Sliding subject positions: knowledge and teacher educators

Tony Brown, Harriet Rowley and Kim Smith.

Manchester Metropolitan University

In England, adjustments to policy in teacher education have had implications for how subject knowledge is understood and for how job descriptions are defined. That is, the interface between teacher educator and subject knowledge representation has been changing. This paper reports on a wider study that considers the experience of university teacher educators adjusting to new academic and operational conditions. On the one hand the teacher educators are confronted with their subject specialism being set according to new learning objectives and to new time and curriculum constraints. On the other hand their professional identity is reshaped in response to structural changes to teacher education where earlier job definitions had been reconfigured or removed. The paper analyses resultant conceptions of subject knowledge and of teacher education emerging through this changing interface and how these conceptions are variously located across staffing arrangements. A Lacanian model of subjectivity provides a theoretical approach to depicting teacher educator and pre-service teacher identification with subject knowledge. The paper provides a theoretical account of how the teacher educator/trainee interface has been reshaped in line with the market-led terminology that governs current practices. Specifically, the analytical tools enable us to dismantle and restructure the prevalent symbolic order guiding current teacher practice and understanding, particularly our entrapment within specific discourses and identity constructs that shape our interactions with subject knowledge.

Key words: subject knowledge, human *subject*, Lacan

Long-term adjustments to teacher education in response to policy changes have resulted in a substantial part of many training programmes taking place in schools. The latest initiative in England, School Direct, which was formally commenced in 2012, has made the symbolic move towards training being school-*led* as well as school-*based* and has affected university influence on training. This new and expanding one-year route now runs in parallel with the previously existing one-year university-led model where some 70% of teacher education was already school-based. The relatively minor reconfiguration of how training is distributed between university and school sites consequential to School Direct has nevertheless altered how the content and composition of that training is decided as a result of schools having greater influence and funding, with some influence over the scale of university input. The earlier model is being scaled down in some universities as School Direct has secured governmental support. A key element of these changes relates to how subject knowledge is progressively conceptualised as the pre-service teacher (known as "trainee" in England) makes the adjustment through training from their own academic study of a curriculum subject within a university degree to a more pedagogically oriented conception of that subject for teaching in schools. Meanwhile, teacher educators face longer-term changes to the place of subject knowledge in their work as academic priorities in schools change the curriculum structure and the relative inclusions of different subject areas. For example, tighter specification of core subjects such as mathematics, English and science has led to a compression of staff specialising in music, drama and art as student recruitment in those areas has been reduced. Subjects such as psychology, sociology and law have become even more difficult to support by university teacher educators as they have often been conflated into generic Social Science due to the National Curriculum prioritising core areas. Teacher educators have become increasingly wrested from the support they are able to offer in terms of meeting the reduced specialist subject needs of "their" students. This adjustment to certain subjects has prompted a reduction of university teachers in some of those areas and a consequential restructuring of university staffing and responsiveness. It has obliged some educators in those areas to find new sources of income generation to fill their working week, such as the assumption of

management or more generic teacher education roles, or additional subject knowledge work outside of their particular area of subject specialism. For others later on in their careers, the rapidity of change made retirement a more plausible option. In earlier cases, retirement of older staff had provided access to university teacher education for newer staff whose credentials had been developed within more recent circumstances in schools. These changes to the composition of staffing further impact on the ways in which teacher educators and trainees encounter each other, especially in an environment of escalating university fees prompting new definitions of trainee entitlement. The strength of the identification trainees have with either schools or universities depends on which they regard as their home base, and the degree to which the trainee's chosen route in to teaching is split and managed between school and university locations. This split has resulted in a mediation of respective contributions to subject knowledge by economic metaphors (e.g. product, account, quality, etc.). That is, subject knowledge has been repackaged as a commodity that can be delivered and received according to external specification.

The paper commences with a literature review that situates the discussion in relation to other work addressing adjustments to teacher education practice. A methods section outlines the empirical aspects of the study. A Lacanian model of *subjectivity* is explained through a close analysis of a brief paragraph from his work. The paragraph provides a template for depicting teacher educator and trainee identification with subject knowledge from the point of view of how the teacher educator's delivery has been reconfigured to meet the specific demands placed on trainees. Data were then provided of three secondary teacher educators (or teacher educators) each describing how their professional circumstances have changed and how this has resulted in adjustments to their mode of engagement with trainee teachers with regard to their area of subject knowledge. The data are analysed from the point of view of how the composition of the teacher educator's professional duties have changed as a result of job descriptions being restructured. It is also considered how the new arrangements reconfigure and reprioritise the manner in which the area of subject knowledge is addressed within the given training programme. The paper's ultimate target is three-fold. Firstly, it seeks to theorise teacher educator

identifications with particular subject areas. Secondly, it documents how some subject areas have been reconfigured as a result of changing structural arrangements. Thirdly, it provides different examples of how subject knowledge is mediated in teacher educator/trainee encounters.

