THE PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY OF TEACHER EDUCATORS IN HIGHER

EDUCATION: THE EXPERIENCE OF MOTHERHOOD

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Abstract

The dominant discourse concerned with the impact of being a mother on a woman's professional career usually draws upon the language of limitations, constraints and glass ceilings. Motherhood is usually considered to inhibit a woman's career progression because women are distracted between separate spheres of activity; they spread time away from being an employee to include being a primary carer. Those working in the teaching profession are not immune to this constructed way of being and are also ill-defined in terms of their professional identity. Motherhood, however, is an enabling experience and shares a purposeful intent common with that of teaching; motherhood is an experience teaching can learn from rather than it disabling professional progression and development.

Drawing upon phenomenological understandings of knowledge development and survey and interview methods of data collection from teacher educators working in a University's School of Education, findings from this enquiry indicate women considered their professional identity to have been influenced and enhanced by the experience of motherhood. Understandings of a teacher educator's professional identity were expressed in terms of relational, empathetic and value-led practice, which were expressions of their own personalities informed by motherhood. Whilst priorities had shifted as a result of becoming a mother, findings indicated teacher educators considered themselves to have become more reflexive and adaptable as a consequence of being a mother. Implications of this enquiry call for continuing professional development and return to work programmes to engage women in a dialogue about how motherhood benefits their professional identity and is an experience that should be celebrated in terms of career development rather than being accepted as a professional limitation.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Professional identity in education; people matter

This enquiry is about motherhood and teaching, the importance of which focuses on the personal and professional experiences of being a teacher educator and a mother. My enquiry explores how motherhood might shape the professional identity of teacher educators; in doing so it explores notions of professional identity and understandings of motherhood. My own professional identity as a teacher, and more lately as a teacher educator, was formed before I had children.

A narrative will be constructed concerning the extent to which women's professional identities are '*forced*' (Webster and Mertova 2007: 71), or shaped, by being a mother, and furthermore how motherhood weaves into the professional life tapestry of being a teacher educator. My research will therefore address how a woman's life as a mother, as Gavron (1966: 148) writes, '*complemented rather than restricted [her] performance of other contemporary roles*'. Furthermore it will explore the extent to which the experience of motherhood allows the teacher educator to be an '*agent*' (Bandura 2006:164) of their own professional identity. Bandura (2006) defines agency as the ability to '*influence one's functioning and life circumstances*' (ibid: 164), and it is this notion of self-determination rather than notions of power relations which I suggest drive at deeper understandings of professional identity.

Whereas agency and self-efficacy are constructs developed from within (Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto 2017), power over circumstances and identity are relatively positional and, as Noddings (2011) attests to, are '*rooted in relationships*' (ibid: 120). Power relations defined by extraneous assumptions and beliefs, which Foucault (1980: 131) would refer to as '*regimes of truth*', lead to dominant discourses, or what Bruce, Benthin, Sheilds, Molzahn and Schick-Makaroff (2016: 4) refer to as the '*metanarratives*' around professional identity. Such discourses by definition of being dominant, or held '*truths*' (ibid), render agency, the ability to act purposefully and '*make choices*' (Bandura, 2006:165) liable to what Foucault (1980:131) describes as '*multiple forms of constraint*'. This enquiry by contrast serves to address how motherhood can, as Swennen, Volman and van Essen (2008:182) describe, '*open up new possibilities for agency*' for women working as teacher educators, and in doing so

rejects notions of positional power. This theme is to be seen in Noddings (2011) work on peace education; she writes women '*contribute substantially*' (ibid: 119) in unifying interpersonal relationships within communities and families. Noddings asserts mothers are '*in a position to watch and work within*' (ibid: 120) shifting familial power relations. My work does not deny being a father nor the gender-collective noun of parent might influence professional identity, and therein personal agency, but I focus on motherhood for it reflects upon my own personal experience from which this thesis emanated. Furthermore, professional women today are still the main carer of children (Dow 2016 and Freitas, Inacio and Saavedra 2016) and the demands of family and home still tend to be the task of women:

> '*Mothers feel much more stressed than fathers when working equivalent numbers of hours in total…home multi-tasking and home organising would be on top of whatever crashed in on them at work*'
> (Wolf 2013: 285)

My thesis draws upon prior research (Chambers 2013) relating to a survey of teacher educators' sense-making of their professional identity. It also calls upon interview findings (Chambers 2014) which explored teacher educators' understanding of how the experience of motherhood had influenced their professional identity. An intention of my enquiry is therefore to make sense of my experiences of being a mother, and the experiences of teacher educators. In doing so, I will reflect upon how my professional identity has been strengthened by motherhood or whether it is a forgotten experience that is given over to the workplace. At the time of commencing this research my identity as a mother and being a teacher educator were felt to be distinct and separate; it was as Rees (2010: 6) describes, a '*dissonance*' of identities. This separation of identities is whereby a person experiences the challenge of not being able to '*integrate*' (ibid) their professional sense of self with their personal self. My intention is therefore to tease out from a clew of my colleagues' voices the patterns and threads of experience of working in a University's School of Education. In doing so the quest is to generate a better understanding of the influence of motherhood on being a teacher educator.

Of particular significance in the development of the enquiry has been Gavron's landmark work, which although over 50 years old, remains pertinent today. Conducted in the first half of the 1960s, Gavron's study focused on women and their position within their married familial-economic spheres of existence. It considered the ways in

which women's lives were prescribed by marriage and having children which would be at '*the expense of their prior paid employment*' (Gavron 1966: 154). These observations are to an extent still seen today with women being more likely to take a career break to look after children than their male counterparts (Wolf 2013). A woman who has children will therefore most likely encounter interruptions to her professional work which needs to be managed if she is to continue with her professional practice.

The identity of women has been researched for some considerable time (Gavron 1966, Chodorow 1989, Butler 1990 and Miller 2005). In Oakley's (1985) work on women's perceptions of being a housewife she writes the identity of women is constructed in part because of the '*way they are thought to be*' (ibid: 1). The values and beliefs a woman holds about her identity are not entirely of her own making; the construction of who is she and what she should be and do is constructed by '*social reality and beliefs.*' (ibid). Whilst this writing dates back to a period of far greater difference in the employment status of men and women (ONS 2016, ONS 2015, ONS 2012 and Miller 2005), assumptions and attitudes about who takes on the role of main child-carer remains a contemporary social phenomenon (Wolf 2013), with, and not least, an increasing number of lone parent families in which the mother is the '*principle carer*' (ONS, 2012: 5). How identity is constructed over the course of personal and professional experiences is therefore a relevant consideration and is framed by the work of Miller (2005) and Wolf (2013) in which women hold multiple roles in contemporary western secular society. Furthermore, the work of Emslie and Hunt (2009) is relevant for it highlights how what was once an assumed distinction between the domains of work and home now '*spill over*' (ibid: 152) into one another. Therefore boundaries, should they exist, between the personal and professional are more likely to be diffuse than categorically evident.

1.2 Defining parameters for enquiry

Situated with an understanding of my experiences and that of others with whom I work, this thesis explores how motherhood might shape the professional identity of teacher educators working in Higher Education (HE). As detailed at Chapter 3, it does so within a socio-constructivist paradigm of knowledge development; it takes a phenomenological approach and draws upon a qualitative methods for data collection and analysis. My research reviews the literature on meanings of professional identity, motherhood and the extent motherhood might shape the professional identity of women working as teacher educators. Furthermore, and again explored in Chapter 3, in establishing a methodological approach for the research enquiry, it defines key concepts for rigorous data collection and analysis of enquiry. Issues include sampling, internal integrity and trustworthiness of subjective data, ethics and reflexivity in order to formulate a response to the main research question - *how might motherhood shape the professional identity of women who are teacher educators in Higher Education?*

My research is concerned with the essence of the person and subscribes to Husserl's (1927/1981) notion of the conscious lived-experience of the participants. I have neither chosen to consider the social nor politically constructed meanings of what it is to be a woman. Nor am I serving to explain the differentiating cultural constructions of gender or sex (Butler 1990). Rather this thesis examines the experience of being a teacher educator and being a mother. In this regards I align with Moi (2008: 32) in her rejection of such reductionist terminology:

> *Whether I consider a woman to be the sum of sex plus gender, to be nothing but sex, or nothing but gender, I reduce her to her sexual difference* (ibid)

Butler (1990) suggests that motherhood is a label used to institutionally oppress women and if this enquiry were to explore whether women's professional identity was shaped by the dominant discourse of inequality in the workplace (vide Gavron 1966, Benn 1999, Oakley 1985, Griffiths 2006 and Wolf 2013) there would be a need to locate the enquiry within a feminist paradigm. This contemporary enquiry is not, however, concerned with a derisive discourse (Foucault 1980). Instead my study will construct an understanding of personal experiences and notions of self-efficacy and individual agency which my enquiry suggests are bounded by the horizon of each woman's experience and axiology.

The researcher positionality I assume for my enquiry begins with me being a teacher educator and a mother who works in the research setting – the University's School of Education (a detailed consideration of which is given in Chapter 3, section 3.7). The significance of positionality for my enquiry is it allows the reader to appreciate the starting points which I bring to the research process (Moore 2012). I agree with Savin Baden and Howell Major (2013) when they write positionality '*reflects that the researcher has chosen to adopt within a given study* (ibid: 71), and in doing so I would assert my experience of teaching in Higher Education is unique and personalised, as too is that of my colleagues. The need for '*self-scrutiny*' (Bourke 2014: 1) and critical reflection in advancing claims to new understandings about how motherhood might influence professional identity is therefore essential. I appreciate the position of being an '*insider*' (Moore 2012: 11) researcher because, and as explored in Chambers (2017), I was part of the research '*group before the start of the research*' (Moore 2012: 11) began. Thereby to collect narratives from colleagues I have made use of open-ended questioning methods, evinced in Chapter 3, section 3.3, to ensure their voices are the significant points of data from which analysis and reflexivity (Savin Baden and Howell Major 2013) commence. The essence of the enquiry is motherhood and whilst it cannot be deconstructed from being a woman, my enquiry is not primarily concerned with the sex of the individual. Rather it is the phenomenon of being a mother which is of interest, and to that end neither parenthood nor fatherhood could have been the centre piece of the research. Consequently, my research enquiry aims to contribute new understandings and knowledge to the question of how motherhood might influence the professional identity of teacher educators.

The claims to the teaching workforce being dominated by women is one which is statistically reported by the Department of Education (2016); 73.8% of full time teachers in state schools in England are women. Griffiths in 2006 noted a predominance of women in the workforce had resulted in the profession being labelled as feminised. Teaching, however, has long since been a profession that has appealed to women (DfE 2016 and Wolf 2013); it is what educated women did for work when there was little option for alternative professional employment (Wolf 2013). Teaching for Victorian women was considered to be work an '*extension of their females pursuits*' (ibid: 149), and whilst this may be seen as an indicator of patriarchal suppression of

women, Wolf (2013) asserts that women teachers of the time '*openly expressed a belief that their jobs mattered - especially to the future of other women*' (ibid: 150). Education and learning mattered to them, and for those whom they taught.

To more contemporary times, Griffiths (2006: 387) asserts there are competing definitions of the '*feminization of teaching*', one which is concerned with the '*numbers*' of women in teaching and the other being the '*culture*' which is assigned to a feminized workforce of teaching. However, even in a workplace which is mainly female, simply by virtue of their gender women are not all the same; they each have cultural, societal, educational and familial experiences which confer difference. To that end, Griffiths (2006: 388) states it is implausible to make a claim that education is a feminised profession for '*there is no such thing as feminised practice because there is no unified category, ''woman'''* (Griffiths, 2006: 388). What matters to this enquiry is teaching is done by someone who believes in the opportunities education and learning affords.

Following on from the claims of feminisation, there has been a recent shift in the characteristics of the teaching workforce and retention of experienced teachers in the profession (House of Commons Education Committee 2017 and Lynch, Worth, Bamford and Wespiesser 2016). Highly qualified females graduates now have more selection in their choice of career; Wolf (2013) explained this choice in terms of increased professional '*opportunity and pay*' (ibid: 156) for women. Sellen (2016) cites reasons being concerned with relatively higher salaries afforded to other professions and also with workload issues - a '*dissatisfaction with pay and with working hours*' (ibid: 42). The House of Commons Education Committee (2017) identified teacher-retention as needing a continued commitment to reducing '*workload issues*' (ibid: 15) and enhanced provision of professional development opportunity. Training and learning needed to focus on improving '*job satisfaction*' (ibid: 24) and to be more nuanced and personalised. For example professional development needed to accord with the teacher's career stage and should be '*cumulative*' and '*reflective*' (ibid). Given '*retaining working-age teachers is becoming harder*' (Lynch et al 2016: 2) and prospectively there is demographic '*rise*' (ibid: 3) in the numbers of young people, with almost three in every four teachers (DfE 2016) being female, it would seem reasonable

to suggest professional development opportunities should therefore address the professional learning needs of women, and their workload issues.

1.3 Structural arrangements

Structured around six chapters and following on from this introduction, Chapter 2 of my thesis provides a discussion of the importance of the research question and examines the essential literature on the notions of motherhood and professional identity, and how they relate to one another. Whilst acknowledging there is a notable number of publications on the impact of motherhood on work-life balance and on career progression opportunities that women experience as a result of becoming a mother, there is a paucity of literature on whether and/or how motherhood has shaped a woman's professional identity. More so, there is a gap in the literature on the formation of teacher identity as indicated most recently by Izadinia (2014) and further back by Swennen, Volman and van Essen (2008: 170) who asserted:

> '...*limited attention has been given to the development and professional identity of the teacher of teachers: the Teacher Educators*'

When considering the formation of professional identity it is understood to be an on-going journey of what is, what has been and what is longed for, or what Vahasantanen, Hokka, Paloniemi, Herranen & Etelapelto (2016: 2) refer to as '*current goals*', '*meaningful practice*' and '*future ambitions*'. Griffith's (2013) research highlights meaningful teaching is more than a skills base and expert knowledge. Whilst these are essential great teaching relies upon the formation of dialogic '*pedagogical relations*' (ibid: 222) between the teacher educator and the student teacher. This is a position corroborated by Day (2012); his work has explored the connections between teachers' lives, and he asserts '*good*' teaching relies upon the teacher having '*empathy with the learners*' (ibid: 18). Professional identity is therefore relational and as with the passage of time and experience, identity will evolve. Griffiths (2013) surmises therefore '*the ''who'' of a teacher changes in the course of a career*' (ibid: 232). Understanding the disposition of the teacher educator was a theme picked up by Davey (2013) whose research into the professional identity of teacher educators commenced with the question of '*who are we as professionals?*' (ibid: 7). More recently, in their consideration of what makes for impactful change on teacher practice, Henning, Rice,

Dani, Weade and McKeny (2017) reiterated the importance of being a relational teacher and asserted the importance of being able to develop a '*deeper understanding of classroom relationships*' (ibid: 13). Day (2012) affirms this notion about working contexts and effectiveness when he writes teaching is '*an essentially human endeavour*' (ibid: 15). Therefore, and with reference to Weinberger and Shefi (2012), this enquiry considers '*what it is to be a Teacher Educator*' (ibid: 261) within the context of being a mother.

Understandings of the language concerned with motherhood are examined in Chapter 2. For now, and drawing on Miller's (2005) work, motherhood is described and explained in terms of a woman having the main responsibility for the growth, nurturing and development of a child in her care. In her writing on women's experiences of motherhood, Miller (2005) interchanges between the terms motherhood and being a mother, and acknowledges that motherhood is '*not a universally standard experience*' (ibid:15). Lyotard (1977:36) writes that our histories are made up of '*wisps of narratives*' and '*little stories*', which for this enquiry will be concerned with the experiences of motherhood and being a teacher educator and will be voiced by the research participants. Rather than presenting a '*grand narrative*' (Pring 2006: 32) of the impact of motherhood on professional identity, this study seeks to learn from women's personal accounts about how motherhood has shaped their professional identity as a teacher educator. The enquiry will draw upon women's unique situated experiences, which as Pring (2006: 32) writes, will '*reveal the understandings and perceptions*' of those who narrate their experiences.

Chapter 3 establishes the epistemological framework for the enquiry and essential notions of generating knowledge. It considers the methodological approach for the enquiry; it offers a rationale for the positioning of the research enquiry within a social constructivist paradigm and establishes a system for robust enquiry that utilises a phenomenological approach. It justifies the methods for collecting and analysing data set within an ethical research framework. Furthermore, Chapter 3 sets the research context for the enquiry thereby allowing for a contextualised appreciation of the research findings, and Chapter 4 provides a thematic analysis of the data collected from the enquiry. It presents a discussion of the indicative findings corroborated by reference

to academic literature. Chapter 5 of the thesis concludes with a review of the main issues arising from the enquiry and in doing so provides a response, by way of new understandings and knowledge, to the thesis' question *how might motherhood shape the professional identity of women who are teacher educators in Higher Education?* It goes on to make recommendations for further enquiry and teacher educator professional development opportunities.

Drawing upon first-hand testimonies of women's experiences, this enquiry offers integrity and authenticity of voice by reliably and accurately relaying contributions made by the participants to my enquiry. The study offers a window of opportunity to examine the participants' views about whether their identities as teacher educators have been influenced by the experience of motherhood. It weaves together personal threads of experience, and in doing so contributes, as May (2005: 476) writes:

> '*an understanding [of] the subjective meaning of events and the connections between an individual life and the larger social connections*'

In summary, my thesis provides an opportunity to explore the formation of women's professional identities as teacher educators. It examines the value of being a teacher educator, explores the significance of learning relationships, the importance of values-led practice and it interrogates the construction of professional identity. A construction which is complex and changing and intricately woven into daily experiences (Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto 2017, Day and Gu 2014 and Buchanan 2015), and in light of participants' experiences, essentially considers how motherhood influences and more so strengthens its creation. I invite you therefore to consider how the experience of motherhood might influence the professional identity of teacher educators and in doing so reflect upon the freedoms which learning offers and the professional responsibilities that are conferred upon the teaching profession.

Chapter 2: Literature review

'Professional identity is part of a personal identity which develops as an ongoing process' (Weinberger and Shefi 2012: 262)

In this chapter I establish the theoretical underpinning of the research enquiry by means of offering a critique of extant academic literature which explores the meanings of professional identity and motherhood. In doing, and drawing upon Lave and Wenger's (1991) social learning model, a theoretical framework is formulated which secures a developmental approach to better understanding the ways in which motherhood might shape the professional identity of women who are teacher educators.

2.1 Teacher educators and professional identity

With reference to the work of Davey (2013), Lunenberg, Dengerink and Korthagen's (2014) review of literature defines the role of the teacher educator being applicable to all those who '*are responsible for teaching and coaching future, beginning and experienced teachers*' (ibid: 5). Their definition includes those who work in universities, colleges of education and schools. For the purposes of my study the definition which will be used is context-based and subscribes to Vahasantanen et al's (2016) understanding of a teacher educator's professional identity being constructed '*within a given context*' (ibid: 2). Furthermore, the definition I am working with understands a teacher educator to be a '*teacher of teachers*' (Lunenberg, Dengerink and Korthagen 2014: 5) and is essentially concerned with learning, both in terms of subject knowledge and pedagogy (ibid). In keeping with this notion, Day (2012) contends the historical separation between teaching and teacher education '*need not continue*' (ibid: 20) for teaching across all phases involves building knowledge, and strengthening skills of critique and challenge. Griffiths' (2013) research also refers to teacher educators as teachers since, irrespective of the student's age, there is a need to formulate an effective working relationship in order to facilitate learning. This essence of learning is seen in Bramming's (2007) work on the essential role of the teacher; it is an '*ontological condition*' (ibid: 46) in which the teacher facilitates learning and invites questioning of assumed knowledge and presumptions about how we learn. Both teachers and teacher educators are therefore concerned with enabling others to progressively find their '*own ways of knowing*' (Hunter, Laursen and Seymour 2007: 67).

Given mutual purpose, there is an overlap of meaning in the terms teacher and teacher educator, as can be seen in the work of Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto (2017). They make use of the terms teacher and teacher educator interchangeably, and in doing so assert the commonality of facilitating learning the two titles are concerned with. Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto's (2017) work focuses not on definitions but on a teachers/teacher educator's understanding of professional identity and the perception of agency or self-efficacy, a theme which will be referred to later. For the purposes of this enquiry therefore the term teacher educator is used because it is the language of the research setting. A teacher educator is understood to be a professional working in University based Higher Education (HE) and who is involved in the teaching and learning of HE student teachers and/or engaged with qualified teachers on continuing professional development programmes. Herein both HE students and qualified teachers on HE training programmes will be referred to as student teachers.

In developing an understanding of professional identity, Lunenberg, Dengerink and Korthagen (2014) differentiate between identity and professional role. They attest to professional identity being a construct of '*personal views and self-images*' (ibid: 6) as compared to the professional role of the teacher educator mainly focusing '*on positions and expectations from the environment*' (ibid). Whilst Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto (2017) agree teacher educators are influenced by how they are perceived by others, they do not separate out the notion of professional identity from professional role. They highlight how a teacher educator's perception of self-efficacy, or '*agency*' (ibid: 37) in their role is mediated by their professional identity. Identity, they assert, is informed by a collective of self-perception, by '*individual and social/collective issues*' and '*how one presents that ''self'' to others*' (ibid: 38), a position also held by Thiele, Pope, Singleton, Snape and Stanistreet (2017). In keeping with this theme, Day's (2012) research signals the connection between a teacher's perception of their professional identity and the extent to which they report high levels of self-efficacy. A stable professional identity, Day (2012) reports, is '*so important to their [the teacher's] sense of self-efficacy and agency*' (ibid: 11). Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto (2017) attest to identity being informed by how the person '*feels others perceive and react to them*' (ibid: 55). Identity and role are therefore intricately linked and are

mediated by a sense of agency, that being the ability to '*make choices and act deliberately in ways that make a significant difference*' (ibid: 37).

