. Their study concluded that teacher identity is based on contexts, relationships, stories and emotions.

In this current research, I wanted to continue this exploration and to extend the idea that it is the contexts of the pre-service teacher's own experiences that inform the process of becoming a teacher, and that emotion and relationships are part of that context. The stories told about these contexts are only a part of the developing teacher
self, and arts based methods provide an opportunity to move beyond the words and into a deeper understanding of the challenges and tensions faced by pre-service teachers. These studies have indicated that both drawing and narrative are key art-based methods in developing this understanding.

Inquiry

In a series of three interviews and using 'a/r/tography' as the methodology, John was asked to draw his vision of himself as the teacher, on two occasions as part of these interviews. The first interview was at the beginning of the year before the Teacher Education program of study began, the second, midway through the program after the first school experience, and the last at the end of the academic year. In the first interview, he was asked to draw his vision of himself and again at the final interview. He was also asked to graph his experiences of the year both personally and professionally. This envisioning of himself as the teacher was to allow him to articulate his ideal teacher self and provided valuable information about that vision. Visioning can help the pre-service teacher bring to the surface beliefs held about teachers and teaching and by sharing the vision they can be helped to understand what it is they believe about the profession. For example, in Utley and Showalter's (2007) paper on pre-service teachers' visions of themselves as mathematics teachers, the majority of students still perceived themselves as at the centre of learning despite explicit teaching about student centred classrooms, Reflecting on these visions can help teacher educators assist with the gap that may appear between the hoped for teacher self and the reality of the personal experience (Hammerness, 2003). This gap can be the disconnect between theory and practice, and when pre-service teachers look back to previous experiences they can take up familiar practice from a past context (Fenimore-Smith, 2004). The process of drawing the vision offers ".... a different kind of glimpse into human sense-making than written or spoken texts, because they can express that which is not easily put into words: the ineffable, the elusive, the not-yet-thought-through, the subconscious" (Weber & Mitchell, 1995, p. 34).

Because becoming a teacher is a complex task, the tools needed to track the journey of a pre-service teacher needed to be able to capture that complexity. Therefore, a triangulated approach was used to verify and validate the qualitative analysis (Patton, 2002). The methodological tools of drawing, narrative and graphing enabled a more complex understanding of what is a complex process and to answer the question—How do Graduate Diploma of Education Primary pre-service teachers envision the teacher they are becoming? Drawings and narratives have been used in previous research (Black, 1999; Murphy et al, 2004; Utley & Showalter, 2007), but in this case using narrative, images of the self as a teacher and graphing levels of personal and professional satisfaction are not reflected in the literature.

Telling the story

To tell the story of another is a difficult process. Despite the best efforts of the teller to 'know' the other, the story is always going to be predicated upon the teller's view of the world. In this study, it is my understandings and interpretation of John's process to
become a teacher that is described. In John's own words, we read briefly of his life history, how he came to teaching, what it was like to be the teacher and how he has felt about the year of study. The themes that arise from his narrative are matched with the themes that arise from the drawings and his graph of life satisfaction.

John's drawings were analysed in terms of the 'particulars' or the 'salient features' (Murphy, Delli & Edwards, 2004), that is, what is in each drawing and how this related to John's vision of himself as the teacher. This included, whether artifacts of teaching or classrooms were included (e.g. whiteboards, desks, books, writing equipment), whether children are in the picture, how the teacher was positioned in the class, what the teacher was doing and how these related to John's narrative and graph. An analysis of the two drawings and the graph was also included in order to gain insight as to how John had understood his trajectory throughout the year.

**John's story**

John's story was told over the year of the Graduate Diploma Program during the three interviews. Each interview focused on particular aspects of becoming a teacher such as his personal history, his experiences of schools and in the final interview a reflection of the year. Two excerpts are presented in detail below, specifically his personal history, and his teaching experiences. In the excerpt below, he recounted his background in some detail, including his decision to become a teacher and the people and events that influenced this decision.

**Personal history**

I was born in the UK and my family moved to Australia when I was in my teens. I finished high school in Australia and studied computing and mathematics at university. I worked in the mining industry for a couple of years and then made a complete career change and did a Graduate Diploma in Outdoor Pursuits. I work in a Christian organisation as the Director of Camps and Mission and so I've worked with many kids and teenagers over the last eleven years. But I've kind of reached a point where I can't see any career move from here and I'm ready for something else, so I decided on teaching, mainly because of the experiences I've had working closely with teachers, schools and kids. I know the kind of work teachers do especially outside of the classroom.

When I was ten I had a teacher who really knew me as a person and he came to my house when I was sick to encourage me to join a scout group he was developing. My parents still say he was the best thing that happened to me in my schooling. In high school in England I had two really terrible teachers who were violent toward students and I don't know how they got away with that. I've also seen inspiring teachers through the camps I've organised and all of these have had an influence on the kind of teacher I want to be.

I see myself concerned with, and actively involved in the local community through the kids in the school. I see teaching as being about engaging with the
community and I'd like to see myself being an active participant in the life of
that community. The primary thing I want the kids to see is that I value
openness and authenticness and I want them to know as much as is
appropriate of the whole me, and that my teaching comes from within me and
who I am now.

At the time this interview was conducted, John created his first drawing to illustrate his
vision of himself as a teacher (Figure 1).

In the first drawing John has himself as part of a circle with children, although he is
represented by the largest figure and is at the top of the drawing. This may represent
himself as being in charge, in control of the class, as the most important person. As he
explains, "this is about the kids and connections, that is, the connections between me,
the kids and then the connections between them and each other and their wider family
or community." John was confident in his belief that he understood teaching from his
experiences running camps for adolescent students. Although the image indicates no
artifacts of teaching and the drawing is non-figurative, the intention is clear. He is part
of the class and as he says, "I'm trying to work on empowerment of the kids." John's
vision of himself as the teacher could be described as 'ideal'. There is no reference to
the reality of the daily life of a class despite his previous experiences with children in a
camp situation.

Teaching
In this second excerpt of John's story, he discusses the match he felt between his vision
of what teaching was and what his experiences indicated to him.

The school experience was really good, very, very good. It was a year 6/7
class and I was able to do a lot of teaching because he (the mentor teacher)
trusted me with the kids. I had to really work on the classroom management stuff because I was used to dealing with kids in a camp environment and I needed to be different in the class. Although at the start management was an issue, the kids did settle down with me and I got a bit of respect. I guess I have to get my head around what schools expect in terms of management. I like a bit of noise and activity in the classroom and so I don't equate management with silence and so I guess I had some chance to experiment a bit with, when stuff becomes disruptive versus when there's a certain amount of banter in a useful way. These kids are in a pretty good school and it's not an area with huge amounts of disruption and so I think what I was dealing with was just kids that were trying me out a bit.

Thus far it has confirmed that I'm well suited to teaching and that most of what I would have thought about teaching seems to line up with what my experience has been, I haven't taught in a variety of situations yet or with a variety of kids so I'm quite conscious that my experience is quite narrow. I think I'm a bit of an idealist and I can see that teachers who have been teaching for a while will become more cynical perhaps and I've seen a lot of that. There's a huge variety in the teaching profession.

I'm a little daunted by teaching but still feel motivated and committed towards the pathway (to teaching). There's a lot put onto teachers now, more than ever before to be responsible for learning, to be inclusive, to cope with different levels of kids, to try and manage behaviour using a different set of tools to those that were used 10, 20 year ago, so I think to teach, to be an excellent teacher is very daunting. I'm not doing the course in one year and I'm glad about that decision because I'm not ready to go out and teach.