2. Recent research in teacher education

The teacher educator in England has become caught between job descriptions crafted to traditional assumptions as to the role of an academic teacher educator and the actuality of the work that follows appointment. Demands on teacher educators have changed as a result of initial teacher training shifting from earlier notions of promoting teacher autonomy for "student" teachers to be *educated* to supporting "trainee" teachers in being *trained* to comply with externally imposed teaching and assessment regimes (Brown & McNamara, 2011; White, 2012) and "giving greater priority to the development of 'key teaching skills'" (Marshall, 2014). In teacher education, personnel have changed as universities progressively meet new demands provoking an on-going displacement from familiar activity for teachers and teacher educators alike, challenging notions both of what it is to be a teacher but also of what it is to educate them. Uncertainties in "the workplace context (of university) encourage the new lecturers to hold on to their identity and credibility as school teachers rather than to pro-actively seek new identities as academics within the professional field of teacher education" (Boyd & Harris, 2010). Further, any former expectations to carry out research have, for many, been rather superseded by maintaining relationships between university and school staff as they share the challenge of training in contested space (Ellis, McNicholl & Pendry, 2012). Tack and Vanderlinde (2014) provide an alternative perspetive from Belgium. The designation "teacher educator" relates to a function that has now primarily been split between either former school-based practitioners now working within a university setting, or, increasingly, by those still employed in schools with an expanded teacher education role. Various authors have discussed the challenge faced by new entrants to the profession of teacher education (Harrison & McKeon 2009; McKeon & Harrison, 2010; van Velzen, van der Klink, Swennwen & Yaffe, 2010;White, 2014; Williams & Ritter; Shagrir, 2010; Hordern, 2014).

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Subject knowledge meanwhile has been susceptible to being understood in multiple ways as adjustments to curriculum and training arrangements have impacted on the spaces in which it is encountered. University teacher educators and school mentors may have different priorities for their roles in teacher training (e.g. Price & Willet 2006), such as those relating to how subject knowledge is understood, meeting the demands of testing, effectively using materials, etc. There are different ways of understanding the disciplinary knowledge that teachers need. Schools may prioritise the immediacy of classroom practice or following centralised guidance; universities may prioritise the more intellectually based elements such as subject knowledge, building professional autonomy, or meeting the demands of formal qualification (Hobson, Malderez & Tracey 2009; Jones & Straker 2006; McNally, Boreham, Cope & Stronach 2008; Hodson, Smith & Brown 2011).

Meanwhile, the government's high profile strategy of taking charge of school practices through a multitude of regulatory devices, such as through testing, prescriptive curriculum and school inspection (Brown, Atkinson & England, 2005; Askew, Hodgen, Hossain, & Bretscher 2010; Brown 2011) has resulted in teaching becoming understood through a culture of performativity (Pampaka, Williams, Hutcheson, Wake, Black, Davis & Hernandez-Martinez 2012). For example, the normative insistence of the (still influential) *Numeracy Framework* in mathematics had dictated in great detail how teaching the curriculum subject *should* be conducted (Brown & McNamara 2011). This insistence on policy targets deflected attention from knowing how the re-distribution of teacher education resulted in trainee teachers *actually* teaching the subject.

3. Method

At time of writing, the on-going project has been in progress for eighteen months. Its original purpose was to better understand the implications of School Direct (SD) for university teacher education, towards rethinking the distinctive role of universities in teacher education. The work builds on earlier practitioner research studies by the authors, carried out over four years, which were concerned with how conceptions of theory had changed for teacher educator and trainees as a result of participation in an

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earlier school-based model (Smith & Hodson, 2010; Hodson, Smith & Brown, 2012; Smith, Hodson & Brown, 2013). The failure of particular states of knowing to meet the needs of new situations provoked a break with earlier guiding principles towards creating something new through constantly revising the narratives that guided *subjective* connections to the world. Conceptions of "theory" were used as an indicator of the trainees developing more generic conceptions of teaching as they gained experience of schools. A supplementary element focused on trainee conceptions of mathematics, as an example of a specific subject area within this model, as an alternative gauge (Smith, Hodson & Brown, 2013; Brown, Hodson & Smith, 2013).