Ruohotie-Lyhty and Moate's (2016) research further explores the weave of professional identity. In keeping with Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto (2017), they affirm the importance of making sense of personal experience and history in forming a professional identity. Buchanan (2015) writes professional identity is a '*reconstruction of stuff over time*' (ibid: 724). Day (2012) goes onto note there is an '*unavoidable interrelationships between the personal and professional*' (ibid: 15), because, and with reference to Kelchtermans (2009), teaching is a '*human endeavour*' (ibid: 15). Day (2012) goes on to contend those who teach go through a series of '*professional life phases*' (ibid: 11) which are concerned with enhancing a sense of commitment, purpose, workload management, motivation and of particular relevance, '*identity and efficacy*' (ibid: 12). This, Day asserts, needs to be developed, reflected upon and sustained over time and in doing so Day and Gu (2014) recognise flourishing teachers can be found in '*professional learning communities*' (ibid: 60) which engender trustful and optimistic participation.

The experience of what has been and what is current is picked up by Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto (2017); they indicate the importance subject and pedagogical expertise as being significant in an understanding of professional identity. Pereira, Lopes, and Margarida (2015) point to a teacher educator's professional identity being '*built on a foundation of school-based experience*' (ibid: 452), and, in agreement with Ruohotie-Lyhty and Moate (2016), Buchanan (2015) writes of professional identities being '*strongly shaped*' (ibid: 701) by previous teaching experience. Day and Gu (2014) state professional identity is defined in terms of being part of a '*community of teachers*' (ibid: 55), a theme which will later be developed (see Chapter 4, section 4.1), and Thiele et al (2017) consider identity to be an individual and social construct which is informed by experience and history. Together with a sense of purpose and endeavour, these instructional notions thread their way through the academic literature on the professional identity of teacher educators.

Buchanan (2015) writes a teacher educator's professional identity is shaped by the '*relationships and emotions*' (ibid: 704) they encounter in their work. In keeping with the work by Henning et al (2017) on appreciating the impact of classroom relationships on learning, Ruohotie-Lyhty and Moate (2016) focus on the importance of the '*relational nature*' (ibid: 326) of a teacher educator's professional identity. This too is picked up by Griffiths (2013) in her work on the importance of pedagogical relationships. Tirri and Ubani (2013) suggest the practice of being a teacher educator is a relational endeavour which has an altruistic '*purpose*' (ibid: 23). This builds upon the writing of Day (2012) who describes the '*passion'* (ibid: 7) needed for teaching, and it also resonates with the work of La Velle (2013). She writes teacher educators are driven by a '*moral*' (ibid: 3) intent and are not merely self-serving or delivering '*technical ma*tter' (ibid). The professional identity of a teacher educator is therefore concerned with something more than function. Peel (2005: 496) develops this understanding in describing the formation of professional identity as an '*interplay between the professional and the personal'*, but as Izadinia (2014) indicates, making claim to a categorical definition of a teacher educator's professional identity cannot be solely corroborated by academic literature.

In her systematic review of professional identity in Higher Education, Izadinia (2014) noted a teacher educator's professional identity '*seems to be still under-researched'* (ibid: 426). Furthermore, and notwithstanding the work of Day (2012 & 2006) and Day and Gu (2014) on the identity of school teachers and the connection to '*effectiveness for students*' (Day, 2012: 11), Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto (2017) reiterate how '*few studies*' (ibid: 26) have robustly considered the professional identity of teacher educators. Equally Trede, Macklin and Bridges (2011) noted a lack of academic research into the definition of professional identity with most papers referring to professional identity as '*a way of being*' (ibid: 10). Whilst Paterson, Higgs, Wilcox and Villenuve (2002) defined identity as being concerned with '*the sense of being a professional'* (ibid: 6), Rus, Tomsa, Rebega and Apostol (2013) suggest that there is no one '*widely accepted definition'* (ibid: 315).

Trede, Macklin and Bridges' (2011) review of literature reinforces Rus et al's (2013) position that professional identity does not lend itself to a ready definition. This in part

is to do with '*variety of roles*' (Lunenberg, Dengerink and Korthagen 2014: 5) required of teacher educators, and because developing a professional identity is an intricate process (Rus et al 2013). Trede, Macklin and Bridges (2011) explain professional identity as being located at the *'intersection between personal and professional values'* (ibid: 14). This nexus of informants on professional identity is supported by Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop (2004). They maintain the professional identity of a teacher '*is not a fixed attribute of a person, but a relational phenomenon*' (ibid: 108). More so, and with reference to Weinberger and Shefi (2012), the meaning of professional identity is closely entwined with that of personal identity; the formation of which is ever evolving. Weinberger and Shefi (2012) suggest an individual's professional identity is unique, it is socially formed and developed by means of on-going dialogue and reflexivity. Themes which were noted in Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto's (2017) literature review of teacher educators' professional identity.

The significance of reflexivity in the formation of a professional identity is indicated in the work of De Weerdt, Bouwen, Corthouts, and Martens (2006). They write of self-evaluation as being the '*mediator between experience and identity*' (ibid: 324); it is essential for developing a professional identity with agency. Izadinia's (2014: 430) research also makes claim to the '*importance*' of reflecting on practice to strengthen professional identity. Equally Day (2012) writes of the requirement for '*deliberative, systematic reflection*' on practice in order to build identity. This claim is supported by others involved in the researching what are considered to be caring progressions. For example, Higgs' (1993) research with health workers, whose profession also values reflexivity, describes the formation of professional identity in terms of identifiable '*attitudes, beliefs and standards which support the practitioner role*' (ibid: 10). Furthermore, Clouder's (2005) work with professionals whose work is concerned with '*caring for others*' (ibid: 506), have a professional identity which is driven by a moral and ethical purpose. Returning to education, Buchanan's (2015) findings indicate professional learning time should be given over to '*critical self-reflection*' (ibid: 714) in order for teachers to connect with what they pedagogically value and therefore make sense of '*how they are shaped by dominant discourses*' (ibid).

Professional identity has much to do with what we share in common with fellow practitioners. Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto (2017: 38) assert the importance of teacher educators '*belonging*' to their '*specific group*', a point which is in keeping with school teachers (Day and Gu 2014), and Higgs (1993) recognises work-related characteristics confer membership to a professional group which brings with it value and benefits. Vahasantanen et al (2016) reported that professional identity is enhanced when working collaboratively with colleagues on '*one's professional mission and practices*' (ibid: 2). Such collaboration for a common good, or working for the '*good of the child*' (Goepel 2012: 501), is identified by Davey (2013: 7) as creating a '*collective identity which binds*' together teacher educators as a professional group. Day and Gu (2014) make reference to a community of teachers having a shared set of values and one which centralises the '*care and achievement*' (ibid: 60) of the learner.

However, whilst shared attributes and practice signify a professional identity, how we differ from one another is equally significant in the formation of workplace identities (Lawler 2000). The identity of a person is formed through a variety of influences, and consequently for the purposes of this thesis, I am particularly interested in the personal experience of motherhood. Richards and Posnett's (2011) work on the aspirations of secondary-aged school girls identified essentially two divergent sets of opinion regarding careers and families. There were those who envisaged a life as being a mother whilst '*managing part-time work*' (ibid: 256) and those who identified first and foremostly with securing a career and becoming a mother when it was the right time to do so. Whilst these variances are expressions of individual aspirations, this thesis identifies a separation between work and motherhood for teacher educators as being essentially distracting. Vahasantanen et al (2016) assert professional identity is strengthened by '*constructing change at a personal level within a given interest group*' (ibid: 2); the personal and the professional identity are closely related, and both intricately mediate a sense of purpose (Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto 2017).

As this thesis will go on to explore, teacher educators in this study identified their professional role as being a human experience by way of offering care and support which is strengthened by the experience of being a mother. It therefore agrees with the work of Day, Kingston, Stobart and Salmons (2004) when they conclude being a

teacher '*demands significant personal investment*' (ibid: 603). Furthermore this thesis appreciates the teacher educator's professional practice is more concerned with the ''*''whole person'' rather than just the hands or brain*' (De Weerdt et al 2006: 324).

The aim of this enquiry is to shed light on what a small group of teacher educators understood by their professional identity and how being a mother might have shaped this understanding. Making sense of one's professional identity is a '*complex*' (Trede, Macklin and Bridges 2011: 14) process and one which is concerned and ultimately owned by the individual. This enquiry does not therefore serve to deduce a categorical definition of professional identity. Rather, and in keeping with its epistemological foundation (examined in detail at Chapter 3), variance is anticipated in how teacher educators' make sense of their professional identity, and the generation of new knowledge and '*deeper understandings*' (Bruce et al 2016: 3) is an inductive concern for my enquiry.

2.2 Professional identity, motherhood and personal agency

Constructing new understandings of professional identity in terms of the experiences of motherhood and individual agency is the concern my enquiry. An emergent understanding will have been shaped by the practices and axiology of each woman who took part in the research. The research is concerned with illuminating and understanding women's experiences, which for those involved was considered to be empowering and reaffirmed their professional strengths as teacher educators. My study is not, however, concerned with producing a '*higher order*' (Bruce et al 2016: 4) explanation or yielding to a dominant discourse to frame women's experience of motherhood on their professional identity. It is neither focusing on what Grbich (2013: 95) '*describes as a feminist perspective on the position of women in society*'. Whilst issues of positional power may surface as relevant to those questioned, the enquiry is not seeking to consolidate a position that women's professional identity is structured and determined by her sex. A feminist researcher such as Miller (2005) might consider this enquiry as an exposition into the '*neglected aspects of women's lives*' (ibid: 7), in which motherhood is considered to be an agent of '*limitation...suffering...and dependence*' (Benhabib 1992: 161) and therefore necessitates an '*action agenda to help marginalised peoples*' (Creswell 2013: 9). It is recognised women who have children,

in mean terms, incur '*a significant wage penalty*' (Kahn, Garcia-Manglano and Bianchi 2014: 56) when compared to childless women, and moreover it is well established women are the primary carer of children (Freitas, Inacio and Saavedra 2016) which results in career breaks. However, my thesis is not concerned with a further consideration of whether one's sex drives professional inequality, and neither does it affiliate with a position that a woman's professional identity is in some way '*inferior*' (ibid: 13) to men because (some) women have a biological capacity to give birth to children. My enquiry acknowledges motherhood assumes '*huge responsibilities*' (Fox and Neiterman 2015: 671), and it appreciates motherhood as a life changing event, which as Fox and Neiterman (2015: 674) posit is '*often a personally transformative experience*'. Thereby, participants were invited to offer their personalised accounts of this experience to the enquiry and in doing so contributed new understandings professional identity and the influence motherhood has on it for teacher educators in Higher Education.

Motherhood is characterised by an unconditional caring and connectedness (Belenky, McVicker, Clincy, Goldberger and Tarule 1997) for '*meeting the needs of another human being*' (Miller 2005: 18). My enquiry subscribes to a definition of motherhood which embraces all phases of connected caring for children and is not one that is owned by women who have given birth. It includes all women who have children in their personal charge. The phenomenon of motherhood is experiential and gradually develops over time (Miller 2005). It becomes the frame within which all other figured worlds (Holland, Cain, Lachiotte & Skinner 2008) come to be contextualised, including that of being a teacher educator. Noddings (2011) attests to the complementary roles in being both a mother and a teacher educator when she writes of the '*caring relationship*' (ibid: 372) that she has with both her own children and with her students. Noddings does not segment her sense of self from when she is at home compared to when she is at work; she identifies with '*serving*' (Strike 2011: 175) the '*good of the child*' (Goepel 2012: 501). Being a mother and a teacher educator therefore shares a moral endeavour and in doing so are charged with developing meaningful human relationships, which as Belenky et al (1997) express is no less than a '*complicated human achievement*' (ibid: 178).

The research setting in which this thesis is contextualised is one in which the participants are demographically homogenous; they are white British and by definition of the enquiry are female teacher educators. The pseudonyms used in Chapters 4 and 5 reflect the heritage of the participants. It is relevant here, however, to consider the cultural and ethnic influences on the experience of motherhood. If motherhood is concerned with developing familial and social connectedness (Belenky et al 1997) for children, the prevailing culture will shape the '*located feelings*' (Miller 2005: 14) she has of her moral responsibilities. Miller (2005) writes of the '*cultural scripts*' (ibid: 37) that guide mothers through life events and experiences, and which create a frame of '*ways of knowing and related practices*' (ibid). The cultural scripts experienced by my participants will be distinct from female teacher educators working in an ethnically diverse University; there will be a different set of held truths (Bruce et al 2016) that drive the social norms. For the purposes of my enquiry the cultural authority is Westernised; it recognises women as being the main carer who take a career break to raise children (Little et al 2015, Kahn et al 2014, Wolf 2013, McIntosh et al 2012). The pursuit of motherhood is progressed mainly through '*self-reliance*' (Miller 2005: 119), and is considered to be a '*private endeavour*' (ibid). Work outside of the home is considered to be more highly valued (Wolf 2013) than '*just being a mother*' (Miller 2005: 119). In Higher Education, women can expect to hold more junior positions to their male contemporaries (Hillman and Robinson 2017) and be assumed to abandon their interest in their career when they have children (Cohen and Duberley 2017). Whilst these cultural themes were not specifically questioned through the course of the research, it was understood my participants held an experience of lived cultural expectations, and these would not only be different from other cultures but there would also be differences within the seemingly homogenous culture (Miller 2005) of the research setting.

The theme of culture and ethnic experience in relation to the identity of teacher educators and learning of student teachers is explored in the work of Bohpal, Brown and Hazel (2016), and magnified in the work of Brown (2014) and Collins (2012). Bohpal et al (2016) highlight the lack of research '*which focuses on the experiences of BME [Black and Ethnic Minority] academics in* HE' (ibid: 240). This is to be further appreciated in the context of '*significant increases*' (ibid: 241) in the numbers of BME

students attending university. Brown (2014), and Collins (2012) address the dominance of a homogenous white culture (Collins 2012), which Brown (2014) signals '*pervades contemporary teacher education*' (ibid: 326). Bhopal et al (2016) affirm this position when they state BME academics often find '*themselves in a small minority*' (ibid: 252) within their departments. Whilst the research setting for my thesis could be described in terms of a '*normalized culture of whiteness*' (ibid), I bear witness to the challenge of how teacher education prepares its student to authentically teach for cultural and ethnic diversity. This substantive theme is however beyond the reach of my thesis; as Collins (2012) writes I am not inclined to '*prematurely synthesize things into a tidy story*' (ibid: 14) of cultural and ethnic diversity for the purpose of brevity. However, in writing about her professional identity Collins (2012) states that it is of a '*fluid nature*' (ibid: 14), and is informed by '*how others see me as well as how I see them*' (ibid: 14). Furthermore, and acknowledging the white homogenous setting in which my research is situated, my thesis subscribes to the values that Collins (2012) is driven by when she writes of the goal to '*teach, nurture, and empower the African American and/or poor children in our care*' (ibid: 15).

In keeping with Collins understanding of identity, my enquiry adheres to the work of Griffiths (1995) in understanding self-identity is '*not absolute, fixed or deterministic*' (ibid: 1), and numerous factors can influence the perception of that identity. Griffiths asks important questions of us when she asks '*so how did I come to be myself? And is what I take to be myself my real self*?' (ibid). These questions matter for they inform our sense of self and identity which, as Griffiths goes on to explain, can be portrayed in terms of a metaphorical web; an identity is '*complex*' and '*intricate, involved, interlaced, with each part entangled with the rest and dependent on it*' (Griffiths 1995: 2).This study considers how motherhood contributes to that web of identity and how this thread might shape the professional identity of women who are teacher educators. It draws on personalised accounts which are individually significant and relevant to the participant. The enquiry therefore draws a line under a feminist methodological approach and positions itself not in a context of inequitable societal status but within the experiences and perceptions of the participant female teacher educators.

2.3 Motherhood and identity

In reviewing the literature on meanings of professional identity it appeared that for all the discussion of professional identity being informed by personal understandings, the influence of being a mother, a father or a parent is not a theme of contemporary research interest. It is back to 1998 and Sikes when family relationships and teaching was seen published in the academic literature. Sikes' (1998) work gave voice to how teachers reconcile their roles as teachers with also being parents. She considered how '*perceptions and experiences*' (ibid: 87) of teaching were influenced by the experience of being a parent. The findings from the research indicated being a parent had a significant role to play in the practice of being a teacher; it enabled teachers to gain a more meaningful connection with those they teach. This was related to an '*identification of their students with their [own] children*' (Sikes 1998: 92), and furthermore teachers considered their professional confidence had increased (ibid) as a result of being a parent. As neither do I, Sikes did not seek to position parents as the '*best teacher*s' (ibid: 102). Teaching is a profession which draws on '*technical knowledge*' and '*practical wisdom*' (Cribb and Gewirtz 2007: 206) and an ability to make '*multidimensional*' (McIntyre 2005: 360) decisions; these are neither skills nor attributes contingent upon having children. However, unlike my enquiry Sikes focused on the influence of being a parent as compared to being a mother, and it focused on the role of teaching rather than the identity of being a teacher educator. Since Sikes (1998) published her work, near two decades since, there has been a breadth of literature published on professional identity (vide Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto 2017, Henning et al 2017, Vahasantanen et al 2016, Buchanan 2015, Ruohotie-Lyhty and Moate (2016), Izadinia 2014, Day and Gu 2014, Day 2011 and Davey 2013) but the influence of being a mother, father or parent has not been a cited theme.

Equally, Griffiths (2013) noted little academic exposure had been given to the changing professional identity of teacher educators. In their work with school teachers, Day and Gu (2014) recognised the significance associated with personal histories on professional identity; in doing so they signalled the influence of '*life changes*' (ibid: 90), yet did not explore in detail how personal histories inform identity. Returning to Griffiths (2013), she posited that significant '*events and experiences*' (ibid: 232) would influence the formation of professional identity. In doing so Griffiths' cited the work of

Sikes (1998) and how the experience of being a parent is a notable event in a career history. This reference to having children, as previously indicated, is rather unique despite much of the literature on professional identity referring to the significance of personal understandings and knowing oneself as a teacher. For example, Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto (2017) write of how professional identity includes an understanding of '*how one makes sense of oneself*' (ibid: 38) but there is limited reference to what constitutes an understanding of the self. Similarly in Buchanan's (2015) work on teacher identity, whilst unequivocal importance is given to the formation of relationships, being a mother, father or parent is not referenced in their discussion. Henning et al (2017) and Ruohotie-Lyhty and Moate (2016) stressed the importance of the '*relational nature*' (Ruohotie-Lyhty and Moate 2016: 326) of a teacher educator's professional identity, Izadinia (2014) noted the importance of being a reflective practitioner in understanding professional identity and Pereira, Lopes and Margarida (2015) considered the significance of having been a teacher of school children. Kahn, Garcia-Manglano and Bianchi (2014) addressed the impact of women's choices about families and career, yet none of these cited papers address the theme of whether being a mother, or indeed parent, influences a teacher educator's professional identity.

For my enquiry, which specifically focuses on the experience of motherhood, it is important to consider whether female teacher educators fundamentally adapt their approach to work as a consequence of having children. Benn (1999) asks whether women '*mind being changed*' (ibid: 88) as a result of becoming a mother; if this is the case and women are assumed to change, the question is then concerned with the nature of change; identity, commitment and/or ambition. Oakley's (1985) work, whilst somewhat dated, is significant for its contemporary reach and is therefore of relevance. She suggests the purpose of '*successful*' (ibid: 166) motherhood is nothing less than ensuring children can become independent of their mothers; '*successful mother brings up her children to do without her*' (ibid: 167). Wolf's (2013) more recent research is in keeping with Oakley's notion of motherhood's altruistic purpose. She does, however, signal a new group of contemporary professional women who will go to sacrificial lengths (Warner 2006) to bring up '*high quality*' (Wolf 2013: 245) children who exceed their own socio-economic status.

