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Teacher Educator changing Perceptions of Theory

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ABSTRACT: An alternative formulation of actor in educational action research is shown to refresh notions of theory within initial teacher education. Methodologically, the actor is depicted as identifying with on-going cultural adjustments through reflective data. Specifically, the paper considers the experience of mature trainee teachers in the UK, who participated in employment-based models of training. Initially, trainees were drawn to meeting the immediate demands of practice in specific locations. Capacity in practice more generally accrued through later exposure to analytical approaches. The paper documents collaborative action research by teacher educators focusing on the changing demands of their development work with the trainees. The resultant struggle of professional identity for tutors is seen as productive, adjusting educative processes to new circumstances. The actor of action research so equipped mobilises a conception of theory supportive of more responsive subjective modes within wider professional functionality.

150 words

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Introduction

Diverse educational priorities can result in teachers being pulled in many directions that can compromise the teacher's sense of professional identity. In the situation to be described teacher performance is referenced to the demands of the regulative policies and highly structured frameworks that have come to define teaching in schools in the United Kingdom (UK). In this scenario, teachers craft their understandings according to the legislative framework in which their practices have become ever more strictly articulated (e.g. TA, 2012). More significantly, teachers are being trained primarily in schools according to current educational policies rather than being educated so much in universities to engage critically with evolving demands. The individual teacher juggles between deciding for herself and being told what to decide. She shares space with others negotiating common and alternative needs where collective arrangements entail personal restraint. Nevertheless, she is not wholly susceptible to these conditions and the guidance of the experts she encounters. Teachers themselves do have some say, and would want some say, over how they conduct their own professional lives. Teachers have a voice of their own through which they express their own aspirations of what it is to be a teacher. They might be enabled to speak more firmly in voices that might be claimed as their own, to conceptualise their practice according to the circumstances they face. How does such conceptualisation take place and in which ways might that conceptualisation be seen as theoretical?

Meanwhile, those charged with providing training for such individuals will develop some conception of the processes and the impact of this training. New teachers need to be prepared to become autonomous professionals, responsible for developing and delivering the curriculum in schools. Yet, trainers are obliged to engage with the policies that prescribe their own practices in training institutions, as well as the practices of trainees whilst in schools. University based trainers would wish to retain some professional integrity in mediating these very different demands, seemingly made harder through their reduced role in new employment-based models. In being responsive to changing circumstances there is a challenge for teacher educators to redefine their own professional identifications. The conceptualisation of theory is a site in which such identifications might be articulated.

Against this backdrop, this paper is centred in a concern with how university-based teacher educators understand their role in enabling trainees to engage with the more theoretical aspects of practice. There is a rapidly changing professional landscape where conceptions of teacher education are being adjusted to fit new priorities and requirements. Theory has become a moveable feast appropriated to suit new and diverse agenda. Yet, encounters with trainees are greatly influenced by these trainees' expectations derived from their own schooling and their anticipations of what their chosen career might require of them. These anticipations are sometimes processed through their positive memories of their own teachers' visible practices, where theory occupied a rather shadowy background location.

The tutors to be encountered in this paper were situated in an employment-based programme constructed according to a specific governmental initiative centred on lowering training costs, reducing higher education input and increasing the apprenticeship dimension of training. There were wider moves by the UK government to locate a much larger proportion of teacher education into schools, with school-based mentors assuming many aspects of training previously in the hands of university tutors (DfE, 2010). These changes resulted in university tutors facing a

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radical re-conception of their earlier professional roles. The more marginalised contribution to the training process, defined after the lion's share of the responsibilities had been assigned to the school-based component, resulted in a major challenge to university tutor agency and the space previously assigned to theoretical or analytical aspects of teacher education. Yet for Butler, this very positioning creates the framework for resistance. "For what is it that enables a purposive and significant reconfiguration of cultural and political relations, if not a relation that can be turned against itself, reworked and resisted" (quoted by Davies, 2006, p. 426). Accordingly, we shall show how the more marginalised role for tutors was re-crafted as a critical platform from which both tutors and trainees could inspect the stories governing their respective practices and the opportunities those stories provided for the development of analytical apparatus.

The paper commences with an initial discussion of how educational theory might be thought through empirical accounts of teacher practice. These conceptions of theory are then considered in relation to a methodological approach to action research, with special regard to how the actor is conceived as a participant in cultural adjustment. We outline the methods through which we document examples of professionals adjusting to new models of teacher education. We then present some data derived from action research enquiries conducted by university tutors. The data is centred on documenting how the tutors responded to the trainees' evolving conceptions of theory. Subsequent reflective data considers how the university tutors themselves began to reconceptualise theory consequential to the demands of the new model of training. The discussion of data is used to think about how we conceptualise the actor in educational action research against a contemporary theory of subjectivity understood as identification with new ways of being.