Within the current project the team members have conducted over one hundred hour-long interviews/meetings with university teacher educators (early, years, primary and secondary) - managers and teacher educators (50) school managers and mentors (25) as well as a selection of SD trainees during school placements (26). Additionally, a number of planning meetings were recorded and a few trainee lessons were observed. The interviews span 15 universities and 8 associated schools. (Parallel interviews (23) have also taken place at six overseas universities for comparative purposes, but not discussed here). The interviews were designed to assess the impact of SD on a range of individuals variously implicated in the initiative. We have also consulted the work of our colleague Jane Martindale (2014) who used interviews and surveys to collect data from 203 curriculum subject mentors and 23 university teacher educators on how School Direct has impacted on mentoring and teacher educatoring relationships. The 42 university-based interviews on the present project addressed questions such as: length of involvement/ responsibilities in initial teacher training, involvement in SD and how it was different to earlier models, changes to job definition, changing role/composition of theory and subject knowledge (e.g. compression of training, influence of inspectorate, school requirements), distinctive role of universities, threat resulting from the increasingly marginalised position, how partnership work with schools is changing, involvement in research or masters/doctoral studies, the role of research in their practice, main challenges ahead for university training, affect of this on them personally and how they think the role

of universities needs to change. The three members of the team have each listened to all of the UK recordings and discussed their observations. Transcripts have been produced for closer scrutiny and coding using Nvivo has taken place in connection with the listed areas of interest. Specific themes in our analysis have included: the effects of marketisation on teacher education provision, the evolution of teacher educator *subjectivities* as job definitions or personnel change and the shift to more operational conceptions of the training process. For the present paper, interviews were inspected from the point of view of how they directly or indirectly pointed to conceptions of subject knowledge within practice. Evidence of these conceptions was considered as a gauge of how the evolving analytical or academic dimensions of teacher education were being understood. The first two case studies were selected to indicate the impact on teacher educator identifications with minority curriculum subjects. The third case study provided an extreme example from our data of how subject knowledge has diminished within some university courses.

4. Representing curriculum subjects

We shall focus on how subject knowledge has changed but also on how teacher educator embodiments of subject knowledge have altered as a result of newly defined job descriptions reconfiguring different areas of subject knowledge. We are also concerned with how the new configurations of subject knowledge shape the people representing them or how teachers are only seen to the extent that they are presenting subject knowledge in the required way. A teacher educator may begin primarily as a subject specialist representing that subject knowledge to a trainee. This however is different to a teacher educator incorporating a reduced aspect of this specialism while undertaking a much wider teacher educator role, but now addressing that specialism to a trainee who has a much more peripheral interest in securing that specialism. Identifications with these new relationships transform teacher educator, subject knowledge and trainee. A teacher educator, understood according to a particular prescription of what a teacher educator should be, represents a piece of subject knowledge to a trainee, also understood and assessed according to whether they have received that piece of subject knowledge. An aspect of the teacher educator represents

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an aspect of the subject to an aspect of the trainee. The register being employed discounts more holistic notions of "teacher educator", "subject knowledge" and "trainee" and rather processes them in line with the prevalent ideology.

To theoretically analyse how *human subject* identifications with subject knowledge might be understood, we shall draw on the psychoanalytical work of Lacan. This work has been discussed in educational contexts elsewhere (Brown & England, 2005; Brown, Atkinson & England, 2006; Brown, 2008; Atkinson, 2011). In an earlier paper the present authors used dimensions of this analytical approach in describing how new arrangements in teacher education have led to university teacher educators differentially identifying with a professional demand to engage in research according to how knowledge was variously understood (Brown, Rowley & Smith, 2014). Attitudes to research derived from the teacher educator's relative alignment with the discourses of governing, educating, protesting or revolutionising. It was suggested by Lacan (2007) that in the "university discourse" defining knowledge is underpinned by a "master discourse" asserting a particular version of events. The operation of these discourses makes unsettling demands on human *subjects* (producing an "hysteric discourse" of protest), who might challenge these demands through developing an "analytic discourse" that examines the functioning of the other discourses with a view to replacing them. For example, some teacher educators saw research knowledge as expert knowledge or facts to be complied with, whilst others preferred alignment with notions of exploratory research generating knowledge through practice. This present paper focuses on how discursive identifications shape teacher educator identities and the structural encapsulations of subject knowledge.