Irrespective of ambition, taking time out to have children is a consideration for professional women for it has an impact on their career '*orientations, preferences and intentions*' (Lovejoy and Stone 2012: 636). Whilst my research enquiry recognises that professional identity '*is important to a career woman's identity when she is not at work*' (Hewlett and Buck Luce 2005: 47), it is more concerned with how the experience of motherhood might shape professional identity and, in particular, the identity of women working as teacher educators. As with Gavron's (1966) work, the return of the mother to professional practice requires the workplace to consider how it accommodates women's needs to be a mother and an employee. It necessitates, as Benn (1999: 89) writes, '*a radical change in our ideas of work that it needs only women to stay still and the world to change around them*'. Brunton, Wiggins and Oakley (2011) state that women's relationships with colleagues in the workplace '*change*' post-partum, and '*their perception to time*' (ibid: 3) altered. Benn (1999) reasserts this altered perception of work; professionals are called upon to be present in the workplace, but children '*take time*' (ibid: 61) to build bonds, rather like teachers who need to build relationships with their pupils. The professional woman with children at home may therefore readjust her perspective on ambition, and for some women this can deprioritise the importance of work. This is a feature of Clark's (2000) border-crossing theory in which people '*manage and negotiate the work and family spheres and the borders between them to attain balance*' (ibid: 750)*;* women are repositioning what matters to them. Benn (1999) suggests that a woman returning to the workplace may '*never again imagine(s) herself with the ambitions of old*' (ibid: 66). Brunton, Wiggins and Oakley (2011) indicate mothers come to acknowledge they have changed and as such need to decide '*how to fit paid employment with motherhood*' (ibid: 26)*.* However, for women in employment which is essentially caring in purpose and whose '*quest is to produce better adults*' (Noddings 2015: 235), being a mother can be affirming and strengthening and have a more impact on identity than an altered working pattern. Lovejoy and Stone (2012: 635) make this point when they write:

> '*the practice of motherhood and care has a profound impact on caregivers' values, thought and orientation*'

Motherhood therefore presents an additional thread to the professional identity of women. This, for some women, can be challenging; Brunton, Wiggins and Oakley (2011: 26) write of the '*tension between their established careers and their maternal*

identity. Lovejoy and Stone (2012) too recognise the experience of being a mother, particularly during the time of being at home with their child can have *a 'profound changes in their values, interests and priorities, which in turn shaped their career aspirations and plans'* (ibid: 640). Dow's (2016) work on childcare responsibilities in financially stable nuclear families asserts women predominantly take on the primary caring role, and more so women experience an implicit pressure to be the main carer even when they return to work. Whilst Mickelson and Biehle's (2016) research into the different roles within two parent families considers '*hers, his and their*' (ibid: 1) contribution to childcare, Dow's presentation of a hegemonic model of parenting is validated by Wolf's (2013) research. She found that it is still women who take on the main role of childcare, and this is seen particularly amongst couples who are both highly educated and professionally employed. Dow (2016) proposes a model of '*integrated mothering*' (ibid: 1), in which professional women are financially self-sufficient and use childminders for their childcare for their children's care, yet Wolf (2013) documents professional women are still more likely to take a career break to raise children than their male partners:

> '*graduate women, not fathers, who are most likely to cut back their hours at work*' (Wolf 2013: 281)

This point is validated by Freitas, Inacio and Saavedra (2016) in their assertion '*it is established as the norm*' (ibid: 415) women are the primary carer and reiterated by Smith (2011) when she writes '*she took it upon herself to be the parent who took the main responsibility for childcare…which also limited the possibilities open to her*' (ibid: 21). More so and returning to Dow's notion of implicit role influence, women returning to their professional role must not be seen to be distracted at work by their '*responsibilities such as caring for children*' (Smith 2011: 20), for fear as being considered '*less committed to their jobs than childless women*' (Kahn, Garcia-Manglano and Bianchi 2014: 57). For other women the importance of ambition and career are such that being a mother is too detracting and so delay the decision to have children or indeed choose not to have children at all (Wolf, 2013).

The notion of being the ideal mother (Smith 2011, Miller 2005, Gavron 1966) and the successful professional is one which Smith (2011) suggests is unattainable due to the '*patriarchal*' (ibid: 11) societal norms. Yet Smith's work establishes different patterns

of how women manage the dual aspects of being a mother and being a professional educator. In keeping with Wolf (2013), the majority of women were defined by Smith (2011) in terms of being '*pragmatists*' (ibid: 13). Such a typology positions women into a group whereby motherhood must not detract from professional practice; professional careers are extraneous to the role of being a mother and family priorities must fit around the career. This prescription necessitates women handle many responsibilities, which are separated and not mutually beneficial. Women are seen to be playing multiple dissonant roles (Wolf, 2013) within a lifelong performance of doing (Goffman 1969). By way of contrast this research enquiry explores the extent to which motherhood influences professional identity, and in doing so invites women to consider whether a mutuality of responsibilities is professionally enhancing.

The interplay between the educator's practice as a '*nurturer*' (Smith 2011: 13) and the unconditionality of acceptance (Rogers 1995) offers the separated roles of being a mother and an educator an agency for personal and professional progression. As referred to previously Smith's (2011) writing would seem to objectify motherhood: motherhood can be a barrier to career development if women do not '*exert a power of belief*' (ibid: 21) over their work. By contrast my enquiry adds to the cannon of knowledge by centre staging motherhood and giving consideration to the positive influence motherhood might have on shaping a woman's professional identity. For example, consideration is given to the ways in which being a mother has influenced professional practice of teacher educators and decisions that have been made about career progression. Indeed motherhood is explored as an agent of professional enhancement and development, in contrast to an experience which defines motherhood as a limiting agent (Kim and Lang 2001), fed by a conflict of separated and competing roles. Whilst ambition may be considered an aspect of professional identity, the question remains as to how motherhood might shape that identity, or whether it is another component which needs to find a place within the many corners of a woman's existence. Motherhood, I suggest, can be an agent for development and empowerment rather than an inconvenient episode in a woman's career, and therefore it does contribute to a woman's professional identity or what Lovejoy and Stone (2012: 649) refer to as an '*expanded sense of the self*'.

Much of the existing academic literature on women in the professional workplace explores how being a woman impacts on professional practices and career development and progression. For example Leathwood (2005) focus on the challenges of gender, class and race instruct professional identity and Gill, Mills, Franzway, and Sharp (2008) consider how power relationships and professional identities in relation to gender are constructed in the workplace. Little, Smith Major, Hinojosa and Nelson (2015) consider the impact pregnancy and motherhood can have on a woman's professional image. Their work signals how motherhood can limit a woman's career because it negatively '*stereotypes*' (ibid: 8) women in the workplace as being '*emotional and nurturing*' (ibid). Pregnancy and motherhood need therefore to be kept separate from a woman's professional image, for it otherwise constrains ambition and opportunity. However, and significantly, there appears to be limited literature exploring the extent to which motherhood can strengthen professional identity and in particular that of teacher educators. The methodology for my enquiry therefore establishes a research framework to explore how motherhood might shape the professional identity of teacher educators, and therefore addresses the deficit in the extant academic literature.

2.4 Theoretical Framework: Communities of practice

This final section of Chapter 2 sets out a theoretical lens, Lave and Wenger's (1991) communities of practice, in which the phenomenon of motherhood and how it might influence the professional identity of teacher educators will be considered. The importance of establishing a framework is to make evident the principles on which the phenomenon is constructed (O'Grady 2015) and therefore can be reinterpreted. Lave and Wenger's (1991) socio-cultural '*model of learning*' (O'Grady 2015: 31) set outs how situations or communities inform human experience and endeavour and thereby influence identity. In the situation of teaching, this would be one's professional identity, and is relevant to this enquiry for it takes account of how experience contributes to understandings of identity over time (Cuddapah and Clayton 2011). Lave and Wenger (1991) introduced the notion of legitimate peripheral participation to make sense of how those with little by community experience, what might be referred to as apprentices (Handley, Sturdley, Fincham and Clark 2006), learn from and in time contribute to an established, or contextualised, community of practice.

I was drawn to Lave and Wenger's (1991) model of learning, and also the later work of Wenger (1998) because it serves to explain the myriad of socially interactive experiences and occurrences involved in developing an identity. Lave and Wenger (1991) referred to this social scape as a community of practice in which learning, and therein identity, is not cognitively acquired (Cuddapah and Clayton 2011) but co-constructed:

> '…*participants share understandings concerning what they are doing and what that means for their lives and for their communities*' (Lave and Wenger, 1991: 98)

Learning with and through others and involving critical debate of the ways of doing is an essential feature of Lave and Wenger's (1991) model (O'Grady 2015). This theoretical framework resonates with the terms of participation, practices, meaning and identity formation (Handley et al 2006) each of which are features of a teacher educator's and a mother's sense of being. It has a generative nature in which participants are identified as being at different stages on a continuum of learning. Beginning with the peripheral apprentices, participants become members of a core (Lave and Wenger 1991) group as they become expert in their field, and are observed as central to the community's cohesion. Lave and Wenger (1991) also observed a group of participants who were actively involved but not yet core to the community and others who were noted for being episodic members of the group. They were part of the community but did not persistently contribute to its development. Finally, Lave and Wenger (1991) identified a group of participants, transactionals, who with core expertise were looking further afield to utilise and apply their learning. In essence, Lave and Wenger (1991) theorised that learning was a situated concern in which being and socially doing with others was an '*integral and inseparable aspect*' (ibid: 53) of a community of practice. In turn progressive participation in the community conferred established membership (Cuddapah and Clayton 2011) and thereby instrumental in informing the participant's identity (Handley et al 2006).

I noted previously that in developing a theoretical lens for the enquiry, I had drawn upon the work of Wenger (1998). He went on to enhance the notion of situated learning (Lave and Wenger's 1991) by developing a socio-cultural framework which theorised how the community context for the peripheral learner significantly influences learning

and engenders enhanced practice, sense-making and belonging (Cuddapah and Clayton 2011). Effective learning is achieved, as O'Grady (2015) writes, through '*a shared learning structure*' (ibid: 32) and it is this structure which Wenger's (1998) model identifies as being the community endeavour. Practices within the community share a '*mutual engagement in action*' (Wenger 1998: 5) and, as Sartre (1948) theorised, members are in a:

> '*transition of becoming as they make sense and learn from experiences, and realise their identity of participation*' (Wenger 1998: 5)

The relevance to this thesis of Wenger's (1998) communities of practice model, with its four interdependent spheres of community, practice, meaning and identity (Wenger 1998), is it provides a theoretical lens in which the identity of participants, who share a common endeavour, can be better understood. Furthermore, and returning to Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of situated learning and legitimate peripheral participation, membership of and engagement within the community can be observed and explained.

There is a point of observance concerning an understanding of identity which strays away from the principles of Wenger's (1998) model. He considered people behave in temporally different ways according to the construction of the community they find themselves in:

> '*We often behave rather differently in each of them [communities of practice], construct different aspects of ourselves and gain different perspectives*' (Wenger 1998: 159)

While my enquiry employs the theoretical lens of communities of practice, it does not presuppose people readily employ a typology of behaviours for different situations. Rather, this thesis appreciates the consideration given to the essence of a person across a range of communities. Handley et al (2006) describes this as the ability to function '*between different communities of practice and yet be actively involved in both*' (ibid: 647). Within a context of under-research into how motherhood influences a teacher educator's professional identity, being a mother and being a teacher educator could be considered as two distinct communities. In spite of the paucity of literature, becoming a teacher educator and a mother involves making sense of ways of being and so, through Wenger's (1998) theoretical lens (see Chapter 4), analysis of participants' narratives will be concerned with understanding how motherhood might influence professional

identity. Moreover, it will consider a community of practice in which the professional identity of the teacher educator is influenced by the joint endeavour of being a mother and a teacher educator.

In conclusion this enquiry is set within a framework that seeks, as Griffiths (1995: 2-3) writes, to:

> '*explain the intricate entanglement which is our self identity [and] which is made up of the threads of epistemology based on autobiographical experience*'.

In doing so and looking forward, Chapter 3 examines the enquiry's methodology; the clew, or entangled threads, of teacher educators' experiences and perceptions will be sourced and rewoven on a philosophical foundation of social constructivism and in taking a phenomenological approach to gathering research data through qualitative research tools of questionnaires and interview.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Methodology is defined by Atkins and Wallace (2012: 24) as the '*theoretical and philosophical justification*' for the selection of research instruments for the enquiry. The research methods whereas are the mechanism for collecting and analysing data. This chapter therefore positions my enquiry within a philosophical paradigm and explains why the methods selected are appropriate and suitable for their purpose. Furthermore, it contextualises the research within its setting and establishes the ethical grounds on which my enquiry was conducted.

3.1 Truth, philosophy, paradigms and positioning

When exploring a phenomenon Griffiths (2006) states there is a need to lay claim to an epistemological understanding of '*how knowledge is brought to bear, and … what it is to be human*' (ibid: 389). This enquiry is set within an epistemological framework that seeks to progress an understanding of professional identity within a context of motherhood. It allows ideas to evolve and it assumes stewardship of the knowledge that emerges from the enquiry. The resultant knowledge is framed by multiple definitions of professional identity and the possibility that motherhood may or may not shape the professional identity of a teacher educator. Rather than attempting to '*build some edifice which will produce a new Archimedean point of view or God's eye view*' (Griffiths 1995), this enquiry is guided by an appreciation of unique and '*continually changing*' (ibid: 45) perceptions which are voiced through personal narratives. The enquiry therefore has no ambitions to generate a theory, or define '*how reality hangs together*' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011: 18); the influences on professional identity, and in particular how motherhood might shape that identity, are understood to be intricate and threaded and are neither presumed nor fixed. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) this intricate nature of knowledge when they write '*situations are fluid and changing rather than fixed and static: events and behaviours evolve over time and are richly affected by context*' (ibid: 17).

The purpose of this enquiry into understanding teacher educator professional identity is to explore the experience of the individual, what Husserl (1927/81) refers to as the '*essence*' of living constructions. Essence for this enquiry is motherhood and its influence on professional identity with such constructions being framed within the

horizon of individuality which itself is contextualised within a social collective (Thiele et al 2017). Identity is understood to be constructed through the lived experience of what a person has seen, experiences and purports to see. This temporality of being is the positional constructor of perception and provides a unique context of identity.

Professional identity and experiences of being a mother are constructs which involve an understanding of the self; it is the essence of the self with its unique weave which cannot, as Heidegger (2008) explains, be objectified in terms of absolute truths. Absolute truths necessitate linear and scientific deduction (Wellington, 2015) which lead to an objective generalisation of reality (Pring 2006) and can only exist '*independent of human belief, perception, culture and language*' (Fox, Martin, and Green 2007: 85). This leads to an assumption that the relationship between research and practice is defined as a transmission of objectively positioned knowledge. Biesta and Burbules (2003) describe such a positivist paradigmatic position as one in which '*knowledge acquisition*' (ibid: 2) allows researchers to see an absolute reality which is bounded by what is already known. Positivism claims knowledge has an objective reality which is '*independent of human experience*' (ibid: 7). Furthermore positivists would support the assertion that individual experience is determined by a logical deduction of causation and truth; Guignon (2012) describes such an ontology as abiding by '*law governed ways*' (Guignon 2012: 99) and Hibberd (2010) refers to the '*theory of causal laws*' (ibid: 40). Guignon (2012) contests this empirically reductionist approach to formulating truthful knowledge for, he asserts, people cannot be understood by '*empirically discoverable generalizations about causal relations*' (ibid: 99). Knowledge of human behaviour is socially contextual and multi-factorial (Forster 2015 and Guignon 2012) and requires interpretative understanding. My research concurs with this approach and appreciates knowledge to be more fluid and socially constructed. As such, I subscribe to Quine (1980) who asserts knowledge and understanding is derived from a '*web of beliefs*' (ibid: 46) which are dependent upon interpretations of what is seen and observed. More so, observation without consideration of personal, social and cultural context can lead to knowledge '*falsehoods*' (ibid) for, as Guignon (2012) writes, people are '*creative, constantly changing self-interpretations*' (ibid: 99) of themselves.

The philosophical foundations, or paradigms (Kuhn 1970), of knowing is therefore an important consideration for my enquiry for it signifies why knowledge is assumed to be truthful. Understanding how we know what we know is crucial to an appreciation of new knowledge. However, I am not concerned with entering into what Pring (2006: 37) refers to as '*paradigm wars*'. Pring questions whether we as researchers should position ourselves specifically between '*the objective, observable and measurable*' and '*the subjective and non-measurable world of the individual consciousness*' (ibid). Moreover, there is a need to consider the ontological and epistemological view of reality and knowledge creation as a spectrum of ideas from which we consider what stands as truth. In doing so, this enquiry is able to select research methods which, as Williams and Vogt (2011: 6) state, are '*the best methods for the task in hand*'.

Given that my enquiry subscribes to an epistemological understanding that knowledge is generated by the individual and their unique '*phenomena*' (Heidegger 2008: 58), positioning an enquiry within a paradigm might be considered paradoxical. The experience of the self, that is one's being, is '*constructed over time and context*' (Uprichard 2011: 104) and is at any one moment understood by what it is to be that person. Knowledge, which is constructed by the self, should not therefore be set within a paradigm or a defined terms of reference. However, experiences of being are subject to challenge by the dominant discourse, or by what Bruce et al (2016) refer to as '*higher order stories that hold social value and power and act as ''truth'' at certain times*' (ibid: 4). Hence the phenomenon of being is not only temporal but also positional and mediated by history (Guignon 2012). In being so, an understanding of paradigmatic positioning is subject to an idiosyncratic perception and construction. Thereby, and of importance to this enquiry, is the appreciation of multiple perspectives on a phenomenon which generate knowledge through a socially constructed critical discourse. Whilst acknowledging people are part of a '*wider context of a historical culture*' (Guignon 2012: 101) and web of social patterning and pragmatic way of being (Heidegger 2008), the conceptual framework for my enquiry therefore attests to people being equally valued for their individuality of experience and as being informants to the research (Powney and Watts 1987). They are not simply considered as objects of an enquiry being examined for subject-related actions and behaviours (Heidegger 2008).

Acknowledging perception and belief develop over time (Husserl 1927/1981) are idiographic to the individual, this enquiry invited participants to narrate what Clandinin and Connolly (2004: 4) refer to as their '*storied accounts*' of being a mother and teacher educator. It is these narratives which are used to make new meaning (Bruce et al 2016) and generate better understandings of the teacher educator's professional identity in relation to the phenomenon of motherhood. The process relied upon participants being willing to '*reveal the understandings and perceptions*' (Pring 2006: 32) of their experiences, an '*examining [of] stories*' (Bruce et al 2016: 3) and thereby socially constructing the enquiry's new knowledge. To be effective, the approach required a '*transaction*' (ibid: 28) of trust in which the participants were taken as the authentic and '*authorial voice*' (Clandinin and Connolly 2004: 9) of the enquiry. My research therefore centralises the importance of generating new meanings from participants' stories, and in doing so offers a rich experiential understanding of the socially constructed ways in which professional identity is made sense of and the extent to which motherhood contributed to professional identity.

In summary, the philosophical foundation to my enquiry invited participants to inform a social construction of new knowledge. In doing so they were integral to the enquiry and positioned them not as passive recipients of research (Woodhouse 2012) but as instrumentally informing (Powney and Watts 1987) the direction of the enquiry. Therefore the women in this enquiry are referred to as participants who offered narrated accounts (Clandinin and Connolly 2004) of professional identity and experiences of motherhood. Thus, I return to the epistemology of this thesis which is concerned with generating new understandings of professional identity and motherhood formed through socially constructed personal experiences.

3.2 Understanding whether and why: A phenomenology enquiry

Motherhood is a '*critical life event*' (Miller 2005: 6), and it is this experience or phenomenon which I will explore in terms of the formation of a teacher educator's professional identity. Working within an epistemological framework of socio-constructivism the enquiry draws upon qualitative research methods to explore women's experiences of motherhood and professional identity. Before moving onto a

more detailed exposition of the research tools, phenomenology as a methodological approach will be explored in more detail.

For my enquiry a phenomenological approach was adopted for it embraces unique subjectivity which, and as Heidegger asserts, is an outcome of a person's free choice and intentionality (Heidegger 2008). Phenomenology is a philosophical approach to the study of experience and it is interested in what '*the experience of being a human being is like*' (Smith, Flowers and Larkin 2012: 11). Creswell (2013) refers to phenomenologists as seeking '*the essence of human experience concerning a phenomenon*' (ibid: 15). Phenomenology is therefore concerned with the meaning of lived experiences; it enables the occasion of events to be examined yet does not purport to provide '*an explanation*' (Lockwood and Strong 2011: 5) of events. For my research, the focus of the lived experience or phenomenon was that of being a mother. The research sought to garner women's idiographic experiences of being mothers and teacher educators and in doing so capture '*subjective meanings*' (Creswell 2013: 8) and unique '*interpretations of the world*' (Oakley 1984: ix). In doing so it was necessary to override assumed ways of being and '*slacken the intentional threads which attach us to the world*' (Merleau-Ponty 2013: XIV).

Thus, phenomenology required me as the researcher to suspend with preconceived judgements ('*bracketing*', Lichtman 2013: 87) and explore participants' essential experiences (Creswell 2013). However, to set aside a personal axiology and subjectivity would seem improbable, a point corroborated by Lichtman (2013: 81) who states that '*it is simplistic to think that a researcher can set aside his or her own ideas about a phenomenon*'. The issue of researcher subjectivity is managed by a process of voicing one's own precepts and beliefs about the phenomenon or, as Lichtman (2013: 88) asserts, make '*explicit one's ideas on the topic*'. Creswell (2013) recognises the researcher brings beliefs and values which can shape their interpretations and so should '*acknowledge*' (ibid: 8) their judgements prior to interpreting their participants' accounts. Furthermore, the researcher should, as Heidegger (2008: 73) states, undertake '*authentic reflection*'; this is to identify and separate their values, beliefs and judgements from those of the participants and from what they assume to be the '*what is, what was and what will be*' (Husserl 1927/1981: 43). In doing so the researcher can

appreciate the nuanced differences of what is owned and '*lived*' (Merleau-Ponty 2013: 415) by the participants as compared to what they themselves observe as being '*displayed*' (ibid) by the participant.