Thinking Theory
This paper is centrally concerned with examining how changes to teacher education models might impact on teacher educator conceptions of theory. What does the term "theory" predicate? Or, *how* does it predicate a meaning? Clearly the potential answers to these questions are dependant on the situation that we are in. Any supposed meaning of the term would need to adjust to new conditions as they arise. This paper is motivated by an attempt to account for the term empirically (cf. Holligan, 1997; Hobson, 2003; Korthagen, 2010). We are not so much supposing that there is a correct *meaning* of the term, but rather examining how the term is *used* (Wittgenstein, 1983) in certain teacher education contexts. This approach echoes Kemmis' description of *phronesis* seen as "understanding from reflection on experience". This comprises "the disposition to act wisely in uncertain practical situations", as opposed to understanding as object, "theoria", or "external truth" (2010, p. 422). The examination starts from the meanings that we ourselves bring to the term when considering our practice. The enquiry to be described here is centred in an attempt to unravel the way in which we have used the term in defining our own practices and the practices of our trainees. That is, our conceptions of theory have shaped the ways in which we talk about these practices. But inevitably, our conceptions are rooted in our personal histories that have been played out in earlier circumstances spanning many years and locations. We are obliged to situate the term in a moving landscape where our usage of the term is a function of the places we have visited, and the motivations being followed whilst there. Our own notions of theory have pasts, and stories that narrate those pasts. Yet for much of the time in those

stories, theory has not had a lead role. It has lurked in the background influencing proceedings in an oblique manner. If "push came to shove" we might be able to provide an account of how we understand theory. We could revisit our educational and professional locations to consider how our conceptions of theory evolved through successive locations. Yet this very attempt to make it explicit would make it something new, a present day working through of the supposed past, rather akin to a psychoanalytic encounter that re-crafts the past to open new futures, a future perfect "what would have been". This gesture, however, would trigger a specific "research" orientation. We are situated in a professional landscape that we are seeking to describe. This attempt at description, however, draws us away from being in a state of "action" that may be available to change the situation. Far better, perhaps, to unleash what Somekh and Zeichner (2009, p. 5) term "discursive power" through a combined action and research model: "In generating research knowledge and improving social action at the same time, action research challenges the normative values of two distinctive ways of being – that of the scholar and the activist".

Methodology: The Actor in Educational Action Research

This paper explores an alternative conception of "actor" in educational action research. The exploration is directed at developing an approach to action research in which such research is seen as active participation in wider cultural adjustments to new ways of being, in this case the move to different understandings of theory in new models of teacher education. The approach entails introducing a contemporary theory of the subject towards building an account of subjectivity in which the individual identifies with broader moves to new circumstances. These identifications produce changes in conceptions of the researched landscape and of the individual carrying out the research. This model of subjectivity differs from some conceptions of the subject in action research, such as early conceptions of action research centred on hermeneutic cycles in which the individual actor is committed to a cycle of planning, action and reflection (as discussed by Brown and Jones, 2001, and Brown, 2008). Theoretically, we are guided by the recent work of Alain Badiou (2009, 2011). In his formulation, knowledge relates to a particular state of knowing that prevails in a given set of circumstances. Yet, such knowledge has a sell by date that expires as old forms of action governed by such knowledge fail to adjust to new demands. We can however break with tradition to create something new. The imperative would be to constantly revise the narratives that guide our actions. Through living a story and becoming aware of its limitations we endeavour to change to a new story. Or rather, we endeavour to keep the story of who we are ongoing and alive, as we adjust to ever-new conditions. And in this story, the place of theory is always in turbulence. Badiou's philosophy is guided by the psychoanalytic theory of Lacan (2006). In this model, the tutors would be working to specific conceptions of themselves, derived from the symbolic environment that shapes their practices. As this environment changes in the light of new priorities and parameters, the individual's sense of herself changes, as does the way in which others read the actions of that individual, governed as they also are by new demands. Methodologically then, the research needs to account for these successive adjustments, in a terrain where the research objects (e.g. "teachers", "research", "theory") are revised in their very ontology, as are the relations between these supposed objects.