Lacan has a tendency to "frighten the horses" with his use of language and analyses of his work in the field of education have typically been tackled through secondary sources. Our earlier paper engaged with his original writing (Lacan, 2007). In this paper we will continue in this ambition whilst also referring to his most prominent contemporary commentator, the Slovenian philosopher and social theorist Slavoj Žižek. Our analysis will engage with Žižek's brief interpretation of just one paragraph from a Lacan seminar that focuses on how human subjects derive

structurally from the symbolic universe. Lacan (1986, p. 207) states in his characteristically slippery way, that the

> whole ambiguity of the sign derives from the fact that it represents something for someone. This someone may be many things, it may be the entire universe, in as much as we have known for sometime that information circulates in it ... Any node in which signs are concentrated, in so far as they represent something, may be taken for someone. What must be stressed at the outset is that a signifier is that which represents a subject for another signifier.

Žižek (1998, p. 74) argues that Lacan's famous last sentence might be understood through an example of a chart at the end of a hospital bed.

> The old style hospital bed has at its feet, out of the patient's sight, a small display board on which different charts and documents are stuck specifying the patient's temperature, blood pressure, medicaments, and so on. This display represents the patient - for whom? Not simply and directly for other subjects (say, for the nurses and doctors who regularly check this panel), but primarily for *other signifiers*, for the symbolic network of medical knowledge in which the data on the panel have to be inserted in order to obtain their meaning. One can easily imagine a computerised system where the reading of the data on the panel proceeds automatically, so that what the doctor obtains and reads are not these data but directly the conclusions that, according to the system of medical knowledge, follow from these and other data.

The signifier, a graph maybe, represents the (human) subject, a patient in the bed, for another signifier, a doctor or nurse reading the graph with a view to it impacting on a specific dimension of their subsequent actions. That is, we are not attending to patient or medic as holistic (human) subjects. Rather we are considering the patient through the restricted registers of the patient, with particular symptoms, and a medic only interested in those symptoms (perhaps with a view to setting a correct dosage),

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according to the wider system of medical knowledge. Some of our Manchester medical colleagues designed a virtual environment to train doctors for major incidents in which trainees had to cut through horrific surface appearances to get to the key "numbers" (blood pressure, heart rate, temperature, etc.) they needed in order to prioritise patients. Here the medic made sense of an individual person according to a very specific discursive register. As another medical example, a Sudanese doctor newly working in an emergency department in an Irish city was concerned that patients presenting with headaches may or may not have something seriously wrong with them. He needed to assess how the patient, unaccustomed to making sense of their bodies in medical terminology, expressed their experience of pain into a set of more colloquial words. The doctor found it difficult to set his diagnosis in medical terminology without being influenced by stereotypical assumptions about the patient's lifestyle and associated risk factors according to how they spoke.

An education analogy can be readily found. A child in a lesson can only express his or her *understanding* using the symbolic apparatus that they have available. Often, teachers only hear the child's explanation to the extent that it aligns itself with the assessment regime. Atkinson (2011, p 25) provides the example of "school reports where the comments do not represent the learner directly for teachers and parents but primarily for the symbolic network of disciplinary and pedagogic knowledge according to which the learner is positioned and appears as a pedagogised *subject*" (emphasis added). And for all the emotion and insight teachers experience they may only be accredited if they demonstrate externally defined competencies. For instance, teachers might be understood and recognised by their employers only insofar as they fulfil the remit of a government policy directive. That is, they are seen as no more than a statistic. In this regard, Stephens (2007, p. 32) reported on his involvement as an education authority manager in a Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy where his work was prescribed by a central government directive: "Overall the targets set in 2000 are aimed at ...ensuring that at least 25% of pupils in every school and 38% in every local education authority can achieve five or more GCSEs a grades A*-C (British 16+ examination)". Such targets at the time were supplemented by policy apparatus. For schools: National Curriculum, teaching Strategies,

Standardised Attainment Tests, Standardised training programme for teachers administering the Strategies, Government Inspections; For training colleges: National Curriculum for Initial Training, Numeracy Skills Tests for teachers, Government Inspections. Within such a frame, children's work may only have been appreciated to the extent that it fitted within the teacher's immediate objectives as defined within such apparatus.