Nothing I've done in terms of the course or school experience has dissuaded me from teaching and if anything I'm more comfortable with the idea than I was when I started. Because the school experience was really good and the school reacted positively to me and I got some good affirmation from the teachers, supervisor and some parents, I've gone back to the school just to visit and I could really see myself doing this (teaching).

It is a positive thing because having been in the working world for 15 years I've spent several years thinking what's next, realising I've needed a change I was probably going to study towards some other career and deciding that primary teaching was the career. Then putting in the work to earn that qualification and juggling all that with family. It is a positive thing because I have a longer term strategy and I'm now half way through the course and I'm clear about wanting this and there's no sense that I've got myself into something I shouldn't have.

In his second drawing completed at the final interview John has a different perception of himself as the teacher.
The second drawing is more complex, but still indicates a strong belief in connection, although now with the wider school and global community. For John the child (the arrow) would negotiate the class, the school and the community with the teacher acting as a facilitator to empower the child on the outward going journey. The teacher now appears as part of a circle of influence encompassing all. This change from being part of the class to a facilitator indicates a change in his perceptions of himself as the teacher. From being part of the class in January (Figure 1), to November (Figure 2), where he sees himself as surrounding the class, with the sense that he is important in the facilitation of the journey that each child must make. John had concerns about his ability to manage a class of children and came to the conclusion that, “I have to get my head around what schools expect in terms of management.” The drawing may well represent his attempts to do just that. John found his school experiences confirmed for him his suitability for teaching and that his vision of himself as the teacher and his experience of being a teacher were closely aligned. However, the Graph of Life Satisfaction also drawn during the final interview indicates that perhaps not everything was as connected as it might have been and that the competing pressures John was feeling were beginning to have an effect on the teacher he was becoming.

Figure 2: John's vision of himself as the teacher – November
In Figure 3, John has used three lines to tell the story of his year. The university line, the 'me' line which runs closely to the university line, and what he called 'my life satisfaction line' appearing at a lower level than either of the other two indicators. John sees these three contexts clearly and in different places on the graph. There is his developing teacher self, negotiating his university course and then there is what might be called his 'personal self' or the 'self in his home life' and it is here where a slightly different story is told. In his graph we see that there were problems with his job and that subsequently he changed it to improve his family situation. "It was all becoming too much." He then has an improved reported rated of satisfaction until August when his health becomes an issue. For John the family, work and university were becoming difficult to manage and it is in the graph that we see these things being played out. John was a willing participant in the research but did not share any of the issues that were causing difficulty in the interviews in the early part of the year. He appeared confident of his success, as he became the teacher he wanted to be and was affirmed by his school experiences. However in the graph, the personal and what was happening in his life began to interact with his ability to deal with the professional part of his life and this caused him some stress.

![Figure 3: John's graph of life satisfaction – November](image)

As John noted in his final interview,

I changed jobs so I could work more from home. I had sort of run out of steam in the other job and was going down hill but working from home in terms of
family life has been great, although it has brought with it a whole lot of other challenges. I had this virus that has dragged on for months and I have susceptibility towards depression from having had previous episodes and one of the things that bothers me about this virus is that it leaves me a bit susceptible. Depression is one of those things you can slide into gradually and I've had a bit of a history of the treadmill of depression treatments. I guess what sustains me at the moment is that this is a situation I'm willing to sustain for a time and for a purpose.

It is now that there is a possibility of a different interpretation of the November drawing (Figure 2). John having tried to keep each part of his life in separate compartments is now aware that the contexts in which he is becoming a teacher have an effect on that becoming. Being a teacher is about the contexts in which the teaching and learning is enacted and in this later drawing we see that he views the teacher in a much broader sense. The encompassing, facilitating teacher may be his understanding of how context mediates how he is in the world and how this has an impact on his work as the teacher.

Although there is evidence in the education literature that personal history, including experiences of teachers and teaching, inform the individual's disposition to learn (Billett, 2009; Britzman, 2003; Fenimore-Smith, 2004; Hammerness, 2003, Minor, et al., 2002), there is little evidence to indicate how what is happening in the life of the individual interacts with, and informs the process of becoming a teacher. For John, what was happening in his life—his job and his illness—were having an effect on the teacher he was becoming. John was reluctant to talk about these issues but in his graph, these feelings spilled out in a form described by Weber and Mitchell (2004) as 'unbidden'. As John suggests, "There's not much room for anything going amiss whether it's health or a family crisis."

Discussion

What does all this tell us about how this particular pre-service teacher experienced and envisioned himself within the education program? The experience for John seemed to be dependent on how he understood teaching and the work of teachers, his life history in terms of previous experiences of teachers and teaching, and what was happening in his personal life. It seems clear that what pre service teachers bring with them to their teacher education programs in terms of their personal history, dispositions, experiences of schools and teaching, attitudes and vision of what teachers are and do has an effect on the teacher they are becoming and become. (Minor et al, 2002). For John his previous experiences, his vision of himself as the teacher and his attitude toward that becoming and what was happening in his personal life influenced how he experienced the process of becoming a teacher. In fact what was happening in his personal life seems to have had a profound effect. However, it was not mentioned in the interviews and only became clear through an explanation of the graph of life satisfaction. "Much of what we have seen or known, thought or imagined, remembered or repressed, slips unbidden into our drawings, revealing unexplored ambiguities, contradictions and
connections. That which we have forgotten, that which we might censor from our speech and writing, often escapes into our drawings" (Weber & Mitchell, 1995, p. 34).

It was this slippage that provided rich data and enabled a clearer picture of John to emerge. The frustrations, disappointments, concerns, fears and joys that occurred during the twelve months of the research were revealed in greater detail and gave an insight into the struggle that is 'becoming a teacher' for this pre-service teacher. This struggle within the individual, is shaped through social interactions and mediated by life history and the "individual's relationship to the meaning of his/her lived experience" (Britzman, 2003, p. 23).

As a researcher of the lived experience of one Graduate Diploma of Education Primary pre-service teacher, I found that the triangulation of the data collection methods of a/r/tography (narrative, drawing and graphing) enabled a clearer picture of the experience of becoming a teacher, a 'search for meaning' (Sinner, et al., 2006) within the contexts of becoming. What was not stated in the interviews seemed to slip unbidden (Weber & Mitchell, 2004) into the images and graph. How much I was permitted to know and what was censored I do not know, although I was privileged to engage in discussions with John about his experiences and contexts within which he was becoming a teacher. I am also not clear about how much the original vision of himself as the teacher is replicated in the second drawing (Figure 2). Karen Hammerness (2003) suggests that the vision is stable over time, and to some extent that seems to be true. However, when the balance of life is disrupted and one part of that life dominates, it appears that the vision of the individual as the teacher can be disrupted. In the representation of life trajectory it became obvious that what is said in the interview is sometimes censored and only those aspects of John that he wished to expose were presented to the interviewer. John had concerns during the year and it was a combination of the interview and the graph that allowed these concerns to surface. He was reticent in discussing disabling factors in his journey to becoming a teacher until the graph was completed. It was only then that he seemed to be aware that there had been difficulties that impinged on the developing teacher he was becoming. This realisation seemed to catch him by surprise, and it was almost as if by completing the graph he gave himself permission to share with another the difficulties he had faced during the year.