Badiou's notion of subjectivity, however, takes a radical step beyond a concern with the individual human in a therapeutic encounter. He drops any privileged link to

the individual human in favour of seeing subjectivity in terms of identification with a movement to a new state of affairs. For example, Spartacus was instrumental in an anti-slavery movement that transcended the individual human Spartacus. Spartacus' identification with the anti-slavery movement, the collective assertion of a cause, was more important in locating subjectivity than his individual humanity (Badiou, 2009, pp. 51-52). Thus subjectivity is associated with a redistribution of the psychological, where perhaps our whole concept of what it is to be human (a teacher, a student) has shifted to a new configuration, and where perhaps the individual human's operative role is rather less central than was previously supposed. Critchley (2008, p. 44) argues: "One can only speak of the subject in Badiou as a subject-in-becoming insofar as it shapes itself in relation to the demand apprehended in a situation".

Within the context of practitioner research such identifications with cultural adjustments open new analytical opportunities that transcend the restrictive parameters guiding a human seen as an autonomous subject. The close integration of subject to situation can result in an account of the subject with respect to the situation. Žižek (1998, p. 74) provides an example in which an 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. We are not attending to patient or the medic reading this chart as holistic 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 view to setting a correct dosage), according to the wider system of medical knowledge.

This echoes countless studies in educational research where there is a demand to isolate a specific dimension of wider discussion. But such questions are crucially linked to the geography of the supposed interface of subject and object. The task then, with educational action research, would be to persistently challenge the ways in which the researcher is situated and depicted within the professional location. Whitehead and McNiff (quoted by Walton, 2011, p. 571) justify action research as being one where researchers realise their "living contradictions" as their "values are denied in … practice". At the start of our project, the teacher educators were striving to uphold values, which had become submerged in a stormy and highly politicised landscape. Persistent readjustment permits a more responsive attitude to changes in the professional landscape. Insofar as theory is conceptualised as the fitting of analytical apparatus, this formulation is not hampered by overly static conceptions of the "mentor" the "trainer", the "trainee" or of the "research actor", seen here methodologically as research objects. Elsewhere, we have discussed the case of mathematics education where exam/test pressures define tight parameters for teacher actions (Smith, Hodson & Brown, under review). In that paper we argued that in the new landscape the designation "teacher" is conceptualised differently, where teacher education's erstwhile nurturing of professional agency has been tempered towards meeting the more standardised demands of tests and associated curricula meeting international criteria. That is, we do not assume the entity of an individual "human", as is the norm in many branches of psychology. Rather, in line with Lacan's psychoanalytical model we conceptualise the subject as a response to social demand, in this case, the adjustment to new models of training in which new models of theory emerge. We echo Heron's (1996, p. 1) notion of co-operative action research which "involves two or more people researching a topic through their own experience of it, using a series of cycles in which they move between this experience and reflecting together on it. Each person is co-subject in the experience phases and co-researcher in

the reflection phases". Yet the model of subjectivity that we intend disperses any easy understanding of "two or more people" where each person is seen as an individual. A more collective approach is taken centred on shared or multiple identifications with new ways of being where actions are assessed with respect to their "fidelity" (Badiou) to these adjustments and to how new conceptions of theory derive from such identifications. For example, we explore how tutor practice might be referenced to a new cultural adjustment for tutors, in which a new way of seeing their role emerges in response to the new training model having been established. This new conceptualisation of their role might be characterised through tutors and trainees working together in forging a conception of how analytical apparatus is introduced into practice to guide their emerging conception of their shared work.

This collective conception of adjustment to new circumstances is crucially different to the better known conceptions of identity and human subjectivity that fuel models of "communities of practice" derived from Lave and Wenger (e.g. Goodnough, 2010; Delamont, 2010), which, in their original articulation, do not "consider movement across multiple activity settings" (Timmons Flores, 2007, pp. 398-399) and the consequential fragmentation of identity. The very conception of apprenticeship often prominent in "community of practice" models does not sit well in the version of teacher education to be described in this present paper. In the existing conception, perhaps, on the one hand, "apprenticeship" is being promoted by a budget driven administration seeking to limit university input towards relocating the parameters of training in an enforced manner, whilst on the other, the teacher education process is seen as being directed at producing professional and intellectual autonomy. Nevertheless, Niesz (2010) has explored this difficulty in relation to Legitimate Peripheral Participation and how differences between settings might be generative of identities, practices and cultural forms in situated activity. In one articulation of activity theory, meanwhile, in which we act and are acted upon to create realities, Engestrom (2001) has suggested that an interaction across organisational settings is needed for transformative activity to take place. We shall suggest that this is also true for an individual encountering serialised organisational settings.