In short, a specific sign relation only works or applies within a particular discursive register. The ambiguity is located in how we understand the *subjectivity* or identities of such actors when filtered through such limited registers. The "someone" or "*subject*" is in a sense, in any instance, discourse specific. They only register as entities in certain modes of discourse (or ground). This reduction clearly functions in the context of teachers and learners engaging in subject knowledge where terminology can assume very specific meanings. Yet, the convenience of stabilising a supposed meaning of a word or symbol for the purposes of education or governance will privilege some interests over others.

Returning to Lacan's paragraph, the "ambiguity" we suggest is centred on how the "someone" is predicated in signifying activity. What aspect of the whole person is activated (or brought into being) in any given semiotic configuration? That is: *How are they created as subjects?* Which discursive aspect responds, or appears, and why? It is this more extensive engagement with discursive networks and their production of subjectivity that fuels Lacan's concerns. This connection is hinted at in Lacan's curious suggestion that the "someone" could be the "entire universe". This term is made yet more obscure by the clause "in as much as we have known for sometime that information circulates in it". Our connectivity to the internet perhaps provides an interpretation since this virtual space re-centres our sense of self, our sense of reach and our scope of receptivity. Being wired into this network echoes Hegel's suggestion that we have intestines (or perhaps tentacles) on the outside. Our connectivity to the network affects how we process information, make gestures, impact on others, etc. Contemporary understandings of subjectivity centred on human immersion in discursive and signifying activity provide a backdrop to Lacan's pre-internet assertion that someone might provide access to the entire network of discursive activity.

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Everyone is implicated in the discursive construction of society and everyone draws on that construction.

And thus: "Any node in which signs are concentrated, in so far as they represent something, may be taken for a someone". Yet between the "entire universe" (which we take to mean the universe of the discursive domain as defined by participation in it) and the example we have offered of a medic with a specific brief, there are many possibilities, each defined by their specific mode(s) of engagements with the discursively created world. For example, teacher educators, teachers and trainees are shaped by assessment structures or curriculum specifications or codes of conduct. Here we have some trainees describing their pupils' progress in terms of curriculum metrics and their pupil classifications:

> They're expected to get Point 9 by the end of Key Stage One. We have kids who are on Point 2 or 1. They're not going to get to a Point 9 and if we have two or three children on Point 9 at the end of the year then that's average. ... We have interventions … in place for the highers and the middles and the lowers.

> Year 6 is all about getting them to be Level 5 or 6 or whatever, so at primary school they never do what they need to be doing – play around with it and get the concepts.

In turn, they each described their own practice in the terms and categories of university assessment. That is, in some of our group interviews trainees understood themselves through the new market oriented metrics where they aimed to deliver a good value quality product (e.g. "you shop - we drop"). The trainees understood themselves in relation to the metric particular to the discourse that is productive of a specific field of meaning as regards how subject knowledge is understood. As one trainee plaintively put it: "I do hope that I am more than a product". Such findings are in line with broader concerns relating to the commodification of education more generally, both in terms of social relationships to ourselves and others and to knowledge itself (Ball, 2004). "Knowledge, then, is placed in the center, in the dock,

by psychoanalytic experience" (Lacan, 2007, p. 30). It's very relationship with Truth is brought into question, or renewed (Lacan, 2008).

5. The overly social sciences

One university teacher educator's interview included a discussion of how curriculum subjects like sociology, psychology, politics and law all get condensed under the label of "social sciences". We saw this as an example of how school subjects and teacher education in those areas had been reconfigured within new structural arrangements. The identity of the individual (human) *subjects* has been compromised, both for specialist teachers who have their expertise displaced by being obliged to teach social sciences more generally. That is, they teach one area in their specialism and a whole host of other curriculum subjects where they are not expert. Another teacher educator describes a similar situation:

> Where we used to have separate strands in history, geography, citizenship, social science, we're now teaching combined humanities for history, geography, citizenship. And next year that will include social science as well because of staffing changes and the numbers.

The subject knowledge itself and the people teaching it are condensed such that both teacher educator and subject knowledge are changed, as is the relationship between them. A key theme of Lacan's work is that one only ever confronts part of a person, and that includes the fact that one is only ever confronting part of oneself, since the whole of oneself is never fully visible to oneself. Of course, there was never a case of wholesome people representing wholesome subject knowledge. We have different parts of differently defined people interfacing with different parts of differently defined subject knowledge areas, but in a persistently changing arena. For one teacher educator of the Social Sciences, describing herself as a Sociologist whose first job was 75% Psychology, there is a need to adjust her understanding of the demands being placed on her and that involved a shift in her identification with the

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professional parameters she faces. Key is the way in which she understands her task of presenting the subject knowledge within the redefined frames; how the subject knowledge is shrunk to fit the new space:

> So I think with subject knowledge [in Social Science], it's time served. I don't think it's such an important issue at this stage in the game [one-year initial teacher education course], because I think it takes three or four years to build that subject knowledge, doesn't it?

