

**Series: Further Education Teacher Educators**

**Article 3: Audit Trail of an FE Teacher Educator's Professional Journey**

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***Introduction***

This final article in the series focuses on a case study of a teacher educator – TE26 - in an FE college. The aim is to illustrate the professional journey and identity following articles 1 and 2. The reason of the case study is to offer an ‘audit trail’ way of detailing the individual participant’s perspectives in addition to the conventional approach of using analysed empirical data of survey, interviews, Talking Heads and supporting documents.

TE26 is a male educator. He represents 9 or 30 per cent of the male gender in this sample. He is in the age group of 50 plus and is part of the 70 per cent of participants in this age group. His country of birth is the United Kingdom (part of 81 per cent of the participants), and English is his first language (part of the 88 per cent) and Swedish is his second language. He has a first degree in Education and second degree in Educational Management. He is a Teacher and Trainer Training Coordinator at a FE college in southern England and has been in this role for 15 years. His current roles involve marketing, recruiting, planning, delivering, assessing, coordinating internal and external verifying, internal and external moderating, and liaising with the awarding body. His past jobs were all education-related or connected with learning. Some of these were as trainer and manager developer, quality assurance and staff development manager, lecturer in General and Communication Studies, teacher of English as a Foreign Language, and secondary school teacher (Loo, 2020). The above introduction is relevant as the details provide contextual insights of the participant.

***Professional journey***

TE26 describes his journey into the teaching profession as:

Teaching seemed to be a good career and a safe option. It was also well paid, and my parents were positive about it, which helped. I thought my values were about fair treatment and the desire to share, and that I had lots of experience that I could pass on.

He made a conscious decision to teach and with the support of his parents. He also, even then, had a clear vision of what a teacher should be. This intentional activity (main category) coupled with the ‘external intervention’ (sub-category) of “the Vice Principal wanted [him] to be to get involved in staff development” encapsulated his journey-making into the community of teacher educators. These delineations offer a more in-depth insight into becoming a teacher educator unlike the other findings by Noel (2006) and Mayer et al. (2011), where the former remarked, “the questionnaire survey did not include questions relating to the route taken into teacher education” (Noel, 2006, p. 161).

### ***Professional identity***

Like 73 per cent of the sampled participants, TE26 felt that he was ‘most definitely’ a professional. Concerning the four themes of identified in Article 2: being a professional; attributes, characteristics and education; emotional connection; and contextual issues, he has these to say. With ‘being a professional, he viewed himself as “role model to his trainees” and as part of the community of educators. With the second theme, he had “something to offer” and that “teaching seemed to be a good career and a safe option”. He also iterated in the survey that this project “has made me express my thinking about the role which I perform. In particular, it has prompted me to try and express the underlying professional philosophy about what I am actually trying to do”. TE26 was making explicit his tacit approach to being an educator prompted by this project. With his emotional connection, he expressed them as:

I thought that as an individual having those feelings as a pupil and becoming a teacher and understanding that learners were having those kinds of emotions as I was having, and maybe I can make a difference.

Concerning the contextual tensions of the regulative imperatives and learning requirements of his trainees, TE26 commented:

Am I aware what is available, do I have the management power to implement its procurement and then do I apply it in a way which will promote learning rather than obfuscate real cognitive change in favour of tokenism?

TE26 also lamented the existence of the non-mandatory teaching qualification requirement, the rather sketchy professional standards (by the Lifelong Learning UK), and the ever-changing FE landscape. Despite all of these tensions, he holds fast to his vision, sense of professionalism, and emotional connection to his trainee teachers.

### ***Summary***

Previously, Articles 1 and 2 focused on journey-making and identities of teacher educators. To end, the descriptions in this final article offer a close insight into a teacher educator in an FE college. Taking these articles together, there are lessons and implications for valuing the complexities of these under-researched educationists by managers and policymakers.

### ***References***

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### ***Short bio***

Sai Loo (PhD, MA, BSc, FHEA, ACA, FETC) has taught in FE and worked in industry as a Chartered Accountant. Sai has published over 120 articles, conference

papers and keynotes (84 per cent are single-authored) including six research monographs with Routledge. His research area is ‘occupational education’ across teaching, learning and work settings from pre-university to professional education.