Method
The programme to be depicted here enabled Graduate Teacher Programme trainees in the UK to carry out most of their initial training whilst employed in schools over a one-year period. They attended university sessions for just one day each month. Two university tutors administering and teaching on the programme created their own analytical diaries over a three-year period with three successive groups documenting their own evolving perspectives of their role. They each worked with a group (one for trainees located in primary schools, the other in secondary). This documentation included regular evaluations of how the trainees represented their experience in discussion and in reflective writing. The trainees' reflective writing had been introduced as an integral and explicitly declared research-oriented dimension of the course. The tutors were seeking to present the university element as a critical platform from which trainees could consider their practice in school. The tutor evaluations of this writing considered trainee experience from the point of view of how tutor inputs could be adjusted to further challenge and develop trainee conceptions of teaching, and, in particular, analytical aspects of these conceptions. The tutor research brief was to monitor how trainees understood theory at successive stages of the programme.

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They also sought to monitor their own conceptions of theory, since the specificity of this programme obliged the tutors to rethink their roles as tutors given the evolving academic parameters of the training model. Periodic meetings were fixed with the third author to review how the tutors thought their ideas in this area were adjusting to circumstances. But also, as practitioner researchers themselves, the tutors considered the material collected from the perspective of how it functioned as data in terms of it being revelatory of trainee experience. There was a persistent ambition to improve the quality of data by finding strategies that better enabled trainees to construct their experiences in more vivid terms, both for their own benefit as trainee teachers trying to better understand this experience, but also for the benefit of their tutors' research motive centred as it was on building new conceptions of theory congruent with this training model.

Our collective story, however, has already been brought to the foreground in our earlier attempts to notice how theory presents itself in our respective work situations. We have carried out research with groups of trainees, examining how they understood theory. We documented how these understandings shifted during the period of training. As a result we developed some sense of how the term "theory" was located in the trainees' accounts of their evolving practice and we had sought to explore what theory could become. There were many alternative, and sometimes conflicting, views of what it should become. Trainee views changed markedly during the process (Hodson, Smith & Brown, 2012). Trainees had developed an ability to both generate and to identify generic analytical apparatus that transcended the specificity of singular school locations. This apparatus sometimes came to be described as "theory". Trainees articulated the processes in which they were involved, both in their school training and in university sessions, which were beginning to secure for them some professional agency. They were able to variously identify with the differing ways in which the two elements of their training contributed to this agency. Employment-based training drove the ability "to do", governed as they were by discourses of performativity. The trainees developed their understanding of the curriculum, their ability to plan, teach, evaluate, control behaviour, raise standards and to uphold the aims and values of the school. They were expected to operate in a space set by others, in which they had only rudimentary control. Indeed, they spoke enthusiastically of "becoming a real teacher" when they felt many of these constraints would be removed. They were aware that the school environment presented little opportunity for them to question experienced professionals or to extend their own reflection. And in this recognition of these actual constraints they *conceptualised* a space beyond where they might be able to *act* differently. In contrast, university-based sessions challenged them "to think", to understand the reasoning behind their actions. The actual outcome in terms of how theory was understood, however, was not clearly determined. There were also battles between university tutors and schools mentors, for the hearts and minds of the trainees, and for the government funds assigned to teacher education. The tutor research thus came to be centred on some key questions. How do resultant conceptions of theory and practice variously link to tutor ambitions relating to building analytical capability, and to governmental ambitions to relocate teacher education into schools? How do these resultant conceptions define a place for tutor professionalism, centred in the building of theoretically informed action?

This paper provides an account of tutor reflective data created at different points during an academic year. The account comprises reflection on their own activity as tutors facilitating trainee learning, but also reflection on the research process and the efficacy of data successively produced in response to their provocation (cf. Quicke,

2010). Data is used to consider how structural parameters derived from governmental priorities and the demands of school experience define the respective roles of trainees and their tutors. Tutors began the process of opening up their own teaching to exploration, whilst engaging trainees in the research process, with some trepidation. They began to embrace the sometimes discomforting notion that "we have to reflect and write about what we do so that we can improve" (Jove, 2011, p. 275). Writing journal entries provided the tutors with "a catalyst for ongoing reflective thought" (Attard, 2012, p.161) ensuring that through the enforced act of writing, they propelled themselves through the pain barrier of confronting their own uncertainty. Ultimately, as we shall see, some adjustments to practice began to take place.