In this scenario, the teacher educator has adjusted university-based provision around "subject knowledge" to the needs of the market during the one-year initial teacher education core PGCE course by addressing directly trainee teachers' needs in relation the curriculum matter they will be teaching. She describes her response to the first school-based training period thus:

> [In] the first few weeks at university and then the block A period [first school base], they are settling into what they're teaching and we don't really do anything subject knowledge specific, yeah. We will support them individually, so if they are teaching a module that they've never come across before in Psychology or Sociology or Politics, we will spend time one to one with them.

Ahead of the second session of school-based training, the course attends to some significant, generic areas of curriculum content and practice encountered by the Social Sciences as a group of curriculum subjects:

> [In the] January period we deal with the subject areas, so all trainees will receive assessment. How to assess Sociology, Psychology, Health and Social Care and Politics, and then, because their placements are a mixture of the main subject area

and PSHE/ Citizenship, we then look at the Citizenship curriculum and the new
PSHE curriculum.

However, despite the obvious best efforts of the teacher educator to adjust practice, the defining purpose of the university as a purveyor of "subject knowledge" in this context of Social Science is of a particular type. Her needs are managed one to one and relationships are key to identifying and addressing them.

The latest development of more market driven teacher training as exemplified by the School Direct route has seen not just a shift of the content of teacher education from the university to the school, but a shift in ownership of the student teachers who increasingly carry the funding resource for teacher education. Through the example of Social Science, as ownership of the student teacher on School Direct transfers to the school, the business of managing the relationship with the student teacher to address her subject knowledge needs becomes ever more difficult for the university teacher educator.

> I don't feel as if we're in communication enough. …I don't seem to have that time with the SD [School Direct] trainees and when they are here they are so busy in other areas…that I only get to see snapshots of them. …[A]nd sometimes the handbook can be a bit difficult to understand, to find things, that when I do meet up with them they are like 'Oh I didn't know that. Or, 'Oh I didn't realise we had to do that'… I feel as if I'm not doing them any justice, I just feel as if they're not getting the support they should be getting from me. You know what I give my core trainees, I don't quite give my SD trainees…

That the university teacher educator should feel this loss so acutely might be dismissed as being symptomatic of a change over time. It could be argued that the trainee teacher's needs might be better serviced by a training more deliberately seeped in school practice and that the change would be to the trainee teacher's benefit. However, the university teacher educator describes the School Direct trainees' experience of using available support in school, otherwise.

So I do what I possibly can, I put in the time with them where I know that I can sit with the three of them and listen, because they have issues, like they are seeing teaching, one has one type of teaching, one has another rule on behaviour management and it's not working, they are clashing. So it's like working them through that because they don't feel as if they can approach the school about it, the mentors in the school.

6. Diminishing artistic license

The Art education unit of one university department used to comprise four full time members of staff but after successive rearrangements Nisha now finds herself as the only remaining member of staff and is only able to devote half of her working life to specifically art-based work. Whereas a trainee may have previously encountered the views of four people, it is now just one. But also the trainees passing through her door have become very few in number and thus in a market-driven, student as consumer model, recruiting staff when older staff have retired cannot be justified on cost grounds. For instance, in the nineteen years that Nisha has worked as an Art teacher educator, the allocation number of trainees has dropped from eighty-four to twenty-one places per year. Having said this, Nisha recognises that her institution is still one of the largest providers of newly qualified art and design teachers in the country, an indication, for her, of 'Gove's master plan in terms of Art education or where we are at the moment in terms of classification.' In this sense, structural arrangements are highlighting underlying value positions and which curriculum subjects are given space within new arrangements and which are being squeezed out.