Whilst I as the researcher am adopting a phenomenological position for the enquiry, it was undesirable to completely bracket out my experience of being a teacher educator and mother. As noted in chapter 1 and detailed in Chambers (2017), the origins of this enquiry commenced with a personal reflection on holding these two dissonant identities which, relative to the experience of others, felt incongruence and self-limiting. Therefore through the course of my enquiry iterative critical reflection for personal authenticity and to '*be-one's-self*' (Heidegger 2008: 314) was crucial. In addition, the methods for my enquiry invited participants to examine their experiences by asking of them open questions which invited a dialogue and deep-reflection upon their professional status and the personal domain of motherhood. More on the trustworthiness of the research is at section 3.5, Trusting new knowledge.

Returning to the theme of experience being temporal, positional and historical, I recognise the experiences which are captured as part of this enquiry are developing and changing. My research therefore reports a stage in the participants lived experiences which they are reflecting upon. Sartre recognises this process as a '*transition*' (Sartre 1948:26); that being in the moment of one's existence (Heidegger 2008) to reflecting upon the essence of one's experience. This continuum of personal understanding is recognised by Kierkergaard (1974) when he describes it as being *'...constantly in the process of becoming'* (ibid: 79). For my enquiry, an understanding of professional identity and the influence of motherhood is therefore a narrated perception held in and of the time it was captured. In being so, and as noted previously, to ensure authenticity of reporting, I as the researcher needed to make evident my own pre-conceived ideas or '*fore-conceptions'* (Heidegger 2008: 195) about the examined phenomenon.

The phenomenological approach to my enquiry offers a critical insight into the experiences and lives of others. I acknowledge I cannot fully comprehend the participants' narrated experiences for, and as Sartre (1948) contends, we can never truly be in the lives of another and therefore fully understand their experience. In

essence the purpose of my phenomenological enquiry is to gain a better understanding of the participants' perceptions of being as described by them in their '*own terms*' (Smith, Flowers and Larkin 2012: 11). Assuming this approach, and with reference to researcher positionality, detailed in section 1.2, my research unearths understandings of the professional identity of teacher educators and generates new understandings of how motherhood might influence it. I will go on to contend the articulation of a teacher educator professional identity is concerned with the essence of the person and therefore personal identity matters for the individual's professional identity.

3.3 Collecting data: Methods for enquiry

The enquiry selected methods to collect data which offered a broad and detailed insight into the phenomenon under consideration. Qualitative research tools of a semi-structured questionnaire and open-ended interview were therefore selected as the means of entering into dialogue, both written and aural, with women working as teacher educators in the School of Education where I worked. Questionnaires were selected in place of journal style reporting for my enquiry because they invited deliberative written discourse set within a fixed number of questions and to be completed within a single period of time. This, I considered, made the process of providing data more manageable within the participants working lives, and ensured that data would be collected in a timely manner.

The first phase of data collection involved a semi-structured questionnaire, and which is detailed at section 3.3.1 Questionnaires. It addressed notions of professional identity and being a teacher educator. The second phase was an open-ended interview (examined at 3.3.2 Interviews) and focused specifically on the phenomenon of motherhood with questionnaire participants who identified themselves as being mothers. The interview process invited participants to reflect upon and narrate their '*underlying insights and assumptions*' (Webster and Mertova 2007: 4) about how motherhood might influence their professional identity.

The purposive sampling method for the research invited all 32 female teacher educators within the School of Education where I work to complete the questionnaire. This method of sampling identified participants who possess, and as described by Cohen,

Manion and Morrison (2011: 156), the '*particular characteristics being sought*' for the purposes of the enquiry. Participants selected for the interview phase of the research were those who had participated in the questionnaire and who had indicated that they had children. The reliability of the semi-structured questionnaire and the open-ended interview were trialled with a group of Higher Education teacher educators working in a different University to which I work in. They were invited to complete the questionnaire and reflect upon the interview questions and in doing so they were asked to consider three main aspects. These included; the extent to which the questions elicited, within a manageable period of time, a deeper understanding of teacher educators' understandings of professional identity (Questions 1-4), the extent to which motherhood (Question 5) had influenced it and whether the interview questions explored how motherhood might influence the identity of teacher educators. Feedback from the trial group of colleagues indicated the questionnaire should have a maximum of five questions given their semi-structured nature. This required the participant to think deeply about their responses and therefore took some time to complete. They considered the questions to be relevant and pertinent to the theme of the research, however a recommendation was to position the question on motherhood (Question 5) as the last question and not as the initial semi-structured question. This they felt would invite women who were not mothers to feel essential to the survey phase of the enquiry. The content and structure of the questionnaire is considered in more detail at section 3.3.1, Questionnaires.

Concerning the interview schedule, the trial group of teacher educators affirmed the significance of the two open-ended research, and context-setting closed questions. They did, however, signal that participants would vary in the extent to which they would share their experiences and perceptions of how motherhood might influence professional identity. This, the group suggested, was a personal and affective domain which not all participants would wish to expand upon. Consequently, the correspondence inviting survey-colleagues to participate in the interview assured participants of their right to withdraw at any stage form the enquiry, with no use being made of any data they had thus far provided to the research (see Appendix B: *Interview schedule and statement of ethical compliance*).

The sequence of questions for both the questionnaire and the interview was integral to participants' understanding of the overall direction of the enquiry; Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) describe the need to establish '*the purposes*' (ibid: 397) of the questioning process. For my research, the staging of questions provided a journey map for the participants to share their experiences and perceptions, and therefore provide the enquiry with a rich source of qualitative data. Methods used to analyse the data included thematic coding and to reduce unintended distortion of participants' data a frequency measure, Wordle, was used. Section 3.4 provides a full description of the methods used for analysing data for my research and trustworthiness of the data is at section 3.5.

When inviting women to participant in my research they were assured of the enquiry's ethical practice. Their participation was voluntary and in agreeing to contribute to the enquiry, the women were assured of their right to withdraw at any stage, with any data that they provided bring disposed of. The participants were assured the information they offered would remain confidential at all times and their identity would be concealed and anonymised. The ethical approach taken for my enquiry is addressed in detail at section 3.6.

In summary, and before moving onto a detailed consideration of the questionnaire and interview phases, methods of data analysis and trustworthiness, this phenomenological enquiry was set in the University's School of Education where I work. Purposive sampling was used for the questionnaire phase and all female teacher educators in the School were invited to participate. Those invited for interview were participants who identified themselves as mothers in the questionnaire phase of the research enquiry. Ethical permissions were sought from the University for both phases of the enquiry.

3.3.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires provide a systematic approach to gathering responses to set questions and in doing so offer information that can be readily analysed. Powney and Watts (1987) describe the use of a fixed framework of questions as a respondent research technique. These are characterised by a set of pre-determined questions, and provide, as Gavron (1966) used in her research, a wealth of responses to planned questions conceived of by the researcher (Powney and Watts 1987). Questionnaires allow for a breadth of data to be collected; they allow for a greater number of participants than an interview could reasonably manage. Participant respondents therefore provide data to the enquiry which is structured by the researcher, and where the '*locus of control*' (Powney and Watts 1987: 17) in how the participants report sits more closely with the questioner.

For my enquiry, I used a semi-structured questionnaire (see Annex A for Questionnaire schedule), with a set number of closed questions. The closed set of questions included items to contextualise the participants' responses and included how many children the participant had, age of children and length of service as a teacher educator. The set of semi-structured questions invited participants to respond to a number of issues pre-set by me as the researcher. However, unlike the closed questions, they provided scope for the participants to address their own understandings of professional identity and that of being a teacher educator. Gavron (1966) refers to this expanded discourse as offering '*latitude*' (ibid: 151) whilst Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011: 377) write of a '*breadth and depth*' of response. The semi-structured questionnaire invited participants to articulate their understanding of professional identity, its significance, being a teacher educator and the signifiers of their professional practice. With reference to the rationale for each of the semi-structured questions asked, Table 1 details the intent:

Table 1: Questionnaire phase: Purpose of semi-structured questions

Question	Purpose
1: What words would you use to describe the meaning of professional identity?	To explore participants' perceptions of their own professional identity; that is did the participants relate to the concept of having a professional identity and to what degree is the notion relevant to them as individuals
2. How would you describe your own professional identity as a teacher educator?	To explore participants' understanding of professional identity in the context of being a teacher educator. This question followed on from question 1 in that, having invited participants to offer their perceptions on the concept of professional identity, the question aimed to explore the meaning of having a professional identity as a teacher educator
3. To what extent is professional identity an important aspect of the way in which you approach your role as a teacher educator?	To ascertain the importance of having a professional identity as a teacher educator; this question sought to add another dimension to participants' expressions of professional identity. It sought to focus on the relevance and importance of having a professional identity as a teacher educator and how this might affect their practice
4. Has your professional identity as a teacher educator changed over the course of your career and if so what has influenced how it has been formulated?	To establish whether participants' perception of professional identity as a teacher educator had changed over the course of their careers, and if so, what have been the influencing factors. This question explored the notion that professional identity changes over a career course, and so aimed to illicit if participants spoke of a changing identity; how had it changed (if at all) and what had been the key influences to its reformulation.
5. If you have children, in what ways and why has being a mother shaped your professional identity as a teacher educator?	This final question was asked of all participants but was only relevant to those who stated they had children. Where questions 1-4 sought to construct a narrative of the perceived meanings, importance and formulations of a teacher educator's professional identity, question 5 opened the dialogue on the extent to which being a mother had shaped their professional identity as a teacher educator, and if so in what ways.

3.3.2 Interviews

The interview phase of my research (see Annex B for Interview Schedule) built upon the questionnaire phase and in particular on question 5. The purpose of which was to explore the extent to which being a mother influenced the teacher educator's professional identity. The use of open-ended interview questions invited women to speak in '*their own frames of reference*' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011: 413) whilst being conducted through a '*professional conversation*' (Kvale 2008: 30). This allowed the participants to speak about their understandings of professional identity and the experience motherhood in a manner which they directed. The interview opened up the discourse to one in which the participants were able to '*reveal and explore the lifeworlds*' (Kvale 2008: 30) they inhabit and experience. The open-ended nature of the questions, and use of appropriate probing, invited the participants to take the authoritative voice (Clandinin and Connelly 2004) and therefore move from the general interview theme to their specific and personalised focal points.

The importance of exploring participant voice is described by Weinberger and Shefi (2012: 261) as a process of '*narrative theorizing*'; this provides opportunity for the participants to reflect upon their own experiences and in doing so deconstruct significant life events in order to make sense of their present being. As will become evident in the analysis of the data, the participants' were to speak of the interview process as a powerful means to consider what they had otherwise taken for granted (Oakley, 1984); that being their professional identity in relation to being a mother. In keeping with Heidegger's (2008) quest to find the authentic self, the process of narrating one's own reflections through the medium of an interview (Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop 2004) provided the participants with an occasion to examine their assumed ways of being and explore what it was for themselves to be a teacher educator in relation to the phenomenon of motherhood.

Interviews have long been acknowledged as a means of capturing a depth of information, for as Jennings (1962) writes such a process enables the researcher '*to see the situation from the points of view of the person interviewed*' (ibid: 152) The interview phase of my enquiry therefore invited the participants to serve as '*informants*' (Powney and Watts 1987: 17). Informant interviews, by comparison to closed question research techniques, invite and consider the participant's depth of

meaning in response to a '*perception…within a situation*' (Powney and Watts 1987: 18). More so it allows the participant to express what '*they wanted to say*' (ibid) in response to questions which are open and '*facilitative*' (ibid: 9) as compared to a schedule and boundary of questions which the researcher attests a significance to. To enable each participant to articulate in their own words the extent to which motherhood had influenced their professional identity, the use of open-ended interviews was therefore considered most suitable for this enquiry.

Before asking the open-ended interview questions, two contextualising questions were asked of the participants. These were to ascertain if the participant was a teacher educator before or after becoming a parent, and also the age of her children. The purpose of this question was two-fold; one to ascertain for how long had the woman been a teacher educator and at what stage in her career as a teacher educator did she have children and therefore if being a mother might had shaped her professional identity as a teacher educator. The open-ended questions invited women to talk about how being a mother might have shaped their professional identity as a teacher educator. For the purposes of authenticity, all interviews were sound recorded and were transcribed verbatim (Fox and Neiterman 2015). The schedule and rationale for each of the interview questions is given at Table 2:

Table 2: Interview phase: Purpose of open-ended questions

Question	Purpose
I invite you to talk about whether being a mother has influenced your professional identity as a teacher educator	The purpose of the question was for the participants to reflect upon their experience of being a mother and consider how it might have shaped their professional identity as a teacher educator. Prompts included, why they did or did not consider to have influenced their professional identity; in what ways influence had been realised in their practice and in their perceptions of professional identity.
Would you describe yourself as a teacher educator who is also a mother, or, a mother who works as a teacher educator?	This question sought to explore the woman's primacy of identity, that being one of a teacher educator or a mother. In doing so the question was teasing at the weave of personal and professional threads of identity and if not offered by the participant to reason their response to the question.

3.4 Analysis: Understanding data

It is to be acknowledged there are a '*wide range of methods*' (Harding 2013: 138) to analyse qualitative data, and the mode of analysis which this enquiry makes use of serves to reflect the whole descriptions that the participants offer. Analysing qualitative data is an in-exact science because it necessitates an interpretation of information that has already '*been interpreted by the respondent*' (Cohen. Manion and Morrison 2011: 554), and this entangled or '*double hermeneutic*' (Giddens 1984: xxxii) process is further compounded by the multiple interpretations that can be made of qualitative information. This is judged by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) to be qualitative data's '*glory and headache* (ibid: 537)'.

To make sense of the collected data there needs to be an intended use for the analysed information, which for this enquiry is to gain an understanding of how the participants make sense of their professional identity and how motherhood might shape it. The process of analysis necessitates an iterative reading and coding of the data and identification of themes which allow for '*deeper understandings*' (Bruce et al, 2016: 2) and new meanings to be generated. For my enquiry, this inductive approach needed to strike a balance between viewing the whole narrative and not pre-coded fragments of text (Bruce et al 2016 and Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011) in order to identify emergent themes which present a '*weight of evidence on which to present credible knowledge*' (Atkins and Wallace 2012: 210).

The credibility of data and findings is in part determined by what, in a positivist paradigm, would be referred to as validity, or in a socio-constructivist mode the truth of findings (Grbich, 2013). Measures of absolute truth in qualitative research enquiry are not of an existential nature for there are as many constructions of reality as there are participants questioned. Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2012: 80) assert that there is '*no right or wrong way*' of analysing data. Furthermore, Muncie (2013: 139) writes '*the researcher must always acknowledge the possibility that alternative interpretations are possible*', and this is supported by Grbich (2013) when she claims no one participant or researcher can claim superiority to the truth of an event. Indeed to understand a person's interpretation of a phenomenon, a construction of meaning between the

researcher and the researched is required which requires an iterative checking and recognition of re-interpretation (ibid).

Credibility of qualitative data is therefore premised on the social construction of meaning and a persistent endeavour to understand what participants themselves are making sense of (Smith, Flowers and Larkin 2012). Research participants are not, however, considered to be immune from the social norms of their peer group. Their description of events will be framed '*from the generalized standpoint of the social group as a whole to which he belongs*' (Mead 1934: 138), or as Bruce et al (2016) referred to as the extant metanarrative. Mead (1934) comments that the construction of meaning is essentially a weave between the individual's perception of the self in relation to that of others; our '*selves can only exist in definite relation to other selves*' (ibid: 164). Yet experience felt by the self is uniquely embodied in the individual, and so whilst we are within a net of others (Heidegger 2008), this enquiry values individuality and the idiographic perspective of the phenomenon being examined. My enquiry endorses Merleau-Ponty's (2013) notion of the person being the central '*means of communication*' (ibid: 106) about the world in which they inhabit, and it is a notion which I as the researcher and as a teacher educator and a mother, willingly subscribe to.

Given that people are the source of this enquiry's research data and I am the means of data analysis, I have acknowledged my '*own consciousness*' (Stake: 41) about the phenomenon in question. In doing so participant data was accepted at '*face value*' (Griffiths 2006: 41), and trusted as authentic even if it did not chime with my own personal experiences or when there was difference in expression between the participants (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011). Therefore, the mode of data analysis for this enquiry considered each participant's account as significant and important in and of itself, and whilst common themes were to be sought, the findings weighted all contributions as relevant and truthful. The uniqueness of each participant's observations was therefore essential and contributed to a wider construction of understanding, which for this enquiry is of small group of teacher educators working in a University's School of Education.

The mode of analysis for the open-ended questions in the questionnaire and interview adopted a thematic analysis (Bruce et al 2016) to highlight streams of convergent and unique thought and meaning. The approach to coding was Thomas' (2009) constant comparative method involving coding, sorting and identifying patterns and which has common features with Lichtman's (2013) three Cs approach to analysis (coding, categories and concepts). The inductive nature of the exercise necessitated codes emanated from the qualitative data rather than mirrored an apriori index of predetermined themes (Bruce et al 2016).

The coding exercise commenced with an iterative line by line analysis (Smith, Larkin and Flowers, 2012) of the data for each question. This in turn led to a coding exercise in which data was tagged (Newby 2010: 467) and labelled allowing for patterns and conceptual ideas to emerge. For the purposes of the questionnaire, in which there was a large amount of rich data to analyse, Wordle's frequency measurement was used to corroborate the outcomes of the process. With respect to the process of analytical coding therefore, the approach served to identify comparative and contrasting features (Gibson and Brown 2009) which in turn generated themes otherwise held within the data sets. The strength of the analytical approach was its congruence with the phenomenological nature of the enquiry and therefore a more complete account of the participant's experiences was formulated (Packer 1985). It focused on understanding participants' perceptions, a process which Lock and Strong (2011) refer to as the 'knowing how' rather than the 'knowing that' (ibid: 36).

To conclude, the mode of analysing the 'rich and detailed' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011: 539) participant data involved corroborated inductive coding, and presentation of the thematic analysis. An analysis and discussion of the findings is hereafter offered at Chapter 4.

3.5 Trusting new knowledge

In keeping with the phenomenological positioning of this enquiry, and qualitative methods used for data collection, it is essential to the integrity of this enquiry that it generates knowledge and meaning which is considered to be trustworthy, plausible and credible (Furlong and Oancea 2006). Atkins and Wallace (2012) frame this

requirement as a question when they ask *'how can we trust the evidence as knowledge*?' (ibid: 121). In order that the research enquiry withstands public scrutiny and so can be reliably used by others to reflect upon and analyse their own experiences, a trustworthy and credible approach must '*abide by canons of validity and reliability*' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011: 295). A '*minimisation of bias*' (Atkins and Wallace 2012: 122) is ethically required to ensure that the data collected is neither selectively gathered nor used for the purposes of establishing the researcher's '*initial suspicions*' (ibid). A fuller address of the ethical approach to the research can be found at section 3.6.

Aligned to the issue of bias is that of subjectivity and how to ensure qualitative data is to be considered credible in the absence of any predetermined benchmarks for comparative analysis. The issue of subjectivity need not, however, be a reason to question the strength of the research design; Lichtman (2013) denotes subjectivity as a construct of contextual interpretation and '*multiple realities*' (ibid: 10). It is managed and minimised by formulating research questions which are open-ended in nature which therefore avoid directing participants towards a given set of assumptions and beliefs.

Aligned to Lichtman's (2013) understanding of reality being a perception rather than an absolute truth is the writing of Fernandez-Armesto (1998); he considers being secure in knowledge is mostly subjective matter. Truth for Fernandez-Armesto is contextual and relates to what others report as their version of events. Moreover, there is little objectivity in the double-hermeneutic or reinterpretation of an interpretive account; '*meaning would always be incomplete*' (ibid: 197). However, in keeping with Bruce et al's (2016) notion of metanarratives, there are widely held cultural opinions which establish the prevailing discourse:

'*History is written by the victors*.' (Fernandez-Armesto 1998: 192)

Therefore in considering the truth of events, there is no such thing as absolute objectivity. How we use language to express meaning is idiographic and socially constructed and is therefore open to a '*subjectivity*' (Fernandez-Armesto 1998: 201) of meaning. There is no confident certainty in knowing what truth is for '*all we can know*

for certain are thoughts of the authors of the sources' (ibid), which in itself is what people are prepared to share with others. If subjectivity is assumed, and objectivity questioned, the enquiry process must be candid and transparent with '*probity of practice'* (Hughes 2004: 404). The researcher is required to openly acknowledge one's own assumptions and values of practice, and ensure they are '*taken into account when undertaking research'* (ibid). Therein, I as the researcher am required to make open my position about the phenomenon of the enquiry.

As outlined in Chapter 1 and with reference to Chambers (2017), with the participants for my enquiry, I too am a teacher educator and mother, and so bring to the research enquiry a subjectivity, or a series of opinions and personal beliefs, which have the potential '*to influence the direction of the study'* (Fox, Martin, Green, 2007: 187). The use of open-questioning and post-analysis member checking sought to contain any idiosyncratic influence on my part and reduce the possibility of confirmation bias; '*the tendency to select and interpret evidence in ways that reinforce prior beliefs'* (Villarroel, Felton and Garcia-Milaa 2016: 167). Minimising my influence on the interpretation of participations' accounts is an ethical necessity and is further addressed by asking authentic questions which is considered next.

Probity and integrity in the process of asking questions is not only an ethical demand of the enquiry, but one which places absolute trust in the data participants' offer to the research. Webster and Mertova (2007) assert that people offer uniqueness to an enquiry if they are embraced as voices of authenticity, which by its unique nature has endemic subjectivity. This unique subjectivity does not qualify as scientific data, however, it is to be valued in terms '*personal knowing'* (ibid: 29), Indeed, and in keeping with Fernandez Armesto (1988), Webster and Mertova (2007) question the absolute value of such scientific knowledge because it '*is not purely objective and exhaustibly verifiable'* (ibid: 29) Therefore the central tenet of my enquiry is the ability to formulate meaningful authentic questions for participants to engage with, because and returning to Gavron (1966), '*every study is only as good as the questions it asks'* (ibid: 153).