Tutor Data
Data was of two specific kinds: tutors' conceptions of the interaction of the research process with their teaching; tutors' developing conception of theory in teacher education programmes.

Tutor Conceptions of their Teaching and Research Task
Data was drawn from tutor journals, and discussion between the two tutors during and at the end of the research and teaching process. The tutors set up an action research cycle, centred on successive teaching sessions followed by journal writing and tutor discussions. This process sought to capture the evolving understanding of the part played by the university in the training of this group of trainees. At the outset of the programme, the trainees were required, as a part of their assessed reflective work, to describe the type of teacher they wished to be, and to outline the role they felt both the school and the university might have in supporting this development. The trainees were asked to submit this electronically for ease of circulation to other trainees towards sharing perspectives.

Tutor response to these initial trainee reflections was mixed, but largely disappointed since the trainees tended to mirror prompted study questions of the teachers they might be and how they would become a teacher. One tutor's journal records:

> The first of these [unsurprising features] is the large number of trainees who note the inspiration of one or more of their own teachers in shaping their desire to teach… High frequency is given to a desire to teach, not simply for the love of subject or that teaching is a 'right thing to do', but significantly perhaps due to the reciprocity it can offer. This is shown in comments concerned with a need for 'mutual respect' and in gaining fulfilment in 'putting something back'… a sense of how the [training] will help them realise their sense of being a teacher, … appears mostly to be located in school through the 'hands on' approach, supported by mentors, sometimes the university and driven by themselves as individuals. … for these trainees, learning through practice to improve practice is key.

Having received the trainees' contributions, subsequent discussion by tutors led to the collation of a collective response to be used for feedback to guide the ensuing whole group discussion. The tutors gleaned little additional information of value from the trainees as a result of doing so, but began to recognise fissures that were potentially (and productively) disruptive of earlier rationales:

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They are not surprised by the models of teachers and teaching reflected back to them…they mirror their original expectations of this programme. … One says she is 'reassured', others nod – why so? Quite a few are eager to step in. Another comes back, 'it's a chance to have [thoughts] made explicit…having space to talk about things really helps…we rarely get this [kind of] feedback.'

Buoyed by the expressed eagerness of some to discuss their training explicitly, the second data collection session took place during a university-based session. With prepared questions, tutors highlighted the issues about how trainees learn that they wanted to pursue through discussion and writing. However, a review of the record was again disappointing. Tutors found that asking the same question, albeit in a different way, served only to elicit the same type of response: typically that ideas gleaned from the session were seen as confirming or legitimating trainees' existing practice, rather than transforming it.

It became increasingly clear that if tutors were to move the discussion beyond trainees' mere acceptance of existing practice, they would need to be more selective in how they developed discussion (cf. McMahon, 2010). Tutors needed to become better able to respond to discussion in the moment, to be clearer about their own thoughts. To challenge and extend the thinking of the trainees, they would need to investigate their own part in this employment-based route. The tutors' research journals illustrated the feelings of frustration:

We [pose] new sets of questions: one about what they tried out…and the other about how they now see the relationship between central sessions and their developing practice in school. Most trainees … articulate the[ir] success in terms of pupil learning and further implications for what they would do next… it's almost sickeningly positive! Are they simply trying to please…where does this willingness not to challenge the sessions or give full voice to practice situations where what we deal with centrally does not work, come from?

This process of delving into the trainees' ideas was proving more difficult than had been imagined. In turn, these feelings emphasised the unasked for position they found themselves in. The tutors were no longer the purveyors of knowledge preparing and arming trainee teachers for a sortie into the unknown territory of school experience. Given the very small amount of time at the tutors' disposal, they knew they were finding ways of making a new and different contribution to training, squeezed as they were between the school representatives, colleagues working on traditional training routes within the university, and the government's standards led agenda.

Better data collection skills were needed to support the research inquiry in which they were now involved. Self-reflective data collection was reaffirmed as an integral part of the teaching:

I was amazed by the extent to which they were prepared to engage in the discussion about their learning to date. At this point they were clearly feeling very positive about their [training in the university setting], and comments seemed to reinforce the expectations fuelled by our original piece of research. I found myself writing up the findings at the earliest opportunity to retain as much detail…and eager to share them [with colleagues and trainees] as soon as possible.