Nisha also spoke of her concerns about how the shift towards a more practice-orientated, School Direct model was having an effect on trainees' breadth of exposure to subject knowledge. Due to the decreasing status of Art as a curriculum subject and in turn the number of Art qualified teachers, the size of Art departments in schools has also been decreasing. Thus, in a model whereby trainees spend the majority of their time in school, they may only be exposed to the practice of one other teacher in each of their two practice placements. In contrast, trainee teachers on the more

traditional PGCE programme, who spend a greater amount of time in subject pedagogy sessions delivered by the university, are "part of an artist community…so they're sharing experiences and skills and techniques." As Nisha further explains, Art graduates "come with a specialism, they've studied to degree level in cyber graphics or textiles" but they are required to "deliver a broad and balanced national curriculum". Being part of an artistic community and learning about the subject pedagogy of art, Nisha suggests, becomes crucial in allaying trainees' common anxieties about their breadth of subject knowledge and equipping them with the necessary skills for employment.

The dissemination of Art has become a very restrictive affair - a small part of Art being disseminated by a small number of people in a small amount of space where the teacher educator's own practice is highly constrained to a very specific externally defined role (Atkinson, 2004, 2011). External definitions of Art such as the national curriculum were also found to have significant effect to how the boundaries of the subject are being designated. For example, Nisha explained how despite recent government changes whereby schools could opt to "disapply" the national curriculum, many were still working to such frameworks and thus she was continuing to train trainee teachers to understand previous specifications. From the school's point of view, working to a previously conceived standardised framework was safest, "because they would be so worried about Ofsted [the UK government's education regulator] that they'd be working with what they knew." Thus, Nisha was forced to operate to a rather confusing, hybrid model, which oscillated between the previous framework, which "highlights creativity and risk taking as well as other areas that are fundamental to Art education and cultural understanding", and the revised national curriculum, which is "one page I think" and "very concise" on "what is meant by some of the issues and learning experiences that are very important to our subject." Surprisingly therefore, the shorter, less specified new framework was more restricting in Nisha's eyes, precisely because it ran the risk of ignoring fundamental pedagogical concepts specific to Art. (See for example, Adams, 2010; 2013) As she explained: "I'm very worried we're going to lose creativity and risk taking." However, she

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buoyantly argued: "We won't if I've got anything to do with it"; currently she was able to introduce trainee teachers to both versions.

Other external requirements were also found to be compromising the extent to which Art in schools could cater for a wide variety of individuals' interests. Thus, in this sense, the reduced breadth of the subject was having an impact upon trainee take-up and access to developing pedagogical skills associated with Art. For example, the introduction of the European Baccalaureate in some schools means that 'higher ability' students are pushed down this particular academic route, whereas 'lower ability' students are encouraged to take lower status subjects such as Art. However, changes to how schools are credited per subject for examination results is changing how students were previously encouraged to study for more than one arts-based subject "to get the A to C's up", but incidentally was "also right for the students, people very good at art". Nisha pointed out that many Art teachers are women, meaning that particular feminist curricula seemed to be favoured and have an impact upon the amount of girls who opt to study the subject in schools. Interestingly, Nisha observes that boys are increasingly moving to a preference of photography-based Art, but the extent to which they are catered for, varies.

Nisha expressed that one of her strongly held principles as an Art teacher educator was "working with the individual", "but alongside that we've got league tables". For Nisha, these external, standardised efforts of comparing schools were narrowing practice, since many Art departments were now characterised by a "house style", which was enabling them to achieve the necessary outcomes. Thus, teachers become predisposed to encouraging students to produce a particular type of Art, which is valued within this framework. For her, part of her job as a teacher educator is to "tease this out" by encouraging trainee teachers to draw from a "broad and balanced curriculum" and "enable their student's to meet the assessment objectives at a high level, the highest level without having a prescriptive approach from a teacher." Although she recognises it is "difficult", she argues that it is possible to "enable children to find their creative space and succeed once they find that creative space". However, this space is still conceived in Ofsted's terms, defined by Nisha as "that

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domain where they can make rapid progress", but "always from an individual perspective".

It may be that Art has freedom but the space of operation is very limited by structural factors. Nisha utilises a very specific part of her experience to meet the restrictive demands of her professional calling. Subject knowledge becomes a function of the space that is allowed, where progress is understood in limited ways. Nisha becomes a function of the space that she is allowed to be as an Art teacher educator that produces specific conceptions of subject knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge. Nisha identifies with a more expansive understanding of Art, but the demands on her practice insist that she use only part of herself, part of her subject and part of the trainees' potential. She is forced into an administrative attitude even though she does not believe in it - merely materialising it in her compliance. For example, to Ofsted inspectorate requirements teachers are required to assess artwork in terms of student progress:

> It's progress, constant progress. So what does progress look like in Art? I know what progress looks like, working with learning objects, yes. But actually that's going to be very different to what's happening in a Maths lesson, you know, maybe we can show more rapid progress. In Art, you know, sometimes it may be three or four lessons before we show significant … How do we assess risk taking? That might be a risk-taking lesson and then we assess the progress in two lessons done. This is my biggest anxiety is where we're going in assessment.