In an investigation of the emotional, the physical and the intellectual aspects in teacher education, Janet Alsup (2006) has suggested that they must be in balance for a pre-service teacher to make sense of who they are becoming. It is my contention that without this balance becoming a teacher is a difficult and perhaps impossible task. John's drawings, graph and abbreviated narrative provide an opportunity to discover what is happening for him and to develop understandings about his life balance. In Alsup's (2006) terms the 'balance' of John's life was disrupted. He is sure he will complete the course but what is happening in his life is informing his decisions about how he will complete the course. The narrative, the drawing and the graph together provide a more fully rounded picture of John's lived experience as he works towards becoming the teacher he envisions himself to be.
Conclusion

The experience of becoming a teacher is about developing a teacher identity that is predicated on previous history, personal interactions, and what is happening in your life. "The influences of the past, present and future [are] caught up in the images developed by the pre service teachers" (Black, 1999, p. 11). Utilising aspects of art/o/graphy as a methodology these influences can be brought to the forefront of teacher education programs because becoming a teacher is a struggle within the multiple contexts of an individual's life. The personal, the physical and the emotional need to be in balance (Alsup, 2006) and this struggle for balance can catch pre-service teachers unaware, for it can appear that becoming a teacher is a seamless process when viewed from outside teacher education programs. Becoming a teacher is not a static process and the becoming does not end at the completion of the teacher education program. As Gee (1997) suggests it is the individual's progress through multiple pathways (contexts) that makes the 'you unique and individual' (p. xv), therefore it is important to assist the pre-service teacher to understand that they bring to the education program existing beliefs and understandings about teachers and teaching. By analysing and reflecting on what they have drawn, written and narrated, and by developing understandings of their past lives and what they are experiencing within the university, in schools and in their personal lives, they can be assisted to find not only the image or vision of themselves as the teacher but the way forward to put that vision into practice; to negotiate the 'prickly aspects' of the process; to know that teacher identity is informed by and informs the multiple contexts in which it develops. Further research on this interaction will enhance the possibilities for teacher education.

References


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6.2 Summary

In the previous article, I describe how events happening in John’s life affected his progress to becoming the teacher. The arts-based inquiry gave breadth and depth to the data gathering process. In the case of John, the depth of the data was indicated by what was revealed in the graph of his year as he looked back. This revelation would not have been available to the researcher otherwise.

John as a father, husband, worker, pre-service teacher, son, brother, friend and so on, experienced multiple realities. For him it was important to be a good husband, father and student and, although he expressed satisfaction with his choice of profession and felt comfortable in schools, his pictorial representations showed that he was suffering from the intensity of these experiences.

The contrast between the narrative account and what was expressed in the graph of his year provided valuable data that would otherwise have remained hidden about John’s becoming. John was always positive in his interviews, and gave the researcher the feeling that he was progressing well. But the graph provided the opportunity for him to reflect further and to talk through some of the difficulties he had faced during the year.

Qualitative research requires an approach and methods that enable the researcher to get close to the action of those under investigation so that normally occurring behaviours can be captured. Although the interview is useful in gaining data about a particular case, in some circumstances the interviewee will tell only that which they wish to be known, and will either consciously or unconsciously censor information
being expressed. John may have been aware of the researcher as part of the teaching staff, and may have felt reluctant to share some of his concerns. It is also to be expected that the individual may not wish to share issues that are of a personal nature. So for the researcher, the conclusions drawn from data collected can only be based on the limited nature of what is said or expressed.

Although this seems obvious, it is a reminder to the researcher about the tenuous nature of data collected. In the final chapter, I look carefully at the research questions and how the data and subsequent analysis addressed those questions. I also look at the framework used to structure the research and the questions and discuss the implications of this. Finally, I look at the recommendations based on my research to inform future work in the area of teacher education.
Chapter Seven

Conclusion

7. Introduction

In this chapter, I present a final focus on the research questions and the suggested outcomes of the study. In the first section, I summarise the reasons for the choice of the theoretical and methodological approaches followed by a brief outline of the case studies of the four participants. Then I revisit the research aims and juxtapose these with the research findings. Next I consider the contribution of the research in extending understandings of the becoming teacher in relation to the conceptual framework, life history, experiences of teachers and teaching and dispositions. This is followed by the implications for changes in practice to support the needs of Graduate Diploma Primary pre-service teachers. Finally, I make suggestions for future research on the experience of pre-service teachers during their teaching education programs.

7.1 Approach

To investigate the key question ‘How do pre-service teachers enrolled in a one year Graduate Diploma experience becoming the teacher?’ I had to first review appropriate theoretical underpinnings for the work. Constructivist theory informed my choice of modes of research, because of my understanding that learning is a social practice and meaning is constructed with others. The approaches of narrative and arts-based inquiry enabled me to interact with the participants and to be part of the research process. The interviews were semi-structured and conducted three times.
over an academic year, and from them, narratives were developed to give voice to the participants. As a form of triangulation, two arts-based inquiry methods were used; one, the participants were asked to draw their vision of themselves as the teacher at the first and the final interview; and two, as part of the final interview they were also asked to track their levels of life and university satisfaction for the year via a graph. This triangulation provided rich data to assist me in developing a response to the research questions. The case studies of four Graduate Diploma Primary teacher education students provided sketches of the way they experienced becoming the teacher.

7.1.1 The pre-service teachers

For Cara, Fern, John and Tom the contexts within which they were becoming the teacher were personal, but at the same time embedded in the social. Becoming involves interacting within each participant’s social world; however, it is also about what is happening in her/his life. For each of them becoming the teacher did not mean a seamless path from not being the teacher to becoming the teacher. As noted by Britzman (2003, p. 36) “There are tensions between being and becoming a teacher as they draw on the past and present in the process of becoming to know”. A case study was made of each pre-service teacher’s journey to describe the process of her/his becoming the teacher. The following is a brief summary of each case.

Each of the pre-service teachers brought with her/him particular views about the work of teachers and teaching, and this informed the process of becoming the teacher. In the case of Tom, he was determined to become a particular kind of teacher, such as those he had experienced in his childhood and who had inspired him. As suggested
by Darling-Hammond (2011), learning to teach is shaped by the experiences the individual had as a student. Tom grew up in a family where no one had been to university and where he was expected to work hard to achieve his goals. He was encouraged by his family and by the teachers he encountered. His sense of self worth, his sense of agency and efficacy enhanced his dispositions, enabling him to be resilient in the face of difficulty (Johnson, et al, 2012). Tom’s fundamental beliefs about teaching were not changed during the twelve months of the teacher education program and his reading of the ‘text’ was filtered through his sense of what the work of teaching was and how he would enact the teacher role.

For John, the vision of himself as the teacher was informed by his experiences of schools and teaching, and by his work with adolescent children. He was inclined to believe himself to be what he described as a ‘good’ teacher. As a child he had experienced both good and bad teachers and was determined to be a nurturing and encouraging teacher. His family encouraged and supported his endeavours, and although he faced personal difficulties during the year he was able to manage them and take appropriate action. He responded to challenges, overcame difficulties and had the capacity to cope; capacities described as leading to resilience (Mansfield, Beltman, Price & McConney, 2012). John’s dispositions enabled him to be resilient in the face of adversity and to read the text of teaching. The match between his vision of himself as the teacher and the reality of schools and classrooms, led him to successfully complete the program.