Following this newfound enthusiasm the tutor was keen to explore trainee learning further. She asked the group to expand on their earlier statement: "working in groups helps you to figure things out for yourselves" in the hope that they would more fully articulate their understanding of the way in which attendance at university sessions was contributing to their ability to reflect on their own learning. The trainees' responses covered a range of insights about how they saw the learning process: "thinking in a low pressure environment"; "discussion helps me to understand"; "teaching oneself leads to ownership". For these trainees, the opportunity for guided discussion focused on their practical experience was allowing them to begin, with support from the group, to develop their thinking, to generalise, to theorize, and to take responsibility for this theorising.

Tutor Conceptions of 'Theory'
Tutors themselves conceptualised theory in response to the trainees' evolving ideas. This examination was focused on contemporaneous entries from a research journal kept by each of the two tutors involved in the study. Extracts from these are included in this section, together with reflective commentaries designed to contextualise statements made at the time. Tutors' initial conceptions about theory and its place in initial teacher education (ITE) were far removed from trainee angst about surviving from one practice situation to the next:

> I think my appointment to an ITE position some 15 years hence was largely made on the basis of recent and relevant skill as a practising teacher … My practice in ITE has…always started from the basis of the practice of teaching in school, as this is where the needs and interests of ITE trainees on longer university programmes have been focused.

Reductions in university time and an ideological preference abandoning study of educational theory *per se* have meant that the tutors' conceptions of theory were probably more in the background or restricted to their own past personal study at masters level. The tutors felt, nevertheless, that on a base of skill as a schoolteacher and one of knowledge about teaching, they had something to *offer* the trainee teachers. As their understanding of teacher development expanded on more traditional ITE and Continuing Professional Development programmes, their offer was not always seen as relevant by trainees as a result of "distance between practice and university experience on longer routes, or the perceived conceptual distance between subject-based and more general ideas". Added to this, tutors assumed that a university education provided a critical supplement:

> It's a practice of initial teacher education, which I have learned, and into which I have become encultured; additionality provided by the university has, for me, existed in raising general professional issues from the particular in ways designed to question both.

Tutors applied this commitment to questioning practice to their more recent work on the employment-based route. They had written about trainees' conceptions of theory in ITE, as demonstrated in interviews conducted with trainees at the end of their training programme (Smith and Hodson, 2010). However, the process of engaging in practical theorising espoused for trainees there was underexplored and had not been sufficiently grounded in their progressive interactions with the trainees. Also, where a

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university element is much reduced, tutors had talked increasingly about occupying a middle space between university and school, where trainees' conceptions of observed and tried practice in schools were dominant and compared with more general notions drawn from other sources, including published reading. The particular question concerning positioning between university and school was much in focus at the start of the new and more progressive research process engaged in for this paper:

> I've become more aware of difference in how we as ITE tutors have written 'about' the development of trainees' theory rather than engaged personally and professionally as tutors in the process of practical theorising espoused for trainees within it. Could this have something to do with our feeling of being in the middle?

At the start of the new research process, "theory" for the tutors had been synonymous with being in the middle. They felt that they were neither "sufficiently" abstract in their use of theory, nor "sufficiently" grounded in practice. The search for a new conception of theory was "on", but tutors wondered what this new version of "theory" would look like, assuming it existed, and how it might begin to appear.

Two themes emerged from the tutors sharing reflections about trainee understandings of theory in ITE at the start of the research process with the third author who was seeking to highlight a research perspective on how tutors and trainees progressively identified with changing demands.

One theme centred on a realisation that as trainees floundered for answers as to why they were at the university, they entertained ideal types of teaching and training as reference points. They engaged enthusiastically with partial models offered to them by the university tutors. For example, reflective practice was picked up as being crucial to their development. The trainees' learning appeared, perhaps inevitably, to be connected to their most recent learning situations. Tutors implicated in those situations were ascribed significant relational roles in the trainees' learning process. The weight of expectation felt by the two tutors created some interesting juxtapositions and dilemmas for them as they performed a dual role as a teacher and a researcher who "struggled with the volume" of data being generated that could not be captured. For example, space was needed for work on an assignment explicitly addressing the trainees' professional development. This activity, however, restricted space for revisiting the process of discussing their thinking about the same development. The tutor felt that the discussion initially conceptualised as serving both tutor research and trainee reflective agenda was for her benefit, as research data, and not for the trainees' learning. The motivation to do a good job, based on adherence to an existing ideal of being a teacher educator won through on this occasion.