7. The out-sourcing of pedagogical subject knowledge

A final case study depicts a university School Direct programme that claims a relatively slight contribution to the trainee's acquisition of pedagogical subject knowledge (Shulman, 1986). An interviewee responsible for managing 100+ secondary trainees reported on how subject knowledge had been marginalised in favour of trainees being brought into alignment with existing teaching schemes from the outset of their training. Their first proper encounter with the school subject is

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achieved through immediate immersion in to the school's preferred mode of practice. There were a number of factors here. The university input to the trainee had almost exclusively been rethought in pastoral terms where the teacher educator was unable to articulate any examples of theory that were covered in the university setting or any examples of how the trainee's were supported by the university in moving from their undergraduate subject knowledge to their teaching of that subject in schools. It simply was not part of a professional vocabulary in the management of this particular programme. We highlight the use of market metaphors where subject knowledge is a commodity in need of relocation or exchange:

> Subject knowledge…I think *that's* always been quite difficult to tackle in a one-year course, I really do. The initial reaction is let the schools do *it*, okay, so that's your first reaction. The schools would take on *the subject knowledge* and the universities would do less. That's not proved very good, we've tried *that* … Now we've been very much struggling at the moment with trying to move *that* to the schools taking more responsibility and I think the schools have to take more responsibility for *that*.

It seemed that the university no longer had permanent staffing in some core areas to cover what remained of *that* subject knowledge input:

> We've tried to *buy in* some *expertise to cover it*…So for example for the first time ever we had an English cohort, so we ended up *buying a former teacher* out of a school and *paying her to come and do specific English subject knowledge* with those. Going forward we're going to have a greater range of subjects like all universities have and I think though *we have to work more closely with schools on them taking responsibility* of the subject knowledge.

The discourse implies that modules (signs) of subject knowledge are presented to any given trainee seeking to attain that module, by a substitutable teacher educator. The

reduced university contribution to modules of subject knowledge had not been linked explicitly to schools assuming that role except in a very substitutional fashion:

> September until January period … will be the subject pedagogy *module*, although that's got *large chunks of "generic"* now included within *it*, in another attempt to *reduce the margins* across as they say. And then the second *module* will be split between *delivery* in school, by we have no idea who, and then the university will *retain* the other half of that *module*.

8. Conclusion: Subject meets subject

The teacher educator and trainee each have an understanding of their own practice and of the subject knowledge with which they are associated. Yet this understanding of their practice is referenced to discursive parameters that encapsulate particular ideological slants on the material in question. People are processed through the metrics that are compliant with structures rather than understood as humans in a standalone sense. In certain professions the human agent has been largely removed as an immediate presence (e.g. automatic stock market trading, computerisation of industry). In others the contribution of humans has been standardised. The real of the capitalist system leads the dynamics and people fit in to its structures and the particular prevalent ideologies. With our data we have had access to the insider experience of neo-liberalism in terms of assessment orientation, reshaping of professional roles, structural rearrangements of institutions as a result of market fluctuations. The commodification associated with the economic metaphors changes connections of individuals to subject domains, where both a subject domain and an individual assume a partiality towards each other. Participants in learning encounters have often become programmed to speak, hear or see only certain words as understood within a particular register. The growth of teacher educators in universities from school backgrounds, perhaps with a different pedagogical understanding of subject knowledge, has shored up the new operationally oriented priorities in the discourse of the university. At the same time these teacher educators

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have become disconnected from the primary source of their own expertise in schools as they have become stranded in a newly defined space, whilst leaving their former school colleagues to pick up the spoils of newly located teacher education. The individual's agency is a function of the constraints that she has accepted (Butler, 1997). Yet as such, this agency can be renewed as constraints are redefined. In the approach described above, the Lacanian concepts may be seen as analytical tools that enable us to dismantle and restructure the prevalent symbolic order guiding current teacher practice and understanding, particularly our own entrapment within specific discourses and identity constructs. It allows for a reformatting of the teacher educator's sense of her identity and a potential distancing from the reductive discourses troubling subject knowledge construction.

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