For its defence of knowledge generation this research relies upon '*trustworthiness of field work'* (Polkinghorne 1988: 176), or in a scientific enquiry what would be referred

to as measures of reliability. Placing a trust in the integrity of women's responses to the given questions is therefore a core value of the enquiry and in summary, using a semi-structured questionnaire and open-ended interview were selected to garner women's perceptions and beliefs and examine their '*underlying insights and assumptions*' (Webster and Mertova 2007: 4). My enquiry therefore offers '*well-grounded and supportable*' (Webster and Mertova 2007: 4) descriptions which are iteratively constructed and shared with others to reflect upon and assess their own understandings of professional identity and the extent to which motherhood has shaped that it.

3.6 An ethical enquiry

Irrespective of the standardised approach taken to purposive sampling, recruiting participants to my research presented a number of challenges. The sampling strategy identified my colleagues to be part of a research enquiry which focused on their identity as teacher educators and, for those who were, as mothers. Some of the participants were colleagues I worked very closely with; others I had less contact with but none of the participants were colleagues who I managed. Collecting data from colleagues was a sensitising process because any questioning '*will always be an intrusion into the life*' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011: 377) of the participant. More so for me to understand more about notions of professional identity and the influence of motherhood in a context that I worked in, I needed to enter into a dialogue with colleagues about common subject matter '*whose meanings are unfamiliar*' (Lock and Strong 2011: 72), and which were likely to be personal and affective. Participants involved in the questionnaire phase of the research were, however, sensitised to the '*interpersonal*' (Kvale 2008) nature of the research through the course of reflective questioning. Thereafter their voluntary participation in the interview indicated they were ready to engage with an '*encounter*' (ibid: 30) which called upon a reflection of being a mother and a teacher educator.

Within the School of Education where the research took place, formalised discussion on a teacher educator's professional identity and the extent to which being a mother shaped identity were not routinely addressed. Understandings of the professional identity of a teacher educator appeared to be assumed, and being a mother was usually spoken of in terms of seeking a work life balance. The research therefore entered into a

dialogue about personal '*horizons*' (Gadamer 1988: 378) which was necessary to make sense of this unfamiliar landscape. Making sense and identifying meanings of professional identity required usual conversations to be '*disturbed*' (ibid: 180). Therefore, I was inviting colleagues into a reciprocal relationship (Lock and Strong 2011) in which we as teacher educators and mothers addressed common ground, and in doing so had occasion to better understand our professional self. Participants' consent to participate in the research therefore assumed a mutual trust and regard for the enquiry's endeavour.

To address sensitivities and to be ethically transparent, colleagues invited to take part in the research were assured, in writing, there was no necessity or requirement to participate if they that chose not to do so (BERA 2011). Their agreement to participate was supplemented with a written statement which guaranteed their right to withdraw from the enquiry at any point and in such a case their data would be destroyed and not used as part of the enquiry. The ethics statement guaranteed an experience that would be grounded in probity and respect for the participant's confidentiality and anonymity (BERA 2011), and the accurate and informed reporting of their data (Data Protection Act 1998).

Over the course of the questionnaire and interview phases of my research participants presented their accounts of professional identity and the experience of motherhood. The idiographic nature of the data collected challenged me as the researcher to ethically sanction the credibility of such '*subjective description*' (Stake 1995: 41). I therefore provided a reliable appraisal of the participants' voices in order to provide a '*further reflection*' (Stake, 1995: 42) of teacher educators' professional identity and fresh understandings of the phenomenon of motherhood. To ensure the credibility of the data analysis '*member checking*' (Dennis 2014: 398) was employed; each participant was offered the opportunity to check the inferred meanings from their accounts. As has been previously discussed, truth is not an absolute fixed entity; it is a collective '*fusion*' (Gadamer 1988: 378) of narrated perceptions, or polyphony (Bakhtin 1984) of understandings, which for my enquiry is the phenomenon of motherhood and its influence on professional identity.

3.7: Research context and sampling

3.7.1 Research context

Research for this enquiry was conducted in the University's School of Education where I work (herein referred to as the 'University'). The University was founded in 1850 and is located in the South East region. It has a Christian foundation, but has an inclusive mission to students and staff from both secular and non-secular backgrounds. The single campus-based University, which is relatively small in size (about 6,000 full and part-time students), prides itself on encouraging students from all backgrounds and particularly those with no family history of attending university. The profile of the University's student population is predominately young (18-24 years) white students with low to medium entry tariff scores. They tend to be from the South East region and live off campus.

The University is structured around four Schools and is largely concerned with teacher education, sports science degree and theology programmes. Since the turn of the millennium, however, the University has increased its undergraduate degree offer with programmes in sports education, law, criminology and drama with each becoming increasingly popular. Similarly there has been a greater number of pathway programmes at foundation level and also in the offering of post graduate degrees.

3.7.2 Sampling from the School of Education

The University's School of Education offers a number of routes into teaching including the primary undergraduate and postgraduate pathways and a postgraduate route for those students seeking qualification in the secondary age phase. Annually the University's School of Education recruits on average 160 undergraduate primary teacher training students and 100 postgraduate student teachers. The secondary postgraduate programme recruits on average 80 students per year across a range of subjects including Maths, Science, Languages, Geography, Physical Education and Religious Education. The School of Education also offers postgraduate at Masters level degrees for qualified teachers which focus on pedagogical expertise and leadership development. The University recruits in the order of 90 students on average to its Masters level programmes in education.

For the purposes of my research, those staff working on initial teacher training and Masters in Education programmes were included in the definition of teacher educators. In the School of Education there were 63 members of staff who worked as lectures on the teacher training programmes, of which 43 were women. Of the 43 female lectures 32 were working as lecturers on teacher education programmes either on a part time or full time basis. The group of remaining 9 staff work as technicians supporting the delivery of teacher education programmes. They did not have direct responsibility for teacher training or contact with student teachers, and so were not invited to participate in the enquiry which explores professional identity of teacher educators.

The group of 32 female teacher educators were invited by means of a personalised email correspondence to participate in the questionnaire-phase of the research. A copy of the email and consent form which was accompanied by the questionnaire, is at Appendix A. In accordance with the BERA (2011) ethical guidelines, I sought to minimise the impact of my research on the workload of colleagues by not indicating in the correspondence a date by which they had to reply. A reminder email was, however, sent to prospective participants who had not replied within 15 working days of the initial correspondence being sent. For those colleagues who had not replied within 30 working days of the initial email I assumed they were not willing or able to participate in the enquiry. In doing so I '*respected their right not to participate in the research*' (BERA 2011: 6).

Of the original 32 female teacher educators contacted, 17 agreed to participate in the questionnaire phase of the research. Of the 17 teacher educators, 15 indicated they had children and would be willing to be interviewed. At the time of undertaking the interviews, 5 teacher educators, for various reasons, were not able to participate and therefore 10 teacher educators were interviewed. A breakdown of the participants' details is given at Chapter 4 and summarised at Table 3.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

In this chapter and with reference to Lave and Wenger's (1991) communities of practice social learning framework, I will provide an analysis of the data which in turn will support my claims to new knowledge and better understandings of how motherhood might influence the professional identity of teacher educators.

To set the analysis in a context of teaching, I return to Griffiths (2013) who makes claim to teaching being deeply informed by both society and relations. More so, Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto (2017) identify the importance of the personal nature of the teacher. A central tenant of Griffiths' and Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto's understanding of teaching is it being a profession which foregrounds active dialogue with others. In being so, it is highly relational, a theme which is reported also by Ruohotie-Lyhty and Moate (2016), Buchanan (2015) and Kelchtermans (2009). A phenomenological approach, sitting within a socio-constructivist philosophical paradigm, was used therefore to consider meanings of professional identity and <u>how</u> motherhood might influence the professional identity of teacher educators. Data was collected by means of a semi-structured questionnaires and open-ended interviews. Participants were teacher educators at the University where I worked, and their anonymised details and the data they contributed to the research is to be found at Table 3. In the presentation of the findings at all times participants are referred to by pseudonyms.

The questionnaire addressed the notion of a teacher educator's professional identity, whilst the interview phase explored the extent to which the experience of motherhood influenced that identity. A coding approach, validated by Wordle frequency analysis, was used to identify the thematic findings from the questionnaire (5.1) phase of enquiry. Analysis of the interview (5.2) transcripts involved inductive reasoning - identifying patterns and notions from within the data (Bruce et al 2016). Connective understandings were sought between participants' accounts (ibid) and by means of an iterative examination of the data and reference to literature, themes were generated.

Table 3: Research participants

Pseudonym	Data contributed	Role: Full (FT) or Part Time(PT) Years working as Teacher Educator	Age of children
Karen	Interview & Questionnaire	Teacher educator: (FT) 23 years	24 & 20 years
Amy	Interview & Questionnaire	Teacher educator: (FT) 17 years	17 & 15 years
Sarah	Interview & Questionnaire	Teacher educator & programme manager: (FT) 12 years	18 & 16 years
Lisa	Interview & Questionnaire	Teacher educator: (FT) 12 years	13 & 9 years
Amanda	Interview & Questionnaire	Teacher educator: (FT) 10 years	6 & 4 years
Jan	Interview & Questionnaire	Teacher educator: (FT) 10 years	5 & 3 years
Maeve	Interview & Questionnaire	Teacher educator: (PT) 10 years	1 year
Alison	Interview & Questionnaire	Teacher educator and Head of School: (FT) 9 years	9 years
Bella	Interview & Questionnaire	Teacher educator: (FT) 7 years	22 & 18 years
Ruth	Interview & Questionnaire	Teacher educator: (FT) 2 years	21 years
Laura	Questionnaire	Teacher educator: (FT) 16 years	16, 14 & 11 years
Jayne	Questionnaire	Teacher educator & MA supervisor: (FT) 15 years	15 & 14 years
Irene	Questionnaire	Teacher educator: (FT) 12 years	n/a
Zoe	Questionnaire	Teacher educator: (FT) 10 years	n/a
Una	Questionnaire	Teacher educator: (FT) 6 years	28, 26 & 24 years
Fiona	Questionnaire	Teacher educator: (FT) 6 years	18 & 16 years
Kath	Questionnaire	Teacher educator: (FT) 2 years	3 & 1 years

4.1 Notions of professional identity: Questionnaires

A first reading of the questionnaires identified an initial set of codes, these were explored by means of a re-reading of the data which in turn led to a set of reoccurring codes, collated for common meanings and thereafter an identification of themes. Table 4 below outlines for each; the question (column one), the Wordle frequency measures, with descending word orders, highlighted in bold font (second column), common codes indicated in italics (third column), and generation of themes in the fourth column.

Appendices Ci-v provide a complete analysis from the Wordle frequency exercise. Table 4 is followed by a discussion of each of the themes arising from the questionnaire.

Table 4: Coding and themes from analysis of questionnaires

Question	Initial codes (***Wordle frequency*** *in descending order + iterative tags*)	Revised codes (*Common codes*)	Final themes
1: What words would you use to describe the meaning of professional identity?	**Work** **Teacher** **Role** **Complex** **Values** **Practice** **Multi-faceted** **Ability** - expertise **Occupational** **Community** identity Seamless beliefs Leading by example	*Shared values* *Vocational practice* *Teacher*	1) **Professional integrity**
2. How would you describe your own professional identity as a teacher educator?	**See**(ing more) **Practice** **Teaching - Students-Research - Work** **Feel** **Values** **Colleagues** Role model Leading by example Transition	*Shared values* *Vocational practice* *Experienced teacher* Shared identity Integrity	1) **Professional integrity**

3. To what extent is professional identity an important aspect of the way in which you approach your role as a teacher educator?	**Important** **Way** (of doing) **Students - feel** **Think** **School** **Teacher - see** **School** Empathetic Experience Personal understandings of teaching Professional practice and identity of teaching Status	*Importance of a professional identity* *Perceptions of identity* *Empathetic teacher* *Appreciating difference*	2) **Appreciative professional identity**
4. Has your professional identity as a teacher educator changed over the course of your career and if so what has influenced how it has been formulated?	**Think** **Role** **Teacher** **Now - See - Become** **Research** **Colleagues - Education** **Way - Feel** Personalised identity Influence of others Importance of a professional identity	*Multiple and changing identities*	3) **Multifaceted professional Identity**
5. If you have children, in what ways and why has being a mother shaped your professional identity as a teacher educator?	**Work** **Think** **Learning** **Time** **Role** **Learning - See - Parents - Life** **Identity - Shaped** **Important - Understanding** Empathy Establishing priorities	*Perspective on work* *Overlapping roles* *Complementary roles*	4) **Influence of motherhood**

4.1.1 Questionnaires: Discussion

The questionnaire mainly focused on the teacher educators' understandings of professional identities (questions 1-4), with question 5 being giving over to the experience of motherhood. Section 5.2 further explores the influence of motherhood on professional identity, and therefore this discussion focuses on teacher educators' notions of professional identity. Three main themes were identified from the sequence of questions; these were 1) professional integrity, 2) appreciative professional identity and 3) multifaceted professional identity; with reference to Lave and Wenger's (1991) theoretical framework each of the themes will be discussed in detail.

Theme 1: *Professional integrity*

Women reported that their understanding of professional identity was defined in terms of their work, their role and experience and the practice of being a teacher; a theme noted in the works of Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto (2017), Ruohotie-Lyhty and Moate (2016), Buchanan (2015), Izadinia (2014), Smith (2011), and by Healy (1999) whose work addressed the impact of career breaks on a teacher's professional practice. Maeve stated that *labels* and *roles,* are associated with being a professional*;* Karen wrote of professional identity in terms of *your role in your workplace* and Sarah reported that such an identity was associated with the *position or role I assume whilst at work.*

Recognition of a professional identity was explored by Maeve and Zoe in their reference to having an identity with a group or community of fellow practitioners. For example Maeve wrote that professional identity was *about having a sense of yourself in relation to a community of teacher educators* (Maeve). Whereas, Zoe described professional identity in terms of having:

> *an identity with a group of professional people, whether it be institution-based, subject-based or school-based* (Zoe)

Amy reiterates the importance of being part of a *community* and describes her role *as:*

> *relational in terms of my teaching and working with colleagues [and] this affects how I perceive my role as a teacher educator* (Amy)

Notions of being part of a teaching community is reiterated by the work of Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto (2017), Vahasantanen et al (2016), Davey (2013), Tirri

and Ubani (2013), and that of Kelchtermans (2009) who recognises that teaching is an '*interpersonal and relational endeavour*' (ibid: 258).

Supported by the findings of Canrinus et al (2011), a recurrent theme from the participants was the importance of having a strong commitment to work; to illustrate Una stated:

> *My very many years in teacher education have provided a wealth of experience across changing political landscapes and how to cope with or adapt to these changes* (Una)

What also appeared to be a common thread of a teacher educator's identity was having an expertise (Alison and Ruth), being competent and holding a valued reputation (Alison, Kath and Laura). The findings here suggest each of these participants are what Lave and Wenger (1991) identify as core members of the School of Education. Equally the findings are again consistent with those of Canrinus et al (2011), and more recently in the work of Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto (2017). These attributes were, however, exercised in a way that valued the processes of learning and engendered motivation and engagement (Alison), all of which lead onto what Kelchtermans (2009) identified as the relational practice of being a teacher educator.

When considered in detail the participants described professional identity in relational and values-led terms. Whilst they acknowledged they were experts in their field of practice, they commonly used words such as shared values (Zoe), beliefs (Zoe, Bella and Kath), integrity (Lisa), empathy (Fiona) and reflection (Fiona and Kath) to describe how they worked. Laura wrote that *a professional identity is one that is relational* and Jayne stated that a definition of being professional included terms such as *duty, conduct, responsibility, ability, development and concern.* These claims are supported by the work of Davey (2013), Tirri and Ubani (2013), Canrinus et al (2011), Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop (2004), and who also endorse a commitment to *community and relationships* as reported by Amy. An identity bound up with words such as *integrity, values and beliefs and continuous reflection* would seem to be the conduit between a professional identity which is practice-based and that which is relationally driven for a common good, and concur with the notion of being core members of their community. Whilst acknowledging the importance of being an empathetic and relational teacher

educator (Ruohotie-Lyhty and Moate 2016 and Kelchtermans 2009), establishing firm boundaries with student teachers was highlighted and professionally necessary. This is indicated by Laura when explaining professionalism:

> dictate[s] the etiquette of these [student- lecturer] situations, [and] the way in which I interact with students and colleagues (Laura)

A significant feature which emerged from the analysis pointed to the importance of a teacher educator's career history (Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto 2017, Buchanan 2015, Lunenberg, Dengerink and Korthagen 2014 and Rus et al 2013) and in particular having once been a teacher of children. In terms of Lave and Wenger's (1991) framework, career history points to the participants' development of expertise over a sustained period of time and being a core member of the community. This is illustrated by Sarah when wrote *I still call myself a school teacher*, and Irene reported:

> I was a school teacher for a long time, and an acting head teacher so the occupational identity of 'teacher' is central to who I am (Irene)

Kath too makes a similar statement when writing:

> I draw heavily on my experience as a teacher and subsequent related school-based links to inform every aspect of my work (Kath)

Maeve points clearly to her experience of being a school teacher when describing her professional identity:

> I would describe my identity as framed by ideas of myself first and foremost as a teacher (Maeve)

It is the interplay between *teaching* and the *practice* that informs the experience of being a teacher and, which in turn, informs a sense of professional identity. This is affirmed by the work of Ruohotie-Lyhty and Moate (2016) and De Weerdt et al (2006), and is summarised by Alison when she states her identity is formed by being *connected to a group - i.e. other professionals [and] working together for a common goal* (Alison).

A common notion, and as illustrated by Alison, was the association between professional identity and *characteristics or actions*, what Wenger (1998) refers to as practices, that need to be *displayed* in relation to being a teacher educator. This idea of position was reiterated by Jan who wrote of professional identity being related to

standing/position. Being a *competent, experienced teacher, leader and educator* (Ruth) and being able to *model good practice* with *high level[s] of knowledge and understanding of the field I teach* (Karen) point to a strong professional identity. Trede, Macklin and Bridge (2011) write of teacher educators being good role models to their students. However, and returning to the significance of career history (Ruohotie-Lyhty and Moate 2016, Pereira, Lopes and Margarida 2015, Rus et al 2013 and De Weerdt et al 2006), holding a strong professional identity as a teacher educator was not the case for all participants. In spite of having 10 or more years' experience of being a teacher educator, for a small number of participants, whilst being confident in their professional identity as teachers of children, there was less assurance when it came to a professional identity as a teacher educator. This is illustrated by Maeve when she wrote:

> *I am training teachers at the moment but have never used the term teacher educator. I think, my professional identity is still more related to primary school teaching and I do question my own reluctance to call myself anything other than that (*Maeve*).*

Zoe offers an insight into why the professional identity of a teacher educator may be less secure. She wrote that she responded to the question about her understanding of professional identity *with difficulty!* (Zoe), and went onto write:

> *My professional identity as a teacher educator is even less 'given' than that of a school teacher – something I spent 25 years doing!* (Zoe)

These findings can be comprehended in terms of Wenger's (1998) notion of identity; Zoe and Maeve would appear to have made sense of their professional identity in terms of being a school teacher, and while working in a community of teacher education draw upon their teaching skills in that role. Appreciating the essence of one's professional self is in keeping with the work of Pereira, Lopes and Margarida (2015) when they noted a teacher educator's professional identity is built on a foundation of school-based teaching experience. Lisa conveys a similar point to Zoe when she reported the question on knowing her professional identity is *difficult* to answer and *is often easier for others to discern.*

With their lengthy experience of being a teacher, what each of these participants share is a core identity (Wenger 1998) defined in terms of a commitment to a common good

(Goepel 2012), and in keeping with Smith's (2011) research, being *a nurturer* (Zoe) and a teacher educator led by core values (Goepel 2012):

> *my identity is underpinned by my values such as respect, justice, fairness, kindness and inclusion* (Amy)

Equally Maeve writes she herself is:

> *someone who adheres to fundamental principles and shared values, whilst trying to have integrity and be flexible and non-judgemental* (Maeve)

Lisa writes *I see my identity worked out through how much I live out my values*, and in doing so makes evident the relational approach to the professional identity of a teacher educator. This is further corroborated by the research of Emslie and Hunt (2009) who, with reference to Clark's (2000) theory of border-crossing, reported women who have children readily integrate their work and home-'*worlds through the identification of similar (caring) aspects in each*' (Emslie and Hunt 2009: 167).