For Cara and Fern, the vision of how they saw themselves as the teacher and the reality of the experience during professional/field experiences and work did not meet
their expectations. Fern’s vision of herself as the teacher at the centre of quiet orderly class (See appendix 5) was not replicated within the classrooms she attended. Her previous experiences of schools and teachers, and her own teaching had been positive and she expected that this would continue. However, Fern’s personal life was difficult, given the responsibilities she had for her sick husband and mother. Her previous experiences in life had not always been positive and she expressed anger at what she had to deal with. Dealing with the impending deaths of two loved family members took a personal toll on Fern, and it is not surprising that she found it too difficult to deal with the complexities of reading the text of teaching and becoming the teacher. Her life balance (Alsup, 2006) was such, she was incapacitated and unable to deal with any difficulties. Her decision to leave the program gave her the space to deal with the personal issues that were always in the forefront of her thinking (See appendix 5).

In a similar way, although for different reasons, Cara too was unable to reconcile her vision of herself as the teacher and the reality she saw in her role as a teacher assistant. Her reading of the text of teaching was permeated by her experiences as an unhappy, rebellious and difficult student and her view that the schools and teachers handled her situation badly. Her present position as a pre-service teacher was influenced by the pain and hurt of her past and she was unable to bring that hurt forward (Strong-Wilson, 2006). Learning to be the teacher can be a place of conflict, where the past collides with the present (Britzman, 2007). Cara was keen to be the kind of teacher she had needed. But the situation she confronted in classrooms did not allow her to meet this expectation. She found classrooms to be unhappy places and she could not see herself becoming the teacher she envisioned; in other words,
she was unable to develop a viable reading of the text. Cara’s disposition to deal with difficulties was compromised by her personal situation and she was unable to reconcile life decisions for herself and her children with becoming the teacher she wanted to be. This inability to become the teacher she desired, coupled with the expectations of friends and family meant that Cara became unable to cope with what was expected in schools and in the university and ultimately she too left the program.

7.2 Research aims

The aim of the research as outlined in Chapter One, was to investigate how Graduate Diploma Primary students in an Australian University experienced becoming the teacher. The subsidiary questions, were about the extent to which previous experiences of teachers and teaching, life history and how what was happening in their lives intervened in this process, how the individual’s dispositions formed through life experiences, and how what was happening in their lives acted upon the process of developing the teacher self, and how these pre-service teachers envisioned the teacher they were becoming? To make sense of these data I developed a framework exploring the development of the teacher self, that was adapted from the literacy model constructed by Freebody and Luke (1990) and Luke and Freebody (1999).

The aims of the research were linked to the research questions, one of which was to assess the value of such a framework to understand the process of becoming the teacher. These research questions were addressed in the three published articles Glass (2007), Glass (2011), Glass (2012). In many ways these research questions seemed to be unproblematic. However, investigating such questions required the
researcher to work with the participants and to gain their trust as the research journey proceeded. The questions asked of the participants in a series of three interviews were shaped by the framework of reading the text of teaching, which was designed to enable the researcher to gain insights into the process of becoming the teacher. Table 2 provides a brief outline of the research questions, findings and implications gleaned from the three published articles.

Table 2: A summary of the research questions, findings and implications of the three articles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article title</th>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Implications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Glass, C. (2007). Becoming a Teacher: Tom’s story. The International Journal of Learning, 14 (8) p 133-139. | What do Graduate Diploma Primary pre-service teachers bring to their programs as understandings and knowledge of and about teachers and teaching?  
What are their experiences of education?  
How does this mediate the process of becoming the teacher?  
How useful is the literacy framework as a model to frame understandings about becoming the teacher? | Tom’s view of teaching, filtered through his world-view of love and community, were unchanged by his experiences in schools and the university environment.  
The teacher he is becoming can be glimpsed at through his reading of the text of teaching. | Further development of the framework in terms of its fit to understand how the individual is reading the text of teaching. |
What informs the development of the teacher self?  
How did the use of arts-based methods and narrative inform understandings about the process of becoming the teacher? | Becoming the teacher is about developing an identity based on previous history, social interactions and ‘what is happening’ in the personal life of the individual.  
Becoming the teacher (i.e. developing a teacher identity) is informed by and informs the multiple | Need for further development of drawing, graphing and personal stories to assist in developing understandings about becoming the teacher. |

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How does what is happening in the lives of the pre-service teachers act upon the process of becoming the teacher?  
Is the literacy framework useful in developing understandings about learning to be the teacher within a teacher education program? | The personal, social and natural factors interrelate to inform the individual’s reading of the text of teaching.  
The participants relied on what they brought to their teacher education program to assist them understand the text of teaching.  
What is happening in the personal realm of the individual has an effect on the teacher they are becoming and their capacity to read the text. | Teacher educators providing opportunities for pre-service teachers to explore the complexities of their lives both in the past and in the present will assist them to develop their reading and understandings of the text of teaching.  
Research to continue the development of the framework as a tool to understand the process of becoming the teacher. |

These questions and implications are the basis upon which the substantive findings of the research are discussed.

### 7.3 The findings

The findings drawn from this study are derived from the experience of the four Graduate Diploma Primary pre-service teachers as they encountered and negotiated their teacher education program. The development of the conceptual framework
based on the literacy model, an understanding of the teacher each pre-service teacher aspires to be, life history and experiences of teaching and teachers leading to dispositions of each participant to cope with the complexity of the task that is becoming the teacher, and her/his personal life are outlined here. There has been a great deal of research in teacher education focussing on the developing teacher self and teacher identity (Alsup, 2006; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Britzman, 2003; Dunne et al, 2005; Hammerness, 2003; Lim et al, 2006; Murphy, et al, 2004; Rodger & Scott, 2008; Utley & Showalter, 2007; Thomas & Beauchamp, 2011) and there are links to this research in this study. However, the novel approach of using a literacy model to frame the study along-side the arts-based methods has enabled a fresh perspective on some of the issues for pre-service teachers and for those that work with them in Schools of Education.

7.3.1 Reading the text of teaching: the conceptual framework

The model of the four practices of the reader (Freebody & Luke, 1990 and Luke & Freebody, 1999) provided a valuable resource from which I was able to develop a conceptual framework that related learning to be the teacher with learning to be a reader of text. In the same way that the literacy model (See Table 1) outlines the four interrelated aspects of code breaker, text participant, text user and text analysis so my framework for developing an understanding of the text of teacher education has a similar set of criteria. In Table 3 on the following page, I show the framework reproduced from Glass (2012), juxtaposing the relationships between the four practices of the reader and the four practices of the teacher. Personal history, the technical skills of teaching, the social act of teaching, and reflection were the four interrelated aspects of the framework to develop knowledge of how pre-service
teachers develop their teacher selves and become the teacher.

Table 3: A framework for exploring the development of the teacher self.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text participant - semantic practices</th>
<th>Personal history</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding and composing meaningful texts from within the meaning systems of the context. What the reader brings to the text as previous experience.</td>
<td>What the pre-service teacher brings to the teacher education context as dispositions, what is happening in their lives, experiences of teachers and teaching, and how these act upon the process of becoming a teacher.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code breaker</th>
<th>The technical skills of teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognising and using the fundamental features of a text.</td>
<td>Understanding and using the fundamentals of teaching-how to teach, what to teach, knowing about the learners. The link between theory and practice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text user – pragmatic practices</th>
<th>Relational – the social act of teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The social act of using text in a functional way to communicate, and to understand the relationship between form and function of various genres.</td>
<td>Relating to the realities of students, schools, university and the wider community. Understanding the social relationships inherent in the practice of teaching and learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text analyst – critical practices</th>
<th>Critical reflection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develops understandings that texts position readers differently and can both constrain and influence the reader.</td>
<td>Develops understandings about the self in relation to what is valued by the university, community and schools and how this can constrain and influence the developing teacher.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The framework was used to guide the research with the premise that literacy is no longer the sole province of the written word and that the term has come to mean so much more than the capacity to read and write. Luke and Woods (2009) explain it as follows,

Literacies are used for a range of human expression and work, for everyday self-expression, identity formation, economic exchange, cultural engagement, religious experience, civic life, commerce, industry and leisure – taking on different designs and modalities, rituals and text practices, demands and expectations in diverse institutional sites (p. 1).
The broadening of the meaning of ‘literacy’ is elaborated in science and mathematics where it has come to mean an understanding of concepts and problem solving capacities in the real world (Holbrook & Rannikmae, 2008; Ojose, 2011). In much the same way, the use of this extended literacy applies to pre-service teachers’ need to develop the capacity to comprehend meaning across various aspects of what it is to become the teacher. Furthermore, this becoming entails the capacity to be able to demonstrate this understanding in the real world of classrooms with children, colleagues and the wider education community.