A second early theme related to the tutor's nervousness about integrating research strategies into the teaching process. The tutors needed to probe the trainees' accounts of their thinking, which demanded the tutors' ability to absorb responses, analyze the ideas being proffered, and quickly make a response that probed further. One tutor had this to say:

> I really enjoy listening to the feedback the trainees provide. I'm stimulated by the discussion with [colleagues], but at the same time feel inadequate for the task. The process of data collection, with our aim of 'peeling back the layers', feels challenging. An awareness of the need to collect…rich data feels like a major responsibility. Discussions are transient. Not only do they need to be

captured, they also need to be facilitated and extended. Feeling unsure of where I need to steer their responses leaves me with a need to respond effectively in the moment…my own grasp of the responses I'm expecting and the direction to steer discussion is lacking.

Here the uncertainties of the duality felt in the new role of teacher researcher were strong. The other tutor was steeped similarly in uncertainty about her capability, placing more emphasis perhaps on the teaching and learning aspect of the role:

> I'm probably not doing enough, as yet, in the situation to help them make the shift of perspective from the model of the teacher they aspire to, to supporting them into occupying that model. I find this a bit disconcerting, as it's suggestive of an explicit lack, or discord, between what I aspire to: helping training teachers to shape their own professional view of the endeavour to improve the lot of those they teach, and it is simply not happening.

The uncertainties felt at this time were unsurprising given the change in direction of practice in which the research *as* teaching had taken the tutors. That is, the production of newness through generating productive research perspectives was not as yet understood as a viable or important aspect of training. Yet these comments signify an acceptance of a need to change and a desire to bring something else to the teaching process. They also mark a transition point in the tutors' thinking, of letting go or adapting some beliefs about what had been valuable practice. The belief had been that trainee teachers came to university sessions mainly to receive a particular offer, significantly, a view from new research, ideas or other informed evidence about educational effectiveness in schools. This notion of tutor "offer" held by tutors was now changing, or perhaps, the very relationship between giving and receiving between the tutor and the trainee teacher at university sessions was itself being called into question.

Increasingly, as the year progressed and tutors became more confident in probing trainees' thinking about practice, they were able to articulate a growing awareness of a shift in their own thinking about their purpose and value as tutors on the programme. In discussions as a research team, tutors had probed shifts in their own development in relation to the research process and teaching the trainees. The team engaged in further sharing of the reflective journals, recording and revisiting the discussion over time, and using colleagues as a critical sounding board. But more importantly, the tutors had gained confidence with the trainees themselves as a sounding board for exploring critical themes:

> How do I articulate making myself better? Probably in looking more closely into what I'm about and how I intend to get there through furthering trainees' professional thinking and practice…seeing it happen, hearing them articulate the process they are going through for themselves… or is this part of a new ideal I've set for myself as a result of engaging in this collaborative research process - does it matter if it is? What matters is that I attach value to seeing it in this way.

The outcome of such probing helped them to clarify their own role as university teacher educators, encouraging the trainees to examine and re-examine their practice in context and across schools and in relation to the way they were learning in the

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university sessions. Key to the new conception of role was a more explicit awareness of what was important in getting the trainee teachers to think about their practice in school:

> All this has made me realise that for me, working on this programme is about seeing the trainees question things. More than anything I want them to begin to be more sceptical about the 'truth' that they encounter in school. Most importantly, I want them to question the processes and procedures that the government imposes on us all. I want them to see learners at the heart of their professional practice and to continually refine and develop in ways that ensures those learners do learn.

Tutors also increasingly saw trainees as a resource with first hand knowledge of how things were in schools since the trainees had now moved on from the "common sense" of their own schooling. The tutor task was centred in working with groups of trainees in making sense of the varying situations that they faced and seeing commonalities across those situations, now that the tutors had moved on from the "common sense" of earlier models of teacher education. Old forms of action governed by such versions of common sense had failed to adjust to new demands. Tutors were now working to new conceptions of who they were, derived from a new symbolic environment shaping the practices of tutors, trainees, schools and mentors, as part of a collective movement to a new state of affairs. Here trainees were not apprentices. Rather they were partners in re-formulating a collective response to new circumstances. Tutors and trainees, at the conclusion of this study, came to place an emphasis on theory *as* a learning process, as part of theory in use.

To make most opportunity for scrutiny of practice, tutors have recognised the greater emphasis, which must be given to the relevance of trainees' experience in school in their learning and both the tutors' and trainees' agency in giving meaning and validity to the analytical process. The researching tutors feel less in the middle and value their place in ITE more strongly from when they embarked on the research as teaching process. The obvious development in the thinking of trainees involved in the study, and the articulation of that thinking, fostered for them the feeling of succeeding in their new roles. This development is discussed in an earlier paper (Hodson, et al., 2012). The nature of the tutor offer has also changed to one that is more enabling of trainee development.