What appears to be a constant theme for all participants is the essence of professional integrity. This is summarised in the words of Kath who, although being a teacher educator for only 2 years but who has a decade of school-base teaching experience, wrote that whilst striving to always being *a positive role model*, she relies on her:

> *personal and professional integrity to guide my actions and decisions directed by a strong sense of core values and beliefs about education, very much person-centred, and this is central to my professional identity* (Kath)

Fiona, again with many years teaching experience in schools and 6 years as a teacher educator, draws on the relational nature of being a teacher educator when she describes her core (Lave and Wenger 1991) professional identity as being *what I am as a person; I live my life to some extent through my profession* (Fiona). This concurs with the work of Ruohotie-Lyhty and Moate (2016), Weinberger and Shefi (2013) and De Weerdt et al (2006) when they each make claim to professional identity being a mixture of the personal and the professional. It is also affirmed by the work of Wolf (2013) on the defining characteristics of a teacher which included a '*moral seriousness*' (ibid: 156). Wright (2016: 42) further describes teachers as being required to commit to a code of ethics in their practice, which he articulates as being:

> '*the seven principles of public life: integrity, honesty, openness, accountability, selflessness, objectivity and leadership*' (Wright, 2016: 42)

Being a teacher educator is therefore vocational and concerned with being part of a professional community (Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto 2017) in which practice is a *relational, humble and fair* (Laura), a claim supported by Tirri and Ubani (2013) and Canrinus et al (2011).

In keeping with the work of Izadinia (2014) and Hewlett and Buck Luce (2005), participants considered their professional identity was an important aspect in how their approach their role as a teacher educator. This was explained and reasoned in terms of it being borne out of experience, being part of a community of teacher educators and holding common values and beliefs about being a teacher educator of students. La Velle (2013) endorses the claim to teacher education being a values-led profession as too do Trede, Macklin and Bridge (2011) and Healy (1999).

Whilst some participants separated out their professional identity from other aspects of their being, others considered that their professional identity was part of their inner weave of being. In either case the importance of being part of a community (Wenger 1998) of values-led practice (Ruohotie-Lyhty and Moate 2016) was identified as being core to professional integrity which in turn leads to the next theme, appreciative professional identity.

Theme 2: *Appreciative professional identity*
In addressing the importance of a professional identity and the role of being a teacher educator, the findings here are in keeping with the work of Izadinia (2014) and Hewlett and Buck Luce (2005). For all participants, with their many years of teaching experience, professional identity was an important aspect of how they approached their roles as teacher educators. Words used to describe the importance of professional identity included; *very important* (Jan and Lisa), *it is key* (Bella), *hugely important* (Laura), *vital* (Jayne), *totally integral* (Kath) and *professional identity is everything* (Una). Alison, who had 9 years' experience of being a teacher educator and more as a school teacher, stated her professional identity was core to her self-understanding (Lave and Wenger 1991):

> *greatly influences all my professional roles on a day to day basis and the way in which I approach all that I do at the work place* (Alison)

Amanda reported a *professional identity serves as a badge* and Sarah identified being a teacher educator as her *main job.* Karen considered having a professional identity served as a *good role model* for her children, as too did Ruth who stated that she would *class* herself firstly as *a teacher educator.*

Furthermore there appeared to be a collective understanding that one's professional identity involved being a role model of good teaching to student teachers; this is in keeping with Lave and Wenger's (1991) notion of being a core member of the community, and is corroborated by the work of Trede, Macklin and Bridge 2011). To illustrate, Ruth said *it is important to convey a sense of knowledge and experience to the trainees* and in keeping with this notion, Bella stated:

> *you are a role model for your students and you can really influence the way they choose to teach in schools, you need to 'walk the walk' in your classroom here so that students have a good example to model themselves on* (Bella)

Whilst the participants considered professional identity to be important, for some it was not a construct which they routinely addressed. Zoe, for example, stated *I feel that I rarely address it explicitly,* and Maeve said *she not sure how to answer* the question. Upon enquiry, and as noted previously (Theme 1: Professional integrity) both of the participants felt more secure with the identity of being a teacher of children rather than as a teacher educator. However, Karen, with 23 years' experience of being a teacher educator, Lisa, with 12 years, and Una, 6 years, each confidently recognised and understood their professional identity (Wenger 1998) as teacher educators. To illustrate Karen wrote *those we teach 'look up' to us as people who have experience in our practice*, and Una stated:

> *professional identity is everything when first meeting and interacting with trainees, teachers in school and other tutors* (Una)

By way of contrast to Sarah and Una, Jayne stated she was *unaware* of how her professional identity affects her role. This lack of acknowledgement, however, seemed to be explained by her professional identity being seamless with who she understands herself to be - *me consists of professional and personal identities; together I am whole* (Jayne), an appreciation affirmed by the work of Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto (2017), De Weerdt et al (2006) and Healy (1999). Alison, by contrast, presents an alternative understanding of her professional identity; she reported the need

to disentangle her professional role from other aspects of her life - *the ability to separate the roles of my identity is important to me* (Alison*).* Holding separate identities for different occasions fits with Goffman's (1969) idea of women playing out are different roles in their lives, and also with Wenger's (1998) notion that people hold different roles in different communities. Alison explained the need for separated identities enabled her to manage a complexity of other roles - *being a spouse, charity worker, church member, governor* (Alison*).* Interestingly, the other roles noted by Alison share a common set of practices (Wenger 1998) which are altruistic in nature. Thereby concur with Wolf's (2013) work on professional women. Wolf identified career women need to be able to manage multiple professional and personal demands which are often giving in nature.

A number of respondents identified with the notion of self-concept, and how others see their role as being an important aspect of professional identity (Lunenberg, Dengerink and Korthagen 2014). How you are perceived in your role was mentioned by a number of the respondents including Karen who used the phrase *how others view you as a professional* to describe her own professional identity. Maeve and Karen both considered the self-concept of professional identity was supplemented by how women see themselves. For example, Maeve wrote that professional identity is *how you see yourself in your professional role*, and similarly Karen wrote that it is concerned with *how you view yourself.* Una drew together notions of self-esteem and self-concept as aspects of her professional identity when she wrote:

> *The different ways we are positioned by and position ourselves in our professional roles* (Una)

These findings were contrary to Oakley's (1985) position whereby women had identity forced upon them, rather, and in keeping with the work of Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto (2017), the participants were mainly agents of their identity. Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto (2017) referred to this as a teacher educator's sense of '*identity-agency'* (ibid: 38). Building on Wenger's (1998) notion of an owned sense of identity, participants in the main recognised being a teacher educator was a reflection of their personalities. It was a part of their integral identity rather than something which was placed, or forced, upon them. Vahasantanen et al (2016) refer to a teacher educator's professional identity coming from '*within'* (ibid: 2). This core identity is

developed over time, through shared practice and being part of a learning group (Lave and Wenger 1991). Laura illustrates this point when she said she rarely acknowledged her professional identity because she understood it to *grow from within* (Laura).

All of the participants valued their professional identity as a teacher educator and for many this was intricately woven into by their personal identity. In agreement with Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto (2017), De Weerdt et al (2006) and Peel (2005), this interplay between identities generated a professional identity which was greater than the sum of its parts. That is to say, professional identity was a representation of the whole person and for the teacher educator is underpinned by common altruistic values (Ruohotie-Lyhty and Moat 2016, Buchanan 2015, Weinberger and Shefi 2013, Kelchtermans 2009 and De Weerdt et al 2006). This also concurs with Wolf's (2013) work in which she refers to the signifier of a teacher's work as living out '*basic values*' (ibid: 150), and it was Laura, with her 16 years' experience of being a teacher educator, who crystallised the connection of values between the personal and professional identity:

> *This is important to me; my 'professional identity' is an aspect of myself, not something I 'put on' Monday to Friday and is divorced from my core values as a person. It is not a pretence but an aspect of my being* (Laura)

The importance of a teacher educator's career history in the formation of professional identity was picked up by Sarah and Karen; a journey which was not always smooth. Both participants, who each have lengthy experience of being teacher educators (12 and 23 years respectively), noted the troubling transition from being a teacher to a teacher educator. Sarah stated it had:

> *taken a long time to understand what it is that I do and what it is that is expected of me* (Sarah)

However both Sarah and Karen managed and made sense of this identity transition by taking on a range of roles, or Wenger (1998) might refer to as practices. Karen wrote experiences, including career progression (see also Sarah), were *definitely* influential in how her professional identity had evolved. Similarly, and for another participant Zoe, again an experienced teacher educator of 10 years, her identity had changed for similar reasons from being *a teacher to a teacher educator*.

In keeping with Lave and Wenger's (1991) framework of learning and identity formation, increasing experience in the teacher educator role seemed to confer a deeper appreciation of how participants understood their professional identities. Alison and Ruth, with their varying length of experience in being teacher educators, indicated how they had each come to better understand their core practice and values. For example, Alison, who had 9 years teacher educator experience, wrote that over time she had grown to be more *empathetic, understanding and tolerant*. Whilst Ruth stated that her in the 2 years she had worked as a teacher educator her professional identity had *definitely* changed. However, Sarah drew upon her many more years of being a school teacher to conclude it was through experience she had learnt there are *many grey areas and very few absolutes* which had shaped how she *dealt with people*. The essence of professional identity, and as noted previously, therefore involves personal understandings, being values-led, empathetic and relational (Ruohotie-Lyhty and Moat 2016, Buchanan 2015, Tirri and Ubani 2013, La Velle 2013 and Canrinus et al 2011). Moreover, it is recognised, and as Lave and Wenger's (1991) theoretical framework indicates, professional identity changes over time and with experience. Professional identity, as described by the participants, is therefore appreciative and not finite and it is therefore to the next theme which addresses the prism-like description of professional identity.

Theme 3: *Multifaceted professional Identity*
This third theme emanating from analysis of the questionnaires focuses on the complex and changing nature of a teacher educator's professional identity. Lave and Wenger's (1991) member descriptors within a community of practices are of particular significance here. Of the 17 participants, eleven had 10 or more years' experience working as a teacher educator; four had between 5 and 9 years' experience and two had between 2 and 4 years' experience. There were no participants who had less than 2 years' experience working as a teacher educator. It is to be noted however that all participants had previous school-based teaching experience before becoming a teacher educator. Table 5 below summarises the duration of experiences participants' had of being a teacher educator:

Table 5: Years of experience of working as a teacher educator (TE)

Years of TE experience	Total	Participants
10 + years	11	Amanda, Sarah, Karen, Jan, Maeve, Lisa, Amy, Laura, Jayne, Irene & Zoe
5-9 years	4	Alison, Bella, Una & Fiona
2-4 years	2	Ruth & Kath

As explored in theme 2 (Appreciative professional identity), participants in the main were confident they had a professional identity as a teacher educator and it was an identity which had changed with experience. Participants therefore recognised, in keeping with Lave and Wenger's (1991) framework, their professional identity as a teacher educator was not a fixed label. This finding was in contrast to the work of Kelchtermans (2009), who suggested a teacher's identity is static, and was in agreement with the work of Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto's (2017) and Buchanan (2015) who assert professional identity is far from fixed, and indeed evolves and develops. Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto (2017) write professional identity is '*continuously reshaped*' (ibid: 38) and Buchanan (2015) states it is reconstructed '*over time*' (ibid: 714). Alison, an experienced school teacher but who had less experience of being a teacher educator, described her professional identity as being liable to *change.* Irene, who had a similar experience profile to Alison, used the words of *shifting, fragile, constructed and complex* to describe hers. Maeve, akin to Alison and Irene's teaching experience, also referred to a shifting identity when she wrote that *it is not a constant and can change.* Maeve wrote that *we also have multiple identities* and this is reiterated by Bella, who had 6 years' experience of being a teacher educator, when she wrote the understanding she has of herself *may not be exactly the same as your 'job' or profession*. Ruth, 2 years' experience of teacher education, described her identity as being *multi-dimensional.* This may in part be explained by Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto (2017) who assert a teacher educator's professional identity had many features to it, and by Lunenberg, Dengerink and Korthagen (2014) who write that teacher educators have a '*variety of roles*' (ibid: 5).

Alison illustrated this point when she stated her professional identity was personalised, complex and multifaceted due to the many features of her life:

> *roles of the job; teacher, mentor, leader, colleague, tutor, admin, carer, etc. these all form part of the puzzle of the professional person* (Alison)

Irene makes a similar point when she indicated there were multiple factors which had shaped her professional identity. She reported her identity as a teacher educator was:

> *constructed out of an overlapping set of different identities that I have constructed/have been constructed by others around me over time* (Irene)

Lave and Wenger's (1991) framework would position Alison and Irene as being active members in their community of practice but not yet core by way of a confident teacher educator identity. This in part might be concerned with their identity being understood as multifaceted, in the manner in which Maeve, Bella and Ruth described.

In keeping with the communities of practice framework and the notion that social learning engenders a confident identity, Alison, Zoe, Irene, Amy and Lisa reported their identity had changed, and more widely confidence in the role had gradually increased over the course of their careers (Lisa, Sarah and Karen). For example, Lisa wrote:

> *as I become accustomed to the role and see myself as no longer new at it, I gain confidence and this formulates an identity that I am now a teacher educator* (Lisa)

Equally, and drawing upon the research of Ruohotie-Lyhty and Moate (2016) and De Weerdt et al (2006), Jayne reported her professional identity had:

> *changed in many ways, this is to do with age, different experiences and expertise* (Jayne)

Two participants did not report any significant change to their professional identity over time; these were Kath, who had 2 years of teacher educator experience and Sarah, who had 12 years. However, they both reported their roles had morphed as a result of becoming research active. Sarah indicated she had moved from being a teacher to *some kind of hybrid practitioner / practice-focused academic*. This is in keeping with what Lave and Wenger (1991) would describe as the transition from being a core to a transactional member of the community. Kath made a similar point to Sarah when she indicted that she did not believe her professional identity had particularly changed but

as a result of her research her *skill set has adapted to the changing roles* (Kath). Kath is confident in her teaching skills but the new University teacher educator role has required her to adopt new practices which she can assume into a stable and core identity as a teacher. This finding of an evolving and emerging professional identity sits comfortably alongside the work of Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto (2017) and Rus et al (2013).

Experience over time of being a teacher educator allowed some of the participants, Maeve for example, to gain confidence and be more certain in their roles. This allowed participants (Bella and Amy) to become adaptable in their role and to think carefully about how they work with, and are perceived by, colleagues and students. In becoming more flexible through experience, participants reported their professional identities had *become more stable* (Maeve) and had *shifted* (Irene) to a position where they wanted it to be. More so, and as indicated by Irene, professional identity is formed:

> *not just by our own feelings and desires but also by the perspectives and positions of others* (Irene)

Jayne, as did Sarah, signalled that while her professional identity was informed by being *linked to a research community,* and by her subject specialism and first degree, it was her experience of being a teacher of children which had the greatest impact on her professional identity. In keeping with Kath and her confident core professional identity as a school teacher, Jayne described this social learning experience of teaching as being *ingrained like the lettering going through the rock* (Jayne).

The notion of professional identity being a changing construct therefore emerges from the analysis (Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto 2017, Rus et al 2013 and Healy 1999). Changes occur as a result of maturity and age, experience and position, taking on different roles and working with a community of colleagues. For the small number of participants who did not subscribe to a notable change in their professional identity, they indicated it was because they had taken on additional roles but the essence of being a teacher, which was integral to their identity, remained core and largely the same.

Perspectives on professional identity are therefore informed by the experience of work, practice and being part of a community of educators and learners which in turn foster an *awareness* (Irene) of the self. This is supported by the work of Trede, Macklin and Bridges (2011), and further corroborates the claim that experience and *growth in [a] professional role* (Zoe) provides for a professional identity that is ever changing, informed by many interrelated features of one's life and is therefore multifaceted.

Before moving onto question 5 of the questionnaire and analysis of the interview transcripts which explore how the experience of motherhood might influence professional identity, it is timely to reflect upon the emergent three themes concerned with notions of professional identity and the teacher educator. Thematic analysis of the data indicates that the teacher educators identified with the practice of teaching being relational and scored by a deeply engrained sense of professional integrity. Their personal values and beliefs serve a common good, and their understanding of a teacher educator's professional identity is one which is a complex and changing construct. The notion of professional identity is important to participants because it denoted a position and standing in terms of experience and relational practice in their field of work. Role and position are not, however, defined in terms of being an edifice of power or hierarchy. Rather the professional identity of a teacher educator is described, by the participants, in terms of knowing how to teach and practice their profession in ways that understands and secures learning. The idea that teacher educators learn from their role of being teachers, is supported by the number of references made to their practice, their research and being part of a community of teacher educators. Professional identity is therefore considered to be appreciative in nature.

Professional growth and development are ideas in keeping with the notion of an evolving yet confident identity. This was commonly referred to by the participants and is explained in terms of career progression, taking on a variety of roles and maturing with the role of being a teacher educator. If the passage of career-time allows for change to occur, the majority of the participants articulated a change in their professional identity. Participants largely indicated their professional identity as a teacher educator was an echo of their relational nature, their values and beliefs, and so

emanates from within. As Laura said her professional identity comes from within and is *not like a coat that is put on*.

4.2 Understanding motherhood and professional identity: Interviews

In addressing how motherhood might influence the professional identity of teacher educators, this section will draw upon an analysis of the data from question 5 of the questionnaire and the thematically coded interview transcripts. With reference to Lave and Wenger's (1991) communities of practice framework, the analysis goes onto consider in what ways professionally identity might be influenced by the experience of being a mother.

As indicated at Table 3 an emerging theme from analysis of the questionnaires (question 5) was the influence of motherhood on the professional identity of the participants. All questionnaire participants offered a response to question 5 either by way of indicting they had children (15/17) or they did not have children (2/17). One of the two women who did not have children reported she could see how motherhood might shape professional identity; *I don't but I could see how it might* (Irene), whilst Zoe indicated the experience of being a teacher had *put me off quite a bit* from having children.

Of the 15 participants who indicated they had children two had left the University prior to the interviews taking place, two were unable to be interviewed due to changes in their roles and one was on medical leave. The remaining 10 participants gave consent to be interviewed.

Participant information, (Table 3), indicated one participant worked on a part time basis with the other nine working on a full time basis as teacher educators in the University's School of Education. The number of years participants had worked for the School of Education ranged from 2 to 23 years. Each of the participants reported they came into Higher Education teacher education from a previous career of teaching primary or secondary aged children. In response to the interview question concerned with when they had their children, five participants stated they had each of their children prior to becoming a teacher educator (Sarah, Karen, Ruth, Bella and Amy). All of these

women had children who were now in the age range of 11-18 years or were post 18 years in age. Three women (Amanda, Alison, Jan) reported they had their children after becoming teacher educators; their children are in the 2-10 year age group. One participant (Lisa) had one child before she became a teacher educator and who is now in the 11-18 age range, and her younger child, who is in the 5-10 years age group, was born after she started working at the School of Education. One participant (Maeve) had one child who is one year old in age. Table 6 below summarises the number of years each participant had been a mother against their years of experience of being a teacher educator.

Table 6: Years of motherhood and years of teacher educator experience

Participant	Years of Motherhood	Years as Teacher Educator
Karen	24 years	23 years
Bella	22 years	7 years
Ruth	21 years	2 years
Sarah	18 years	12 years
Amy	17 years	17 years
Lisa	13 years	12 years
Alison	9 years	9 years
Amanda	6 years	10 years
Jan	5 years	10 years
Maeve	1 year	10 years

In summary, all of the participants had come from teaching primary or secondary children prior to taking up employment at the University's School of Education. There is a notable range in the length of service as a teacher educator (2-23 years) and of the 10 participants 5 had had children before they commenced their teacher education careers and 5 after they had started. The children's ages range from 1 to 24 years.

With reference to Lave and Wenger's (1991) framework and the notion of the experienced and practiced members of a community holding a core professional identity, Table 7 below plots the profile of the teacher educators by way of their years of being a mother against tenure of being a teacher educator. This is of relevance for it visually indicates how professional identity might be influenced by motherhood. Lave and Wenger (1991) suggest social learning experience informs identity; participants with older children (Lisa, Amy, Sarah, Ruth, Bella and Karen) and who are experienced

teachers are more likely to have made sense of themselves as mothers. Therefore, this understanding of motherhood will most probably have informed their professional identity. The discussion following on from Table 7 ventures into the analysis of how motherhood might influence professional identity.
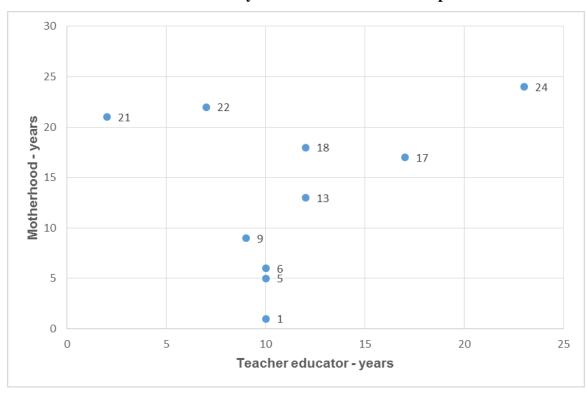
Table 7: Years of motherhood and years of teacher educator experience

Key:

The location number denotes the number of years each participant has been a mother.

Location	Participant	Years of Motherhood
1	Maeve	1 year
5	Jan	5 years
6	Amanda	6 years
9	Alison	9 years
13	Lisa	13 years
17	Amy	17 years
18	Sarah	18 years
21	Ruth	21 years
22	Bella	22 years
24	Karen	24 years

4.2.1 The influence of motherhood on professional identity

There is a limited pool of academic literature that focuses on the influence of motherhood on teacher educators' professional identity, and thereby my enquiry now focuses on the findings concerned with this influence. It begins with the experience of Maeve, whose child was one year old and who at the time of interview had recently returned from maternity leave.