This adapted conceptual framework allowed me to follow the idea of the development of all aspects of the becoming teacher and to have an awareness of the importance of the emotional, relational and analytic aspects of becoming the teacher that are interrelated with the practical. That is, whereas the pre-service teacher is invested in all aspects of the becoming process, having some control of the practical or the technical helps the individual to deal more pragmatically with the other aspects, particularly when the personal interrupts the professional side of their developing teaching self (Alsup, 2006; Billet, 2009; Rodgers & Scott, 2008; Utley & Showalter, 2007). In the case of Fern, the pressure from both the schools, and the university meant that she felt caught in a bind and could not meet the requirements of either appropriately. This coupled with her personal life of facing the impending loss of those who mattered most to her, meant the technical aspects of the teaching role became problematic for her. As the researcher, when faced with this reality of Fern’s life, my attention was drawn to the support needed by pre-service teachers as they grapple with such difficulties.
In considering the framework from its first iteration (see Table 1) to its second (see Table 3), I became aware that there were aspects that required developing. For the participants in the research process, it was apparent in their conversations, drawings and graphs that it was much more than the technical aspects of teaching that were playing on their capacity to read the text of teaching. For Tom, his beliefs in love and community were driving his reading of the text, whereas John, despite his positive view of himself as the teacher, had personal issues that were disrupting his reading of the text. In the cases of Fern and Cara, both had personal situations and a life history that made reading and understanding the text of teaching extremely difficult. As suggested by Billett (2009), Darling-Hammond (2011), Lortie (1975), Minor et al (2002) and Murphy et al, 2004), life history has an effect on the way an individual becomes the teacher. The capacity to deal with difficulties, including the dispositions developed throughout life, is important in the becoming process and requires the pre-service teacher to confront these difficulties in order to explicate their own understandings of the developing teacher self. This critical reflection is imperative if the pre-service teacher is to develop a capacity to read and understand the text of teaching.

There is a danger in reducing and quantifying the complex process of becoming in which relationships, past history, the social, and the capacity to analyse are entailed. As Leonard (2012) suggests in regards to the current Australian Standards for Teachers, (the standards) make no reference to the social context of teaching, expecting only that teachers will have teaching strategies responsive to the strengths and needs of students from diverse backgrounds. Similarly the National (sic) Standards do not articulate a role for teachers in forming, critiquing and investigating the appropriateness of curriculum. Rather they [teachers] are to use curriculum and assessment knowledge in a technical sense to design
learning and teaching programs” (p. 59).

Leonard goes on to suggest that the Standards are promulgating a “narrow ‘technicist’ conception of teaching” and that “In this discourse, teacher professional knowledge and teacher professional practice are constructed as largely the same thing, and knowledge of cultural and linguistic difference is not relevant for neophyte teachers” (p. 59).

It is clear that the social aspect of teaching is of great importance in the process of becoming the teacher (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Botha & Onwu, 2013; Olsen, 2011; Rodgers & Scott, 2008) and therefore, when developing the framework to outline the reading of the text of teaching, I was mindful of making clear that the cultural and the social are crucial to the process of becoming and being the teacher. Also important is the capacity to be a critical user of text for it this that makes for the truly accomplished reader. As Luke and Woods (2009) suggest, it is the “readers, writers, listeners and viewers who have a cogent, articulated and relevant understandings of texts, their techniques, their investments and their consequences – and who are able to use these understandings and capacities to act mindfully and justly to change their worlds” (p. 9) that will make a difference.

Listing particular attributes for in-service and pre-service teachers can mean that much that is important will be overlooked, and so in developing the framework for understanding how pre-service teachers come to read the text of teacher education I am mindful that this listing could be counter productive. The narrow focus in the Australian Standards (2011), wherein the social and the critical are not explicitly included and where the inference is on the ‘industry ready’ graduate, means that it is
possible that those things that matter to the pre-service teacher will not be included in teacher education programs.

As for what is important and necessary in teacher education for pre-service teachers: the personal, the emotional and the social, that are not included in the Australian Standards (Leonard, 2012), it becomes imperative that those of us in teacher education do include these elements. The following figure is presented as the third iteration of the framework for reading and understanding the text of teaching, written in an attempt to include these important aspects of the becoming process.

**Figure 2. A framework for developing the teacher self: Reading and Understanding the Text of Teaching**

The practices included in Figure 2 are by no means meant as an exhaustive list; rather it is an attempt to convey the complexity of the work that is becoming the teacher.
All aspects of the framework are interrelated and must be developed together if the pre-service teacher is to gain the understandings required for reading and comprehending the complex text that is teaching.

The third iteration of the framework acknowledges this interrelatedness by presenting it diagrammatically as circular rather than linear. In a linear form it is possible to understand the framework as a sequential process, when it is imperative that each aspect of reading the text of teaching is developed together. Nevertheless, I believe, a focus on the technical or formative skills, in the early stages of a teacher education program is important to help the pre-service teachers develop confidence in their classroom practice. However, the technical without the social implications, an understanding of what the individual brings to the work of teaching and the capacity to critique both the self and the profession, means that the reading will do little more than produce a technicist teacher who is unable to understand the broader implications of the work of teaching. Researchers have examined many aspects of being a teacher:

- Life history (Billett, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2011; Lortie, 1975; Minor et al, 2002; Murphy, et al, 2004)
- Experiences of teachers and teaching (Britzman, 2007; Hammerness, 2003; Olsen, 2011; Scott, 2005)
- Dispositions (Billett, 1997, 2008, 2009; Sleeter, 2009)
- Reasons for choosing teaching (Kauchak & Eggen, 2011; Richardson & Watt, 2005, 2006; Tyler & Stokes, 2002)
• Emotional and social (Alsup, 2006; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Cook, 2009; Olsen, 2011)

• Technical skills and relating to the real world of schools (Lortie, 1975; Britzman, 2003; Witcher et al, 2008)

• Reflecting on experiences (Sleeter, 2008; Witcher et al, 2008),

• Understanding the personal narrative (Beattie, 2000, 2001; Ewing & Manuel, 2005; Rodgers & Scott 2008).

However, it is connecting all the parts to make the coherent whole that has emerged from this research as an important finding. Focusing in any one area will not be helpful to the pre-service teacher as was clear with Cara. Her reading of the text was filtered through her view of herself as the teacher and despite assistance to develop technical skills and to participate in classroom activities she was unable to do so. In being supported to read and develop understandings about the text of teaching, pre-service teachers can be helped to acknowledge all aspects of their emerging teacher self and begin the process of developing an identity as the teacher they want to become.