What has also become clear to the tutors from the discussions with their trainees is that time for this examination and the skill required to do it with good effect is not currently provided during the school element of training. This does not mean that it ought not to be provided in school, but meeting this need would demand a shift in resource, bringing the university to school. Managerial relationships between school staff and their employment-based trainees and the trainees' self perceived role as professional 'doers' rather than 'learners', also makes doing the new ITE theory in school, prohibitive. Value attached to the university element of ITE is wanting in that it is perhaps still conceptualised by government with reference to traditional undergraduate models of large presentational lectures and an expectation of doing aspects of training for schools (e.g. TDA, 2009). As one tutor put it:

> For this reason, the university has to offer more than models of practice and research findings. To educate those learning to teach, it needs to provide space and a framework for processes of learning to examine practice and consequent

regeneration of ideas for future practice possibilities; it should implement such processes and, thereby, develop an altogether different view of its own utility.

Data as Evidence of Specific Ideological Immersions
Data derived from trainee and tutor reflections within an action research model were a function of the programme parameters relating to specific ideological conceptions of the training process. The data provided methodological constructions of trainers, mentors, trainees, and of the landscape they inhabited. Tutor reflections, for example, demonstrated an adjustment to their understanding of what it is to be a "tutor" given the reduced profile of the university component of training, with a consequential change in the demand as to how "theory" is shaped. This data pinpointed the tutors' new status and perceptions of how it impacted on their professional agency now read against a differently described professional or ideological landscape. Some assessment has been offered of the tutor's mode of participation both in terms of its support of and resistance to the model of training as the cultural adjustment to new training arrangements is worked through. For example, tutors needed to shift their role from teaching theory to participating in a shared task of theory generation, which required a two hats challenge of combining the production and analysis of reflective data. By conceptualising the university component as a critical platform for assessing school based practice it was possible to be distanced from immersion in the policy level demands that dominate school life. The use of data simultaneously enhanced knowledge through action to bring new conceptualisations from those originally held. This current paper has sought to explore how teacher educators might build or recapture a critical dimension to their practice whilst acknowledging that this transition requires the development of new capabilities that do not come instantly. Also, in early sessions trainees were still locked in to naïve conceptions of theory that resisted tutor attempts to reconceptualise university input during the eight or so scattered days available to them.

Both trainees and tutors have been depicted as working to a model that seemingly constrains their actions and their agency. For the tutors the initial constraint was expressed in terms of their not being able to pursue practices more familiar in their background in university-led teacher education. Yet the change in arrangements released the tutors from front line involvement in the trainees acquiring practical skills of teaching. Later, their intervention came to be expressed in terms of enabling trainees to exercise critical capability in ways that transcended the specificity of the particular school locations in which the trainees were employed. The challenge was not so much about "what works in this school" as "what works in schools more generally". (See Hodson, et al., 2012). Read in this way the change of ideological arrangements is not so much domination preventing preferred action, but rather a reconfiguration of the space for action, a newly defined subjective space. In this reconfiguration tutors re-think the place and function of theory within their "offer" to the trainees. The tutor conceptualisations of themselves *as* tutors were being re-shaped to new circumstances in which their work acquired a newly located intellectual dimension. We have sought to document some of the struggles associated with this change of conceptualisation. Rather than theory being something that was introduced or explored as an existing domain, it was now something where its evolution was built *in* to the interactive exchanges with trainees. It was complicit in the move away from restrictive rationalisations that set practices in specific schools, and set "theories" governed by a specific form of "knowledge" that had earlier guided

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university practices. For example, in our own university setting in the past, extensive discussions within university classrooms had centred on trainees building a conception of the teacher that they wanted to be, later developed in school but with extensive university tutor support. In the new arrangements the focus of university study came to be about building generic analytical capability across multiple situations of practice from the outset, where most learning was in the hands of the students and their school based mentors. It was about becoming an intellectually engaged teacher building a relationship between university sessions and their developing practice in school. In this process, reflective practice was not mere reflection, but rather a creative reflexive process that defined the parameters of practice, and the human actor implicated in that practice, in new ways. It renewed professional identifications. Collaborative, reflexive, practitioner-oriented action research was key in enacting this reconfiguration, enhancing teacher educator understandings of their practice and in making clear to teacher educators that they must act to reclaim their intellectual space in the field of ITE through asserting a new definition of their role.

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