Maeve indicated that whilst she had been up until very recently defined by her professional identity, she anticipated it would be *greatly* affected since recently becoming a mother. This she reasoned would be down to a change of *priorities* and *responsibilities*, and as she went on to state, her professional identity would *become less important* (Maeve) to her. This perception of a changed professional identity was something that the majority of the interview participants agreed with when invited to talk about the extent to which motherhood had influenced their professional identity. Fiona wrote that motherhood had *shaped how I am*, Alison stated that *it has shaped and pulled and changed who I am and how I work with others* and Ruth noted that *my professional identity has changed in many ways since becoming a mother.* Returning to Maeve she spoke of how her professional identity was being repositioned as a consequence of becoming a mother;

> *Before being a mother the importance of being a professional was everything to me and was more important than anything else but that didn't mean family wasn't important but my professional identity was who I was* (Maeve)

Similarly, but from the perspective of a participant who had adult children, Karen indicated her professional identity had changed as a result of being a mother. She summarised this change in terms of motherhood having given a much broader perspective on her personal and professional life, and her reasoning concurs with Lave and Wenger's (1991) notion that a depth of experience confers a more confident identity. Meanwhile, motherhood for Maeve required her to reconsider her professional identity. This she explained was:

> *because once you are a mum you do have a focus elsewhere and perhaps your focus isn't as much on work* (Maeve)

These findings, are again in keeping with the Lave and Wenger's (1991) framework in that as a mother Maeve is at the periphery of experience. It also concurs with the work of Sikes (1998) who reported that teachers' '*priorities had altered*' (ibid: 100) since

having children. Similarly Brunton, Wiggins and Oakley's (2011) research reported women experienced a change in priorities following maternity leave; there was a shift from being centred on work to that of being a mother. This transition of priorities Brunton, Wiggins and Oakley (2011) describe involves women needing to consider '*how to fit paid employment with motherhood*' (ibid: 26).

An understanding of the ways in which this perceived change had influenced professional identity came through in the voice of the majority of participants. For some, such as Maeve, and as affirmed by Lovejoy and Stone (2012) and Brunton, Wiggins and Oakley (2011), the experience of motherhood had softened their career ambitions as teacher educators. Karen, who had been a mother for 24 years, reported that work was no longer at the top of her *priority list* after having children, and Una indicated the needs of her children took precedence over the need for an ambitious career:

> *When they were growing up and at home, their needs always came before my professional work. Having been very ambitious as an early career teacher (I completed an MEd whilst working full time in school and became a Head of Department very quickly), this ambition disappeared as they were growing up* (Una)

Brunton, Wiggins and Oakley (2011) refer to this transition as being a period in which there is '*a general shift in prioritizing motherhood over paid work*' (ibid: 25), whereas Smith (2011) referred to motherhood in this case serving as a distraction from work. Lave and Wenger's (1991) framework would you point to a transitioning of identities in response to new learning experience. Maeve stated her identity as a teacher educator was changing as a result of becoming a mother yet she focused on the need to constantly improve on her professional role:

> *Being a mother has affected my identity as a teacher educator that is what I do but my thoughts are very often on trying to do the other role better* (Maeve)

The influence of motherhood on professional practice was addressed in all the interviews. As borne out in the questionnaire findings, becoming a mother had for most of the teacher educators resulted in them becoming more empathetic, relational and becoming more adaptable. Sarah, who had been a mother for 18 years, referred to:

> *'growing up' and acting more mature in my role as a teacher and feel this is possibly the stage when I had children* (Sarah)

Equally, Alison, who was a mother of 9 years, focused on the reciprocity of a mother-child relationships and the change that brings;

> *In shaping my professional identity, I feel he keeps me grounded: sometimes work can be overwhelming but I go home and help him with his homework and it gives me a necessary perspective* (Alison)

The theme of becoming more empathetic in the workplace is confirmed by the work of Sikes (1998) and supported by Lovejoy and Stone (2012). As a notion which a number of participants talked about, not only had they become more empathetic for their students but also when they were working with parents; Alison, for example, stated:

> *Having my own children has given me a greater awareness of children's development socially and academically as well as foster a great empathy for those with children and the joys and difficulty that role brings* (Alison)

Continuing with the idea of empathy and drawing upon her experience of being a school teacher, Sarah, whose eldest child was 18 years in age, came to understand her professional role through the eyes of the families whose children she taught. Again this concurs with Lave and Wenger's (1991) framework in that social interaction, or learning with others, informs the sense of self. This process had presented a challenge to the assumptions she held about the impact of her professional opinion:

> *I remember speaking to parents at curriculum evenings and happily assuming the position of power and knowledge... Yet I now realise that I had no understanding of this parental identity* (Sarah)

The impact of heightened empathy towards students and their parents (Sikes 1998) led participants to adapt their practice and take an even greater account of their learners needs. This required a reflective approach to working which is summarised by Sarah:

> *I do think I spend more time thinking about my possible actions before responding nowadays, taking into account my changed ways of knowing and being and hoping to access more understanding of the person/s I engage with* (Sarah)

Becoming more empathetic and reflective as a result of motherhood, allowed for more adaptability in participants ways of working, a point made by Bella when she said:

> *You learn very quickly as a mother that what works for one does not work for another you learn the importance of listening and watching and learning from people around you (parents, friends, professionals etc.). You learn to amend and change in light of experience* (Bella)

Learning from others and reflecting on practice included the participants' personal experiences of seeing their children grow up, the significance of which is made evident by Amy when she said:

> *My son missed a lot of school and struggled to keep up at times. This has shaped my identity in terms of my awareness of the difficulties associated with a variety of health problems and the affect this can have on learning* (Amy)

In Amy's experience motherhood had tempered the idealism sometimes afforded to education, a point reiterated by Amanda who came to see education from the perspective of being a parent rather than just being a teacher. She described being challenged by the contradiction of her ideals as compared to the *limitations of education (*Amanda*)* which she had experienced as a mother. Motherhood had not therefore limited the professional identity of the participant, rather and in keeping with the work of Swennen, Volman and van Essen (2008), motherhood had complemented and strengthened the practice of being a teacher.

In the main participants indicated motherhood had influenced their professional identity and in a manner which offered a wider vision of what it is to learn. Understanding more about being a learner, as seen through the eyes of being a mother, offered a more rounded view of being a teacher educator and is in keeping with the work of Lovejoy and Stone (2012) and Healy (1999). With an eldest child of 6 years, Amanda said being a mother had given her:

> *a three hundred and sixty degree approach to teacher education as opposed to a two seventy degree* (Amanda)

Karen, the experienced mother of 24 years, stated that being a mother had offered her a *different perspective* which enabled her to have a *better understanding* of student teachers because she was able to nurture those she taught (Smith 2011 and Sikes 1998). This was particularly so when teacher educators were teaching student-teachers similar in age to their own children. Bella summarised this point when she stated:

> *Because I am a mother I realise what some of the students are going through and in fact because I have come from junior school all the way up to HEI and my children are following that route ...I can identify the issues as a mother that I am having as teacher as well* (Bella)

Maeve, who had 10 years' experience of working as a teacher educator, noted that she looked to her role as developing students who she would want to teach her own child.

Since becoming a mother, this shift in approach she noted had *become more important – it is more than teacher education* (Maeve*).*

Being a mother and appreciating students' needs was further expressed in terms of personal experiences. For example, Amanda noted that the process of learning became more concrete and *real* when she saw her own child developing language and reading skills:

> *Developing language, developing reading skills those things become much more real to me now that I see my own son doing them but I think as a teacher I saw children doing them but I wasn't always aware of my role* (Amanda)

Lisa, whose eldest child was 13 years, and Alison who had been a mother for 9 years, made a similar point about how the experience of being a mother informed their practice. Lisa mentioned having children allowed her to see education from a *different angle*, which was in keeping with Alison's opinion that *I consider very particularly what I do because I have a child.* Equally Amy described the influence of motherhood on her professional practice as giving *a particular perspective on children's learning and education,* and Karen, the mother with adult children and 23 years' experience of being a teacher educator, stated:

> *I don't just see the student in the class, I try and see them as part of a whole* (Karen)

Amy, a mother of 17 years, indicated being a mother had given her cause to look to the long term and make a *very concrete investment in the future, and the community* (Amy). The experience of motherhood would seem to have threaded itself into the professional identity, a point affirmed by Mead (1934) when she suggested there is '*no hard and fast line*' (ibid: 164) in the roles women do. In being so, the stakes are raised for what is expected of being a teacher educator.

A developed sense of understanding and appreciation of professional practice as a result of the experience of being a mother, (as inferred at Table 7 for Lisa, Amy, Sarah, Ruth, Bella, Karen and Alison), is in keeping with Lave and Wenger's (1991) social learning framework. Furthermore it can be inferred from the research of Gavron (1966) when she identified motherhood complements other roles women might have, and in the work of Sikes (1998) when describing parent-teacher educators as having the '*right*

characteristics and attitudes' (ibid: 98). In De Weerdt et al's (2006) research they consider a teacher educator's professional identity is informed by the whole person, and not by just by having standardised skills and knowledge (Griffiths 2013).

The meaning of a whole in terms of being a teacher educator was for some participants so closely associated with being a mother there was little separation between the two identities. For example, Fiona stated, in response to question 5, it was important to her to have a working relationship with student teachers in the same way that she values the relationships she has with her family:

> *It is important to me that they feel their [her children] life is meaningful, whether this be through their work, play or families. I sort of hope I extend this message to the children I have taught and to the students I teach now and I think I always have* (Fiona)

This notion of motherhood and teacher educators sharing similar values is highlighted in the work of Healy (1999), as too is having high expectations in the classroom. Alison highlighted that as a teacher educator she expected the same high standards from her student teachers as she would from her own children - *I would ask the same of my child what I do of a student in my class* (Alison). Amy too spoke of how *passionate* she was to offer a high quality educational experience which, as she stated, was no different from that she *would hope for [her] own children* (Amy*)*. This notion of overlapping identities of being a mother and a teacher educator, affirmed by the work of Lovejoy and Stone (2012), is evidenced by Jan when she wrote:

> *the roles are possibly not separate on the grounds that a lot of the time you think that while you are with the students would you want them teaching my kids* (Jan)

Kath builds on this idea yet speaks of a tighter weaving together of motherhood and being a teacher educator when she writes:

> *I think I am broadly the same person in both mother and teacher educator roles* (Kath)

Being a mother and teacher educator therefore appears to have a common purpose - the notion of working with integrity (Sikes 1998):

> *I try to approach motherhood with integrity, aiming to be a good role model, sharing my values and beliefs, and with commitment. I love being a mother, so there's passion there, too! These are some of the same ways that I approached*

> *teaching (even before becoming a mother) and my subsequent role as a teacher educator* (Kath)

Motivating and inspiring people to become a teacher, is something which Ruth describes as a profession she *loves,* and has *something to do with being a mother* and *about nurturing* (Ruth). Alison articulates the influence of motherhood on professional identity when she expresses how one's personality comes to *inhabit [and] informs the professional teacher you are* (Alison). This concurs with Lave and Wenger's (1991) notion of identity forming through the experience of doing with others.

While the majority of participants spoke about the distinct influence motherhood had on their professional identity, three of the participants were less certain. Una indicated her identity had not significantly changed as a result of being a mother and Karen was neither certain her professional identity was different. Maeve, having recently returned from maternity leave following the birth of first child, acknowledged her professional identity was changing but she was uncertain as to the extent to which it would alter. She anticipated, as Karen noted, motherhood would be an additional identity; Karen described motherhood as having added to *the list* of identities. Maeve was a teacher educator before she had her child, she said she a strong professional identity and explained being a mother had already begun to constrain the amount of time she was able to spend at work. In comparison, Karen indicated the additional identity of being a mother had made her *aware* she had a professional identity, and in doing so endeavoured to separate herself from work when she was *not on campus* (Karen). Separating out identities seemed to be in direct contrast with those participants who considered being a mother had allowed them to better understand and make meaning of their identity as a teacher educator. However, if motherhood adds an identity, which for Maeve and Karen is additional to their professional identity, this did not indicate a disconnection between being a mother and a teacher educator. Returning to Maeve, she said she had already made use of her experiences of being a mother in her teaching; *I sometimes draw on my identity as mother in my teaching* (Maeve). This too was a point made by Una when she wrote *I used stories and anecdotes from their school tales in my teaching* (Una). Whilst therefore both participants were able to make use of their experience of being a mother, there was a distinction between motherhood and being a

teacher educator. Maeve, the new mother, made evident the distinct nature of these two identities when she stated:

> *I don't deliberately foreground it [motherhood] as at work I don't feel like a mother all the time* (Maeve)

Una, whereas, addressed the distinction in terms of temporal fractional identities; she recalled when her children were still living at home and she was teaching she was *a full time mother and part-time professional* (Una). Now, with her children having left home, she is a full time teacher educator.

However, whilst Karen, Una and Maeve identify with more distinct identity-roles, which is affirmed by Wenger's (1998) understanding of separated roles, it appears that motherhood offers them a perspective on the relative importance of the various identities. Maeve, for example, reported motherhood has helped *me not to see my professional identity as my only or most important identity* (Maeve), and Una, whose children had left home, wrote:

> *I now a full time professional and part-time mother (still dropping everything if they need me to)* (Una)

The notion of complementary identities (Swennen, Volman and van Essen 2008 and Gavron 1966) comes to the fore even when a participant does not readily recognise a weave between motherhood and professional identity.

For all the participants, being a teacher educator and a mother involved being sentient, values-led and empathetic and for some women their career ambitions had softened. Whether the participants' related to their professional and personal identities being closely threaded together or they compartmentalised their understanding of identity, Sarah conveyed the essence of overlapping values in being both a mother and being a teacher educator when she said:

> *who am I as a person and how I treat them [student teachers] is about how I value people, and that comes more from my own identity which precedes being a mother or a teacher educator* (Sarah)

4.2.2 Positioning motherhood and professional identity

In the second of the two interview questions participants were invited to consider the positioning of their professional identity in relation to being a mother; would you describe yourself as a teacher educator who is also a mother, or, a mother who works as a teacher educator? This question builds on a range of academic work; that of Kahn, Garcia-Manglano and Bianchi (2014) who identified women's lifelong choices of family versus career as being '*made early in life…which affects later life choices and outcomes*' (ibid: 57); Richards and Posnett's (2011) research, which suggests from a young age secondary-aged school girls appear to hold a preference on whether to prioritise a career or to become a mother and the question also draws upon the work of Wolf (2013) and her interest in the personal and professional lives of career women. Whilst Wolf considered how women came to integrate children into their careers, the rationale for my question was to understand how women positioned their identity as a mother with that of being a teacher educator. The question's intent was to explore the participants' perceptions on the relative importance of being a teacher educator in relation to the experience of motherhood.

The question evoked a series of initial responses from the participants and for a few, replies were immediate. However, for the majority there were lengthy and thoughtful pauses before the question being described as being *good* (Lisa) or *brilliant* (Karen), or in some cases, and as illustrated by Maeve, *difficult to answer*. Alison, Bella and Lisa each met with the question with a degree of hesitancy, as too did Amy. Whilst she did go on to offer a response to the question, Amy considered the question caused her to take a position which she felt did not describe the understanding she had of herself, despite being a teacher educator and a mother. She was cautious in aligning with an identity-descriptor, which if the question had been of a closed nature, would have been the intent. Moreover, the question invited participants to consider their identity in terms of being a teacher educator relative to being a mother in order to elucidate the extent to which motherhood shaped their professional identity. Being hesitant to answer the question was explained in terms of an apprehension to separate out what were considered to interlinked identities; Karen indicated they are *not separate identities, they influence one another*, and Sarah expressed this weave in terms of *the two roles seem fairly seamless*. In replying to the essence of the question, participants

reaffirmed the common signifiers of who they are as teacher educators and mothers; these being relational, empathetic, appreciative and idiosyncratic persons. For example, Lisa stated that her identity reflected her sense of being; *I am me first*. This is in agreement with Lave and Wenger's (1991) notion of identity being in throw of becoming and is a manifestation of the core person.

Alison spoke of the values that drive her professional identity and that of being a mother. Whilst she did not have a need for the label of being a mother, Alison identified with *a real sense of self*, which for this same participant led her to conclude that she was *more comfortable with myself as a teacher educator* (Alison). Alison explained that while she began her career as a teacher educator in the same year her child was born, she had always been a teacher and therefore her professional identity had strongly influenced her self-perception. Alison's sense of identity is an expression of her broader experience of being a teacher over that of being a mother. Alison expresses this understanding when she stated:

> *I do not have the confidence to be the mother who is the teacher educator…because I have not been a mother for long enough* (Alison)

Identity was not, however, considered to be a fixed entity; being able to position the identity of mother or teacher is context dependent, time related whilst being mostly interrelated. Sarah spoke of situations and circumstances determining the response to the question on positioning:

> *I think it depends on where I am. If I am in home mode I would think of myself as being a mother who is also a teacher educator. But sitting here in your office I am in teacher educator mode as so I am a teacher educator who is also a mother* (Sarah)

Similarly Amy recognised her identity was dependent upon the circumstances in which she was asked the question. Furthermore, she suggested the identities were difficult to position because of their interdependence:

> *When I am at working I am the Teacher Educator who is a mother but when I am at home I am a mother who is also a Teacher Educator. Not separate identities they influence one another* (Amy)

Similarly and in keeping with the work of Healy (1999), the participants identified with the positioning of professional and personal identities as being as both being temporal and contextual:

> *Hard question! I don't have an answer because if you ask me here I am a Teacher Educator but also a mother. If you were to ask me on a Monday at 15.15 at the school gate I am a mother who is a Teacher Educator* (Amanda)

This point was also made by Jan who at the point of interview was in the final weeks of employment before relocating and later taking up a new appointment elsewhere:

> *…now I would be a teacher educator who is also a mother but when we move because the work will be less of my working week than looking after the kids will be* (Jan)

Irrespective of context, the length of time the participants had been mothers influenced how they positioned their professional identity in relation to being a mother. In particular for those participants whose children were older (11-18 and 19-24 years age groups), their identity as a mother had changed as their children's need changed. Bella stated that as her children were now older they no longer had such an immediate need of her, and this allowed for her to focus *more on the role of the teacher educator* (Bella). However, this shift in position was not one she particularly celebrated:

> *I would love to say I am a mother who works as a teacher educator but I think it's gone, as my children have got older* (Bella)

Amy stated her identity prior to having children was defined by being a teacher and it was when she became a mother that her professional identity *radically changed* (Amy). She was no longer *defined* by her professional role but *more so by being a mother* (Amy). In relation to motherhood, professional identity therefore appears to evolve with children, and whilst personal identity begins with the self - *I am me and that is how I see myself first* (Lisa) - the importance of children and professional roles affects how the participants made sense of their own identities (Griffiths 2013).

Therefore, professional identity has its place and time for being foregrounded, not least when children leave aside their dependency of basic needs and the role of being the mother significantly changes; *I have to keep my identity as a teacher educator – this will stay* (Bella). It was Karen, however, who clarified the connection between the two identities when she simply stated the identities *influence one another* (Karen).

The theme therefore which draws together the interplay of motherhood and professional identity is priority maxim; this refers to phrases and words used by participants, and supported by the work of Brunton, Wiggins and Oakley (2011), to express how priority is always given to children; *my children always come first and my job a very close second* (Sarah). This applies even when children are older as noted by Karen;

> *I am still really concerned about them and still really involved with them and their lives, and so I find getting that balance really difficult if I am honest and so the mother bit is always going to be the most important* (Karen)

The prioritisation of one's own children over other responsibilities was further reiterated by Amy when she said;

> *Being a mother was my highest priority and 'trumped' everything else, despite working full time from when both children were six months old* (Amy)

Meanwhile, it is important to highlight the priority given to children does not diminish the identity and responsibilities of being a teacher educator; they are seen to be complementary and affirming (Sikes 1998, Swennen, Volman and van Essen 2008 and Gavron 1966). It has been discussed how being a teacher educator and mother share similar values and the identity of being a teacher educator is something to take pride in. However, in spite of these commonalities participants did report being both a mother and a teacher educator could at times be challenging. Amy said managing a full time position and being a mother left her *stressed* and often feeling she was not being *a good mother*. She knew she was a *very good teacher* but sometimes she *averaged out feeling like rubbish* (Amy). Similarly, Jan indicated it was at times difficult *to keep both [roles] equally balanced,* and Amy also addressed this point when cautioning against being *defined by one's job* at the expense of caring for your own children. As noted in Chapter 2, managing workload for all teachers is a critical contemporary issue for teacher retention (House of Commons Education Committee 2017), and therefore the recommendations to this enquiry make reference to how this pertains specifically to women.

4.3 Concluding discussion

In exploring how the experience of motherhood influences a teacher educator's professional identity, with reference to Lave and Wenger's (1991) social learning framework, this chapter has addressed the formation of professional identity and how being a mother shapes professional identity.

In relation to an a self-understanding of professional identity, participants considered it be important, and it was defined by nurturing values, empathetic and relational qualities, high expectations and an appreciative approach to learning. These characteristics were considered to be shared with the experience of being a mother, and therefore motherhood was considered to strengthen the identity and practice of being a teacher educator. The experience of motherhood offered a vantage point for empathising with student teachers. Mostly participants reported having children led to a change in priorities from that of being centred on work to that of being a mother. Again, with reference to Lave and Wenger's (1991) appreciation of identity transitioning towards a core status, participants conveyed an understanding that the identity of being a mother changes over time. As noted previously as the child gets older and becomes increasingly independent the nature of motherhood changes, however, the identity of motherhood remains core and influential. Karen illustrates this point when she reported that while her children, now in their adult years, were no longer dependent on her for basic needs, they still looked to her for companionship, advice and support.