The focus on understanding the text of teaching is an important aspect of the framework as reading has at it its core the development of understanding. An emphasis on the technical aspect of teaching: implementing curriculum, assessment, reporting and planning encourages what Leonard (2012) and Cumming-Potvin (2013) have called the technicist approach to the work of teachers and fails to recognise that teaching is more than this. In this research the four pre-service teachers, although keen to know and implement the technical aspects of the work of the teacher, were
also struggling with so much more. Their understandings about teaching and the work of teachers, what they brought with them as experiences, their understandings of classrooms, the school community, what was happening in their personal lives, their dispositions to deal with this complexity and their ability to reflect on their developing teacher identity indicate that reading the text of teaching requires much more than a capacity, to take a phrase from the literacy world, ‘to bark at print’. Just as reading sounds, words, sentences and even texts without an understanding of what is being read does not constitute reading. Being able to plan and implement curriculum without the capacity to understand that curriculum is based on an ideological approach, and that the social, the personal and the capacity to be a critical participant within the profession, is also not reading and comprehending the text of teaching.

The framework for reading the text of teaching offers teacher educators a more nuanced tool for understanding the complexity inherent in becoming the teacher. I contend the framework presents teacher educators with the opportunity to share with pre-service teachers this complexity, and to support them to develop understandings about themselves, which will enhance the prospect of the individual being able to make appropriate decisions about their professional life.

The following section comprises further outcomes of the research, beginning with the notion of what teacher the individual was becoming.
‘A’ teacher, ‘the’ teacher

Becoming the teacher for the participants in this study proved at best to be a difficult task; for Cara and Fern it was an impossible task because the teacher they envisioned themselves to be was not the teacher self they found and their reading of the text was obscured by what was happening in their lives. An issue for all of the participants, but especially for Fern and Cara was that the chasm between the vision and the reality of becoming the teacher was disruptive to the process of that becoming. An outcome of this research that has allowed me as the researcher to think differently about the process of becoming the teacher is the way the use of the article ‘a’ and ‘the’ sends a subtle yet clear message about the teacher the individual is working towards becoming.

However, my use of the definite article ‘the’ in this thesis, as in ‘the teacher’, is a little problematic. It is not where I began, and this is noticeable in the published articles where there is still reference to ‘a’ teacher, but slowly over the period of time in which this research has taken place it became apparent to me that I needed to emphasise the particularity of each participant’s becoming. The participants were involved in becoming the teacher they wanted to be. Cara and Fern’s difficulties in becoming a generic kind of teacher, their dispositions to deal with the issues in their lives, meant that for them continuing in the becoming process was not viable. For Tom and John, there was much less dissonance in becoming the teachers they wanted to be. Although their journey was difficult and beset with problems, for both Tom and John, their dispositions informed by their life histories and their experiences of teaching, enabled them to move forward and they were able to sustain the vision of themselves as the teacher they wanted to be.
Britzman (2003) in her study of two secondary pre-service teachers focused on learning to teach, and emphasised that there was “no single road to becoming a teacher” (p. 6). Building on her valuable research, I am arguing that learning to read the text of teaching and become the teacher is also deeply personal; becoming ‘a’ teacher does not pay sufficient attention to the personal nature of the becoming process. In reading the text to understand the process of becoming ‘the’ teacher the pre-service teacher is developing the capacity to find a place where their vision of themselves is more closely aligned to the teacher they experience themselves becoming. They will, of course, need to develop the technical, the social, the content, the understandings, the knowledge of learning and teaching and the myriad of other skills, knowledge and capacities that are necessary to become the teacher; however, this learning should not be presented as a formula for teaching. Reading the text of teaching is both too personal and too professional to be characterised in this way.

Beliefs about education, teaching and teachers’ work need to be integrated in line with the model of becoming the teacher I have proposed so that individuals are more readily able to appreciate and find space in their visions for what is entailed in becoming. This appreciation will enable pre-service teachers to understand that it is a process in which they do not need to lose sight of their ideals or beliefs and to become something they do not wish to be.

7.3.3 Life history

The four pre-service teachers relied on what they brought with them to help understand the text of teacher education. These aspects of themselves had an affect
on not only who they were in the present, but also who they were becoming, and in
the case of Fern, Cara, Tom and John their family, upbringing, religion and
relationships were an integral part of who they are. According to Lortie (1975, p. 230)
education students have usually internalized - in part unconsciously - the
practices of their own teachers. If teachers are to adapt their behaviour to
changed circumstances, they will have to be freed of unconscious influences
of this kind; what they bring from the past should be as thoroughly examined
as alternatives in the present.

Similarly, Sleeter (2008) suggests that personal history is important in the becoming
process, but an uncritical look at personal history does nothing to help the pre-service
teacher understand who they are as the teacher or what the work of teaching is. So
this idea of reflecting on and explicating what it is that the individual brings with
them is crucial to pre-service teachers’ understanding of their present situation.

7.3.4 Experience of teachers and teaching

We have all been to school and therefore have a view of what teaching is and the
work that teachers do. What we don’t know is what we do not see as a student in a
school. Teachers come into classrooms and, in a seemingly seamless way, work with
students in a variety of tasks and activities. What is not seen by students is the
preparation, planning and organization that occurs prior to class lessons. Lortie
(1975) described the observing of teachers, as a kind of apprenticeship where the
actual tasks of the worker are not seen by the apprentice; only the outcome of the
work. Britzman (2003, 2007) also describes the hidden elements of teaching in a
classroom and how the revelation of the hidden elements of teachers’ work can catch
pre-service teachers by surprise.
In this research the four participants had experienced school and had a view of what they thought it was like. Tom, who had been provided with a special learning program during his secondary school years, knew that schools could provide for students with different needs. This view, despite experiencing a negative response to it from teachers he was working with, was for him positive, and he intended to individualise learning for his students. He would also develop a sense of love and community and he believed the students would respond positively. John had experienced school as a bright, able child who fitted in with what the school expected of him and had found that his expectations of school and of teachers fitted well into his schema of how schools would be. However, he did struggle with the behavioural issues of some children, but was able to learn from his experiences of children on camps, where more freedom was expected and tolerated, to make compromises for the level of control expected in a classroom. Cara, on the other hand, disliked school and had been an actively rebellious adolescent. She felt schools were places of conflict and expected that this would be so in schools when she was the pre-service teacher. Her work as a teacher assistant had also contributed to this belief. Not unsurprisingly she found schools to be places of ‘loud voices’. Meanwhile Fern had fanciful expectations that her love of education would translate into a classroom where this love would manifest itself in an orderly way, and she would be the centre of the class, and the children would be working quietly and diligently (See appendix 5). Her reaction to the reality of a classroom while on professional experience was one of surprise and unhappiness. She felt caught between the university expectations and the teacher’s views of how things should be done. The diversity of the class took her unaware and she felt unable to cope.
As argued above, becoming the teacher is difficult and made more so by the multiple contexts within which the becoming is occurring. Thus the personal, the physical and the emotional need to be in balance (Alsup, 2006), and if they are not then difficulties can occur. For all of the participants there were times of struggle and it was how each of them dealt with this that was of particular interest. John and Tom were ultimately able to deal with the issues and continue in the program, whereas Fern and Cara, for different reasons, decided that it was all too much. Why they made this decision is interesting and I will look at what a School of Education might do to assist pre-service teachers as they struggle with what can seem like insurmountable difficulties. Clearly both pre-service teacher and those in teacher education need to be aware of the likelihood of this struggle so that it does not catch them unaware. Becoming a teacher can appear unproblematic from the outside looking in (Britzman, 2003).