In conclusion therefore to this chapter, motherhood influences the professional identity, or community of practice, of teacher educators. Over time and through social learning experience motherhood informs, as Lave and Wenger's (1991) framework indicates, an enhanced self-understanding which in turn enables a better understanding of professional and personal priorities. It does so in a manner which is positive and affirming and threads together empathetic and relational values and beliefs that are evident in the identity of a teacher and a mother. Ruth summarised this enhancing interrelationship when she stated:

> *my daughter, I didn't realise it but she is absolutely the most important thing that I have ever done in my life, she is my legacy* (Ruth)

Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendations

My enquiry set out to determine how motherhood might influence the professional identity of teacher educators working in a University's School of Education where I work. In doing so it explored understandings of professional identity, the importance of it to teacher educators and its formation. The enquiry considered notions of motherhood and by drawing upon participants' accounts and with reference to literature, the ways in which professional identity was shaped by the experience of being a mother.

The enquiry was grounded in a socio-constructivist paradigm and engaged with a phenomenological approach using questionnaire and interviews for data collection. It was the phenomenon of motherhood which was under review. The questionnaire phase focused on understandings of professional identity whilst the interview questions invited consideration of the significance of motherhood on the formation of professional identity and the extent to which participants positioned themselves first and fore mostly as a mother who was also a teacher educator or a teacher educator who was also a mother.

The professional identity of teacher educators is a construct which is considered to be still relatively under researched (Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto 2017 and Izadinia 2014). The contemporary academic work on professional identity largely focuses on the teacher educator role and the importance of belonging to a professional group (Henning et al 2017, Vahasantanen et al 2016, Buchanan 2015, Pereira et al 2015 and Lunenberg, Dengerink and Korthagen 2014). This thesis, however, contributes a body of knowledge which is concerned with the understanding and importance of a professional identity and the significance of motherhood in how it is shaped.

My research has highlighted a group of signifiers, concerned with values and personal constructions, which thread through a teacher educator's professional identity. These are integrity and appreciation, and an idiosyncratic, changing and multifaceted understanding of identity. The professional identity of a teacher educator is understood to be underscored by an empathetic and relational personality (Buchanan 2015), driven by a moral quest of betterment (Noddings 2015) and led by values of integrity and appreciation (Griffiths 2013). In arriving at this conclusion participants spoke of the

teacher educator being purposeful in their role, championed by a vocational identity (Wolf 2013) and belonging to a community of learners (Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto 2017, La Velle 2013, Tirri and Obani 2013). Canrinus et al (2011) and Healy (1999) affirms the notion of teaching as a vocation. Healy refers to teaching as an '*occupational commitment*' (ibid: 189) whereby there is a chime and resonance between the values and intentions of the individual and that of the workplace. This notion befits the Lave and Wenger's (1991) social learning model, and is in keeping with the Wenger's communities of practice four spheres of activity – community, practice, sense making and identity formation.

Professional identity was considered to be an important feature of the way in which this enquiry's participants approach their work as teacher educators (Izadinia 2014). The importance is explained in terms of the position, expertise and experience of being a teacher (Ruohotie-Lyhty and Moate 2016, Pereira, Lopes and Margarida 2015 and Lunenberg, Dengerink and Korthagen 2014). In alignment with Canrinus et al (2011), Wolf (2013) in her consideration of teacher identity asserted female teachers over the course of time have considered '*their work to be a vocation*' (ibid: 149); this was echoed by the participants in this enquiry when they asserted their professional identity was central to who they are as people. At the same time, their understanding of professional identity is one which is multifaceted (Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto 2017), appreciative and develops with changing commitments and broadening experiences (Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto 2017, Buchanan 2015, Griffiths 2013 and Rus et al 2013). Nurturing reciprocal relationships, alongside a strong work ethic within a community of learners (Vahasantanen et al 2016 and Davey 2013) is also an important strand of teacher educators' identity. This notion of purpose is affirmed by Nias (1981) who refers to teachers as having a '*bottomless appetite for commitment*' (ibid: 181).

Teacher educators in my enquiry identified closely with the need to be reflective practitioners (Izadinia 2014) both individually and by means of dialogue with colleagues which allowed for socially constructed professional learning and a greater agency of being and doing (Vahasantanen et al 2016). Teacher educators conveyed an approach to their role which was appreciative in nature; participants communicated

how they sought to guide their students into their careers of teaching by understanding who their students are as people and by building confident working relationships (Griffiths 2013). Whilst there was a regard for curriculum management, participants focused on student teachers developing an inner understanding of their role as a teacher. This signalled a pedagogical shift from a pursuit of business-styled management tools to that of nurturing a career in teaching (Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto 2017).

An expression of professional identity for some of the participants was more secure in terms of being a teacher of children rather than a teacher educator (Buchanan 2015). An explanation seemed to be in the length of teaching service; for some of the participants they had more years working as a teacher of children than that of being a teacher educator. In my thesis I have, on occasion, made reference to the teacher educator as a teacher; this was permitted due to the finding that some of the participants identified more closely with being teachers than teacher educators. Furthermore being a teacher is common to both labels; being a teacher involves many roles (Lunenberg, Dengerink and Korthagen 2014) and is concerned with people learning irrespective of whether they are children or adults (Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto 2017). It is the exchange of learning and teaching that encapsulates the '*purpose*' (Tirri and Ubani 2013: 21) of being a teacher.

Participants in the enquiry conveyed a significance to the nature and disposition of the teacher; who teaches is fundamentally important, for as Kelchtermans (2009) expresses '*teaching is done by somebody*' and thereby '*is at the centre*' (ibid: 258) of the learning process. It is therefore of professional concern who teaches because it matters to the students, it matters to those with whom we work and, as the participants relayed, as does Kelchtermans (2009), it matters to us as teachers. The transformative experience of learning requires trustful and challenging interactions and practice. It involves an exchange between learner and teacher, or what Griffiths (2013) describes as the '*pedagogical relationship*' (ibid: 222), and is built on reciprocity, empathy and respect. There is, as Trede, Macklin and Bridges (2011) state, an '*overall agreement*' (ibid: 14), deep learning and understanding of the professional self is based on collaboration and dialogue. More so, and again signaled by the participants in terms of self-perception

(Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto 2017) how we see ourselves as teachers and how others understand what we do is significant because teaching is a fundamentally '*inter-personal and relational endeavour*' (ibid: 258).

The narrative approach to collecting interview data for my enquiry engaged participants in a process of '*critical self-reflection*' (Buchanan 2015: 714) about their '*professional mission*' (ibid) and in particular the perceived influence of motherhood on their identity. This was to be enlightening and allowed participants' to take a uniquely personalised consideration of their professional identity. In keeping with the work of Sikes (1998), my enquiry indicates being mother enhances the professional identity of teacher educators. For the participants of this enquiry, the teacher educator community of practice had been strengthened by the experience of motherhood. As core members of their community (Lave and Wenger 1991), the participants described how their professional identity emanated from their sense of being; a self which significantly involved the identity of being a mother.

Common to being a teacher educator and a mother are shared values and a purposeful intent for a common good, a conclusion which is affirmed by the work of Gavron (1966). She signalled motherhood would complement other roles women held. Similarly Lovejoy and Stone (2012) gave light to a shared purpose between being a mother and a teacher, and Emslie and Hunt (2009) indicated women with children readily identify the overlap involved in caring work, such as teaching and being a mother. By way of contrast Kim and Lang (2001) considered motherhood to be a limiting agent on a careers, and Butler in 1990 reported on how the label of mother oppressed women. For the participants in this enquiry, however, motherhood is an agent of self-efficacy; teacher educators draw upon their personal experiences of being a mother to inform their teaching and recognise their identity of being a mother and a teacher educator are intricately weaved together (Sikes 1998). As indicated over time (Henning et al 2017, Hokka, Vahasantanen and Mahlakaarto 2017, Buchanan 2015, Rus et al 2013, De Weerdt et al 2006 and Mead 1934) there need not be a separated line between the personal and professional identity.

In my enquiry the experience of motherhood is a cause for celebration; it brings opportunities for teacher educators to reflect upon teaching and motherhood as being mutually reinforcing and beneficial, and in doing so offers a richness to professional identity. For the participants in this enquiry, the experience of motherhood appeared to confer a sense of greater confidence and agency in their professional role and mediated a deeper understanding of the connection between pedagogical theory and pedagogical relationships (Izadinia 2014). As with the understandings of professional identity, my enquiry identified the central importance of learning to be a socio-constructivist endeavour which is driven by relationships, and made more significant by the experience of motherhood.

Whilst it is important to signal this enquiry appreciates all teachers have the capacity to hold a set of core values which lead practice, I was concerned with perceptions of professional identity and the experience of motherhood. What this thesis therefore brings to the academic literature is a refreshed and new set of understandings of teacher educators' professional identity, the positive influence motherhood has on it, and a deeper understanding of the critical importance of human exchange in the dialogue of learning and teaching.

The limitations to my enquiry include sample size; the research involved a small number of participant teacher educators who were self-selecting. The analysis did not therefore take account of women who declined the invitation to participate in the research enquiry either at the stage of questionnaire or the interview. As discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.2, the sample group did not therefore represent the demographic composition of female teacher educators beyond the University; the essential criterion for the initial questionnaire phase was being a female teacher educator. There was no coercion to include a representative sample of age, ethnicity, career length or family structure, the research was founded on a voluntary basis and participants were aware they would be required to engage in discussion concerning affective and personal considerations. Additional research in this area should therefore include an enquiry into the cultural and ethnic perspectives on how motherhood influences professional identity; items related to working patterns, for example, whether women who work on a fractional basis report similar findings to those working on full time contracts. It is also

suggested there is a need to explore the extent to which the experience of motherhood has a lasting impact on the professional identity of teacher educators, an issue which was inferred in the work of Griffiths (2013). Furthermore, whilst my enquiry focused on the experience of women who had children no claim is being made to it only being mothers who professionally benefit from the experience of being a parent. Therefore a necessary area of research would be to consider the influence of fatherhood on a teacher educator's professional identity, and also whether wider relationships, such as caring for elders, influence its formation.

The outcomes of this enquiry have indicated being a mother shapes professional identity in a manner which enhances the agency of being a teacher educator. There is a striking concordat between the identity of being a teacher and of being a mother, and of significance, motherhood seems to strengthen professional self-efficacy because it happens at a personal level (Vahasantanen et al 2016). However, as to the issue of whether there is a causal link between a confident professional identity and motherhood, my thesis would suggest the idiographic nature of being a teacher, a mother and a person would neutralise any call for impact statements in this regards. This enquiry sought to generate better understandings and new meanings; it did not seek to create absolute truths about the influence of motherhood on professional identity.

For the purposes of this thesis, there are recommendations to be made for policy and practice, particularly in light of teacher retention being identified as a contemporary workforce issue (Lynch, Worth, Bamford and Wespiesser 2016). Vahasantanen et al (2016) asserted a teacher educator's professional identity is strengthened by collaborative discussion about '*one's professional mission and practices*' (ibid: 2). Buchanan (2015) further suggested a process of '*critical self-reflection*' (ibid: 715) can facilitate an understanding of professional identity and refresh the values of practice in the knowledge of the prevailing '*dominant discourse*' (ibid). This infers an enhanced sense of professional self-efficacy and heightened agency comes from within. Given therefore the positive influence motherhood has had on professional identity, teacher educators returning to work following maternity / adoption leave, during keeping in touch days and professional learning events, should be encouraged through dialogue to

consider the benefits of being a mother and dissuade discourse away from it being career limiting or inhibiting professional progress. Those with managerial responsibilities should consider the scheduling of meetings in order to enable teacher educators to fully participate in their multiple roles, and as Gavron back in 1966 recommended, workplaces need to be child-friendly so women can readily work and not seek alternative employment which has closer proximity to childcare facilities (Wolf 2013). Furthermore, career promotion opportunities and policies should be assessed for the extent to which mothers encounter barriers to progression, and evaluated in terms of whether there is a contextual assumption women will abandon their career plans when they have children (Cohen and Duberley 2017).

This thesis concludes with a reflection on my own experience of a recognised troubled dissonance (Rees 2010) between being a teacher educator and a mother. This is what I experienced as I entered into this enquiry; I was a teacher educator who happened also to be a mother. These separated spheres troubled my conscious to such effect I was compelled to learn more from my colleagues as to their perceptions of dual identities. What has come to the fore is an understanding of teaching being a commitment and vocation which is reinforced and enhanced by the experience of motherhood. Being a mother is professionally enabling and enriches the identity and agency of being a teacher educator; it engenders a deeper sense of empathy and appreciation and heightened sustenance to enable and facilitate learning and personal achievement. Whilst being a mother can be exhausting children are their priority and the deeper understanding of the phenomenon of motherhood is it brings strength to the professional identity of teacher educators.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire template and statement of ethical compliance

Professional Identity of women working as Teacher Educators in Higher Education Institutes

I would like to invite you to take part in a research enquiry that I am completing as part an Educational Doctoral programme. The enquiry is investigating professional identity of women working as Teacher Educators in High Education Institutes.

I have attached an ethics statement which states that all responses will be treated in confidence and all when reported will be anonymised. Do be aware that you are able to withdraw from the research at any point. If you do wish to be part of the research enquiry please would you sign the consent form and return it to me.

There are five questions to complete as part of the questionnaire, and all are concerned with your perceptions of professional identity and being a Teacher Educator. Thank you very much for your time in participating in the research enquiry.

Please complete the following five questions:

Question 1:
What words would you use to describe the meaning of professional identity?

Question 2:
How would you describe your own professional identity as a Teacher Educator?

Question 3:
To what extent is professional identity an important aspect of the way in which you approach your role as a Teacher Educator?

Question 4:
Has your professional identity as a Teacher Educator changed over the course of your career and if so what has influenced how it has been formulated?

Question 5:
If you have children, in what ways and why has being a mother shaped your professional identity as a Teacher Educator?

Would you be willing to take part in a follow up interview about professional identity? If so, please indicate how you would prefer to be contacted:

Statement of ethical compliance when undertaking questionnaire research

Ethical research practice will be assured through the research activities by ensuring that:

- I will gain your written consent to willingly participant in the research programme

- You have the right to withdraw from the research programme at any stage you wish, and any research information that I have received from you will be subsequently destroyed.

- I will ensure confidentiality and anonymity at all times; no individual will be identifiable at any stage of the research.

You may contact me at any time with questions or for clarification about any aspect of the research.

If you agree to be interviewed, I will require you to give written consent to have the interview recorded before the interview can take place.

If you agree to take part in the research programme, you will be informed of the interim findings once all the feedback has been collated and analysed.

Thank you,

Jane Chambers

jane.chamber04@gmail.com

PERMISSION

Your name:

'I have read the letter outlining the research activity to be undertaken by Jane Chambers. I have read the ethical statement and am willing to participate in the research.'

Signed: Date:

Appendix B: Interview schedule and statement of ethical compliance

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for my research which is concerned with exploring how the experience of being a mother might influence the professional identity of women who are Teacher Educators.

Before we begin the interview I wanted to make you aware of the ethical compliance of the enquiry. Please be assured that at all times, including in the transcription of the interview and reporting of the interviews that your identity will be anonymised and all information collected will remain confidential.

If you wish to please withdraw from the interview at any stage any information that has been collected from you will be destroyed.

Following transcription of the interview if you wish to review the script please advise me.

Three questions makeup the interview of the interview; one is concerned with when you became a mother in relation to your role of being a Teacher Educator; the second question relates to how being a mother might have influenced your professional identity as a Teacher Educator and the final question is concerned with whether you perceive yourself to be principally a Teacher Educator or a mother.

To begin then, the meaning of professional identity is understood to be:
- how you perceive yourself as a Teacher Educator
- how others perceive you as a Teacher Educator
- how you approach your role as a Teacher Educator

…and this definition has been taken from the analysis and findings of the previous questionnaire phase of this enquiry. And so with that in mind:

1. Would you mind telling me: a) how long you have been a Teacher Educator and b) whether you had your children before or after you became a Teacher Educator?

2. In the next 15 minutes may I invite you to talk about the extent to which being a mother has influenced your professional identity as a Teacher Educator...

3. Would you describe yourself as a Teacher Educator who is also a mother, or, a mother who works as a Teacher Educator?

Thank you very much for your time, and if you wish to see the transcript of the interview, which will be used as data for the research, please let me know.

Thank you very much for your time in participating in the research enquiry.

Statement of ethical compliance when undertaking interview research

Ethical research practice will be assured through the research activities by ensuring that:

- I will gain your written consent to willingly participant in the research programme

- You have the right to withdraw from the research programme at any stage you wish, and any research information that I have received from you will be subsequently destroyed

- I will ensure confidentiality and anonymity at all times; no individual will be identifiable at any stage of the research

- You may contact me at any time with questions or for clarification about any aspect of the research

If you agree to be interviewed, I will require you to give written consent to have the interview recorded before the interview can take place.

If you agree to take part in the research programme, you will be informed of the interim findings once all the feedback has been collated and analysed

Thank you,

Jane Chambers
jane.chambers04@gmail.com

PERMISSION

Your name:

'I have read the letter outlining the research activity to be undertaken by Jane Chambers. I have read the ethical statement and am willing to participate in the research.'

Signed: Date:

Appendix Ci: Questionnaire Wordle Frequency Analysis Q1

Question 1: What words would you use to describe the meaning of professional identity?

Question stem words removed from analysis: professional and identity
Rationale: they appear in the question

Maximum words number presented: 70
Rationale: Allowed for responses to be included that had been mentioned by three or more respondents

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Professional identity concerned with (in frequency order)[even weighting]*:
C1.1: Work, teaching and children:
Work, [teacher and role*], practice, occupational, ability, position, [students, knowledge, description and expertise

C1.2: Relational and values-led practice:
Values, [others and awareness*], context, community, view, [people. perspectives, relationships, support, reflection, integrity, feelings, beliefs and understanding*]

C1.3: Complex, changing and multifaceted professional identity:
Complex, multifaceted, [identities and self*], [construct. changes, characteristics, different and shifts*]

Word thread: occupational role

Appendix Cii: Questionnaire Wordle Frequency Analysis Q2

Question 2: How would you describe your own professional identity as a Teacher Educator?

Question stem words removed from analysis: professional, identity, teacher and educator
Rationale: they appear in the question

Maximum words number presented: 70
Rationale: Allowed for responses to be included that had been mentioned by three or more respondents

Professional identity as a Teacher Educator can be described in terms of (in frequency order)[even weighting]*:

C2.1: Work, teaching and children:
Practice, [work, teaching, students and research*], [working, think, education and schools*], [job and question*], [role, educational, experience, leader, tutor, know and learning*]

C2.2: Relational and values-led practice:
See, part, feel, values, colleagues, [community, within, others and sense], [relation, different, strong and develop*]

Word thread: Relational practice

Appendix Ciii: Questionnaire Wordle Frequency Analysis Q3

Question 3: To what extent is professional identity an important aspect of the way in which you approach your role as a Teacher Educator

Question stem words removed from analysis: professional, identity, teacher and educator
Rationale: they appear in the question

Maximum words number presented: 70
Rationale: Allowed for responses to be included that had been mentioned by three or more respondents

The extent to which professional identity as an important aspect of being a Teacher Educator (in frequency order) [even weighting]*:

C3.1: Work, teaching and children:
Way (of working with), students, school, teach, [work and teacher*], researcher, authority, secure, knowledge

C3.2: Relational and values-led practice:
Feel, think, see, experience, [situations, terms, sense and affects*], [speak and need*], relaxed, [reflect, interact and colleagues*]

C3.3: Changing and multifaceted professional identity:
Aspects, part, changing, [adapt, different, influences and whole*]

Importance value: very Important

Word thread: Importance of experience to improve ways of working

Appendix Civ: Questionnaire Wordle Frequency Analysis Q4

Question 4. Has your professional identity as a Teacher Educator changed over the course of your career and if so what has influenced how it has been formulated?

Question stem words removed from analysis: professional, identity, Teacher Educator, influence, changed

Rationale: they appear in the question

Maximum words number presented: 70

Rationale: Allowed for responses to be included that had been mentioned by three or more respondents

Has professional identity changed and if so what are the influencing factors (in frequency order) [even weighting]*:

D4.1: Work, teaching and children:

[Role and teacher*], research, education, school, [time, years, teaching, taught, students and course*]

D4.2: Relational and values-led practice:

See, colleagues, [feel, time, believe, understanding and others*]

D4.3: Changing and multifaceted professional identity:

Now, become, time, [experience, change and taken*], [different, changing, active, including, assumed, grown, since, move

Word thread: Experience and time drive change

Appendix Cv: Questionnaire Wordle Frequency Analysis Q5

5. If you have children, in what ways and why has being a mother shaped your professional identity as a Teacher Educator?

Question stem words removed from analysis:
professional identity, professional, identity, Teacher Educator, children, mother
Rationale: they appear in the question

Maximum words number presented: 70
Rationale: Allowed for responses to be included that had been mentioned by three or more respondents

If you have children, in what ways and why has being a mother shaped your professional identity as a Teacher Educator (in frequency order) [even weighting]*:

D5.1: Work, teaching and children:
Work, [time, role and learning*], parents, [professional and teaching], school, teachers, [worked and years*], working

D5.2: Relational and values-led practice:
[Learn and see*], [understanding, important and home*], [people, perspective and importance*], need

D5.3: Changing and multifaceted professional identity:
[Shaped and always*], identity, [difficulties and old*], [struggled, changed and growing*]

Word thread: Work, time and role