I have stated repeatedly that for the four pre-service teachers, what they brought with them as personal history and experiences of teaching and teachers affected the teacher they were trying to become. And researchers (Alsup, 2006; Black, 1999; Lortie, 1975; Scott, 2005) have stressed that these are important aspects that need to be brought to the fore and dealt with. What is also important for pre-service teachers is what is happening in the now. Billett (2009, p. 34) described everyday realities as “brute facts”, those things that cannot be controlled by the individual, such as having a sick husband and an elderly mother, having to care for young children, illness, having to relocate so that children have access to their father, being injured and unable to pursue a sporting dream. This part of life, the personal, had serious
implications for all the participants and it is this that can cause difficulties that add to the existing struggle to find herself/himself as the teacher.

The personal, the social and natural factors (Billet, 2009) have an effect on learning as they interrelate and so the individual’s reading and subsequent understanding of the text of education is filtered through this reading. The personal, who we are as individuals based on our life history, the social, how we interact with others and the natural, those things that occur in life over which we have no control such as illness, death and birth. This then has an affect on the relationships and capacity to maintain them while dealing with those things in our lives that cannot be controlled by us. It is this capacity to deal with the difficulties, that is the dispositions that each individual brings to problems, that are formed through life history that proved to be important in this study.

7.3.5 Dispositions

An individual’s disposition toward coping and managing difficulties has been reaffirmed in this study as an important element of becoming the teacher. The reality for these four participants was that despite previous experiences they were not prepared for the complexities of classrooms, nor did they expect to have any difficulties in their studies. For John, Cara and Fern, this was particularly true. Coupled with the difficulties in their personal lives, this proved insurmountable for Fern and Cara. While John delayed his program, as he juggled fatherhood, work, relationships and study. However, whereas John made decisions to reduce his workload at University and in his private life, Fern was unable to make this decision and decided she had to withdraw after six months in the program. Cara did reduce
her University workload, but ultimately left the course because she felt unable to deal with the pressure such a program presented for her.

As previously mentioned the completion rate of Graduate Diploma Primary pre-service teachers in this Australian University is approximately 50% for all participants from 2007-2011 and there are many reasons for this. My research indicates that the problems that arose for the four pre-service teachers were indicative of the problems faced by many of those who have enrolled but not completed the Graduate Diploma of Education.

Of course a sample of four does not allow sweeping generalisations; however, case studies can help us understand the situation of others through the realities of known cases. Stake (2005) argues that we arrive at conclusions based on our personal experience of life, but he goes on to say that if the case is well constructed then we can connect with the case study through “vicarious experience” (p. 85). The case studies of Fern, Cara, John and Tom provide such experiences. The stories of each of them are powerful indicators of the complex journey each of them undertook and indicate that:

- Personal history and previous experiences of teachers and teaching affect the way these pre-service teachers experienced reading and understanding the text of teaching.
- Personal dispositions that have been formed as a response to the individual’s life history have an effect on learning and becoming and towards coping with difficulties.
• The personal, social and natural factors interrelate to inform the individual’s reading and subsequent understanding of the text of education.

• Becoming the teacher is about developing the professional self based on understandings about teaching leading to identifying as the teacher and is based on previous history, the social and what is happening in life (the personal).

• Becoming the teacher is a struggle within the multiple contexts of the individual’s life and this struggle can interfere with reading the text of teaching.

• Identifying as the teacher, or developing a professional identity is informed by and informs the multiple contexts in which the pre-service teacher is situated.

• Becoming the teacher is a personal journey undertaken in interaction with others.

7.4 Implications for teacher education programs

What was apparent in the case studies, and throughout the research, were the difficulties faced by the four pre-service teachers. The struggles identified in this research indicate that becoming the teacher is difficult, confronting, emotional and personally challenging work, and although this is not a new discovery (Alsup, 2006; Britzman, 2003; 2007), it can be hidden from the pre-service teacher as they begin their journey to become the teacher. The four participants were all competent individuals who had a previous degree and an understanding about how universities worked. What they did not have was a clear understanding of the world of teachers, teaching and schools, despite being students for many years and observers of schools and teaching.
In teacher education programs, opportunities need to be provided for the pre-service teacher to reflect on where they come from, why they have come to teacher education and on the complexity of their lives as they begin the task of becoming the teacher. This focus on the complex contexts within which individuals develop will better enable teacher educators to support those individuals as they struggle with the reality of becoming something that is more difficult than they had imagined or envisioned.

7.4.1 Possibilities for a new Graduate Diploma of Education Program

The case studies of the four participants reveal the personal and emotional nature of the journey to become the teacher. However, also revealed are the contexts in which this becoming occurs. This awareness, I believe, is critical for developing teacher education programs that support the personal, emotional and social needs of mature pre-service teachers who arrive at the university. Unlike many undergraduate pre-service teachers who come straight from school, these individuals have families, work, financial pressures, experiences of education both in the school and university, particular expectations of how the course will manifest itself, and for many a sense of a new beginning as they begin their studies.

A more personally focused program of study may have assisted each of the four participants to become the teacher they aspired to be. Although each of them would still have had difficulties, it is my contention that a more personalised approach may have helped alleviate some of the emotional pain associated with becoming the teacher and given them the opportunity to develop a clearer understanding of the text of teaching.
The question that must be asked is: how can we design such a program and still attend to the mandated requirements of the university and state and federal governments? This is not easy work but it is possible given a willingness on behalf of schools of education to consider changes to the way many now operate. The work of Grossman, et al (2009) offers some interesting ideas for re-imagining teacher education programs, not so much as a “fully developed model for teacher education programs, but rather as a set of emerging and provocative ideas for rethinking how we prepare novice teachers” (Grossman, et al, 2009, p. 3). By contrast I offer not provocative ideas but principles to assist the development of Graduate Diploma programs, acknowledging that we are in an era of budget restraints. I offer the following as practical principles for re-imagining teacher education for pre-service teachers of the future.

7.4.2 Principles of a teacher education program

The first principle I propose is the need to recognise the personal nature of the process of becoming the teacher. In the first instance, interviews of each prospective teacher should be conducted as part of an induction process that would allow an exchange of ideas:

a) about mode of study, b) the student’s previous experiences, skills and knowledge, and c) about any special needs an individual may have for reaching her/his potential. Although this exercise would be costly, it would prove to be both a good investment financially and personally because it would help students to make appropriate decisions about workload and the supports they would need given their personal circumstances.
The second principle has at its core understanding of the self, and would require an allocation of time for the pre-service teachers to discuss, write and draw the vision they have of themselves as teachers. This reflection would also provide opportunities for the pre-service teacher to look back at their personal history, including their experiences of school and of teachers and teaching. The main purpose of this principle is for each person to engage in a critical reflection and analysis of her/his biography, and to become informed of the multiple contexts in which her/his becoming will develop. This knowledge will be a powerful tool for each pre-service teacher and will help build dispositions towards resilience to deal with the difficulties that will inevitably occur as they become inducted into the profession of teaching.

The third principle focuses on an idea suggested by Grossman et al (2009) about the development of key concepts. Taking this further, I suggest that within teacher education programs the development of core concepts and practices for each pre-service teacher would replace the traditional units currently on offer in most schools of education. The key concepts would be overarching conceptual understandings that would enable a more flexible, personal approach to the process of becoming the teacher. To clarify what is meant, I offer the example of ‘a positive learning environment’ as an example of a key concept. To build understandings about the key concept may mean working with a mentor teacher in a classroom to develop core practices such as planning positive learning programs for students. To understand this key concept would require the input of both the theoretical and practical to enhance understanding, learning and the development of skills.
The final principle builds on the previous principles and has as its focus the notion that the theory and the practice of teaching and learning should be the joint responsibility of both the university and school-based educators. Such a partnership would require schools of education and school-based educators to identify the key concepts and core practices that each pre-service teacher will need to become the teacher they envision themselves to be. Academics in schools of education and educators in school systems would need to rethink their approach to teacher education. This could entail school-based teachers working within the university and university educators being part of school-based programs. With university and school based educators working together in collaborative planning teams, and with the pre-service teachers at the centre of that planning, the possibilities for successful outcomes will be considerably enhanced.

Developing such a collaborative approach to teacher education, I believe, would enhance the opportunity for pre-service teachers to understand more fully their developing teacher selves and thus their professional identity. The deeply personal nature of the journey to become the teacher would be better supported in a teacher education program that recognises the individual nature of the becoming. Each pre-service teacher’s journey would follow to some extent an individual path and yet it would take place in a community that includes colleagues from schools and universities. The pre-service teachers’ reading and comprehension of the text of teaching will be enhanced and their capacity to become the teacher they aspire to be more likely to be realised.
7.5 Further research

This research has provided further evidence of the complexity of the task of becoming the teacher, and it adds to the assertion that pre-service teachers have much to contend with as they develop their professional understandings, knowledge and skills. In this research the importance of understanding that past experiences and present circumstances are important aspects of the becoming process have been highlighted, but further study in the area is warranted. This study provides a foundation from which further research on the experiences of pre-service teachers can be undertaken.

I make the following recommendations for further research.

1. To develop the idea of reading the text of teaching to assist in framing understandings about the process of becoming the teacher:

The use of the literacy model (Freebody & Luke, 1990 and Luke & Freebody, 1999) adapted, as the basis for the framework for reading the text of teacher education was helpful in making sense of the myriad aspects of the pre-service teachers’ learning.

Aspects such as learning the fundamentals of teaching, the relationships, transferring knowledge into practice and being able to reflect on the process of learning. It is this reading of the text and understanding that becoming a teacher is negotiating all these aspects in an interrelated way that was helped by the framework.

However, further development of the framework for learning to read the text of teaching would assist in developing a clearer picture of the teacher the pre-service teacher is becoming. Research as to how the four practices interact to provide information about the becoming process would be a useful addition to the existing
work, as would refining the descriptors to more clearly reflect the work of becoming the teacher.

2. To develop understandings about the complexities of an individual becoming the teacher within multiple contexts, particularly with the added dimension of standards for programs within schools of education and for graduate and in-service teachers:

Continued research into the contexts within which the individual becomes the teacher set against backdrop of the Australian Standards for Teachers and School Leaders (2011), the Australian curriculum, and NAPLAN testing would prove to be challenging but rewarding work. As teacher education programs face accreditation and standardisation processes, knowing the individuals and providing them with appropriate support and intervention becomes even more important. Pre-service teachers enrolling in postgraduate teacher education programs bring with them much that is positive, but they also bring with them unrealistic expectations of being successful while honouring responsibilities for families, work commitments, etc. The relational and the personal are vitally important aspects of becoming the teacher as opposed to an input/output, and technicist approaches to teacher education (Cumming Potvin, 2013; Leonard, 2012).

3. To develop understandings as to why individuals choose teaching to enable an awareness of what brings people to the profession and how they can be supported to become the teacher that best reflects the image they have of themselves:

The pilot study I conducted indicated that there were two main reasons for the respondents to select teaching. One was their desire to imbue children with a love of learning, and/or to make a difference in a child’s life, and the other was because of
favourable experiences with children. Further research on reasons for choosing this career would enable a clearer picture to emerge and would be of assistance in helping teacher educators to bring the reality of teaching and teacher’s work to the fore. Research in the area is developing (Richardson & Watt, 2005, 2006) but further work on explicating the tacit reasons for becoming the teacher could lead to a stronger foundation for the becoming, and therefore greater retention of pre-service teachers.

4. To develop understandings about the development of dispositions and how these relate to resilience, which may assist in understanding why many pre-service teachers in the Graduate Diploma program discontinue their course:

The rather surprising rate of non-completion of the Graduate Diploma program in one Australian university gives pause for thought. Research that investigates the development of dispositions and how this informs resilience may lead to successful intervention programs to support pre-service teachers. Billett’s (1997, 2008) research focuses on apprentices as they develop their learning and dispositions in the workplace and research that is concerned with pre-service teachers will add to that body of work. Indications from the case of Fern, however, who did not want to discuss her reasons for discontinuing at the time, but later felt she could make her feelings known, suggest that a sensitive approach is necessary. All research with people requires sensitivity so that the individual’s integrity and dignity is supported, especially during periods of distress.

7.6 Conclusion

Stephen Billett’s (2009) research on those things over which we have no control, what he called ‘brute facts’ and which have a major effect on whether the individual
is able to cope with difficulties in the process of becoming the teacher was pertinent to the experiences of each of the participants in my study. When the individual’s family and/or personal life is in crisis it is much more difficult to focus on matters such as curriculum or classroom management. When personal difficulties are coupled with a disappointing result for an assessment, or a difficult professional/field experience, the capacity to cope is compromised even further.

Related to this is the importance of dispositions that the individual brings to the becoming process. Life history has shaped the way each person deals with difficulties and with life in general. For each of the participants their life history had prepared them for life in different ways. Dispositions according to Billett (2009) can be developed and strengthened to assist pre-service teachers generate the capacity to be resilient and to deal with difficulties with greater success. It is suggested by Johnson et al, (2010) that, “Successfully negotiating teacher identity is pivotal to becoming a resilient teacher. During this process teacher identity is actively constituted, through experience, in a range of personal, professional and structural discourses” (p. 5). I would go further and claim that without an understanding of life history and how experiences of teachers and teaching inform the process of becoming the teacher, the pre-service teacher is unlikely to successfully learn to read the text of teaching and therefore develop the dispositions that lead to resilience.

7.7 Post script

I set out with the aim of adding to the understandings about how Graduate Diploma Primary pre-service teachers become the teacher. Within a constructivist case-study methodology, I employed the methods of interviews, drawings and graphing to
collect and triangulate the data. These methods allowed me to generate rich data for
the case studies of four individuals as they dealt with the issues that arose for them
during the period of the research. Of the four participants, only two completed the
program. Of the two who completed, only Tom went on to teach, not in Australia, nor in his country of origin. John, after completion of his teacher education
qualification, was offered a position within his organisation with higher pay and
better conditions than that of a primary teacher, and as far as I know has never taken
up the profession of teaching. When last heard from, Cara was contemplating
whether to leave Australia so that her two children had continued access to their
father. Fern’s difficulties were unresolved at the time of the research as she faced the
care of her seriously ill husband and elderly mother, and was trying to find ways of
coping with the impending loss of both. I have not been able to contact her since the
period of the research.
References


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Appendices

Appendix 1

Interview Questions

Appendix 2

Pre-service teacher information letter

Appendix 3

Fern’s January and November drawing
Fern’s graph of life satisfaction

Appendix 4

Cara’s January and November drawing
Cara’s graph of life satisfaction

Appendix 5

Tom’s January and November drawing
Tom’s graph of life satisfaction