

**Anticipatory and Emerging Selves in the  
'Impossible Professions': a psychoanalytic  
analysis of the development of self and identity  
within the initial development of teachers,  
nurses and police officers**

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Thesis submitted for the Research Degree of

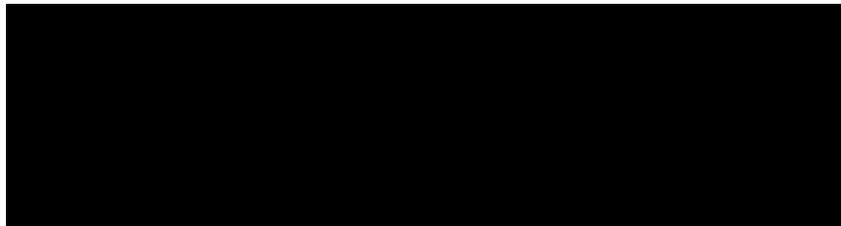
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## Declaration

I, Helen Judith Glasspoole-Bird confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.



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## Abstract

This research examines the development of self and identity during the initial stages of professional development for Freud's 'impossible professions' - translated for this study as teaching, nursing and policing. Using a psychoanalytic framework, the thesis conceptualises the first professional placement as a transitional space where unconscious conflicts and anxiety in relation to diverse aspects of students' expectations and experiences are played out. At a time of increasing emphasis on competency, performativity and measurable outcomes within the focus professions, this study explores the value of considering the complex unconscious dynamics of the individual during the process of professional education.

In the first stage of the study, 121 students from across the three professions completed a questionnaire to map feelings about their professional education and forthcoming first placement. The findings, which revealed both excitement and fear of the unknown, supported the decision to focus on management of anxiety in the development of identity during students' professional education. The second stage of the study included unstructured interviews with students before and towards the end of their first professional placement.

Using a psychoanalytical approach, analysis of transcripts from the first interview develops a conceptualisation of an idealised, future 'anticipatory-self' which offered some stability at a time of transition and change. Analysis of transcripts from the second interview develops a conceptualisation of an 'emerging-self' which identified how each student was uniquely and psychically positioned to three common concepts within professional development: professional competence; professional responsibility; and professional recognition.

The thesis constitutes an argument for the importance of acknowledging the influence of individuals' affective and unconscious dynamics during professional education programmes which could enable more supportive management of anxiety and more meaningful development of a student's sense of self.

**Keywords:** impossible professions; anxiety; idealised identities; anticipatory self; emerging self; professional development; psychoanalytic analysis

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I understand more fully now, than I did at the start of this journey, about the importance of listening to the individual's story at the heart of the process of becoming. In my case, for beginning teachers, nurses and police officers. I would like to extend my thanks to all those involved in professional education who care more about people than about results. My hope is that we can reclaim agency and enjoyment and that together, we can map out the way ahead for these professions. After all, 'where there is no vision, the people perish,' (Proverbs 29:18).

As with most journeys, this one set out from a different place at a different time to where I am now. I'd like to thank my family and all those friends who have kept in touch and have not minded when I was not as available as I used to be. Thank you to Beck, Alice, Hobbit, Katski, Claire, Lilo, WW and Jane for your ongoing encouraging words and cards. Thank you to all those who have cheered me on in different ways over the years - especially during the steeper climbs and when it all got a bit boggy underfoot.

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## Impact statement

With shortages in teaching, nursing and policing which have been attributed to high attrition rates, funding cuts and the greater demand placed on these professions, there is an imperative for professional education to be efficient and cost-effective. Neo-liberal models of Higher Education have led to competition for student numbers for these professions – all of which now require graduate level entry. But what consideration is given to the individual at the centre of this professional development?

This study focuses on the process of re-formation and change within an individual's sense of self during the early stages of professional development. It includes the influencing factors of the individual's emotional responses and unconscious dynamics. By acknowledging the significance of psychoanalytically produced knowledge, anxiety associated with becoming a professional and the defences against this anxiety can be interpreted. This might contribute to a clearer understanding of why people and organisations behave as they do and why the professions of educating, healing and governing were named by Freud as 'impossible.' An understanding of anxiety and how individuals in these professions can be better supported has the potential to enhance individual and collective mental health and wellbeing which in turn might promote the retention of those working in these professions.

My research identifies how an individual's unconscious defences against anxiety might enable or resist engagement with hands-on practice. My findings stimulate a demand to know more about the way in which individuals and organisations are able to recognise, acknowledge and work through anxiety. Greater understanding of why these professions are dominated by high levels of sick leave and high attrition rates is required. One way of researching this might be through safe, supportive and non-judgemental spaces identified in this research as transformative and therapeutic.

The potential translocation of this research to the international field of professional education is likely to have greatest impact on those countries whose models of professional development align most closely with England's technicist approaches. In countries where shortages of staff and barriers to recruitment prove problematic, the adoption of psychoanalytic perspectives to understand human interaction could be instrumental in decisions regarding allocation of funding, policy reforms and the organisation of professional structures. Although not impossible to integrate a

psychoanalytic framework into existing models of professional education, there are challenges which raise the following important questions: Are those in power willing to think about new ways of working - do professions necessarily have to be tough to be rewarding? How could changes to funding and policy proactively promote healthier and more productive ways of working across a global society?

Action for further research includes the need more personal accounts from those within and those who have left such impossible professions in order to identify any patterns of tension and difficulties illuminated at individual and organisational levels. Psychoanalytic interpretations of anxiety could lead to models of working that enable effective containment or management of anxiety. In turn, this could curb attrition rates and thus reduce the loss of expertise and knowledge in these professions. Such models also have the potential to limit the human cost of those working in impossible professions.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### **1) Stimulus for research: my dissatisfaction with teacher education models**

The stimulus for my research stemmed from an increasingly felt dissatisfaction with the primary Post Graduate Certificate for Education (PGCE) – a programme that I was a tutor on at an English university. My dissatisfaction linked to the programme's ideological migration away from my own values associated with teacher education. This was reflected in the political shift in language from teacher 'education' to 'training' and from 'students' to 'trainees' which emphasised practice-based skills and subject knowledge rather than deeper understanding of pedagogy and the application of concepts. Aligned with my values and the focus of my research, I use the language of 'education' and 'students' in this thesis, however, both I and the students involved in this research use the language of 'training' in the interviews which reflected the use of language in the university at that time. Government-set Teacher Standards for practice and conduct (DfE, 2011) were the benchmark that students needed to reach by the end of the ten-month programme. During the time in which I had been a lecturer on the PGCE programme, successive governments had set the requirements for qualification as a teacher at post-graduate level including: increased levels of subject knowledge; a minimum competence in English, Mathematics and ICT assessed through online 'skills tests' (1998); the introduction of assignments at Master's level (2005); and increased expectations to demonstrate Good or Outstanding practice (as judged by Ofsted grading). My perception was that the programme focused heavily on outcomes and 'outside-in' approaches (Dawson, 1994) where the emphasis passed onto students was on fitting into a pre-shaped, easily-measurable teacher-mould. I considered this a reductive approach which focused on what students could not yet do well enough and usually overlooked the individual's past experiences, specific skills and character - something I believed would be inherent in their version of being a teacher. Individual development within what sometimes seemed to be a 'teacher factory' which focused on outcomes contrasted starkly with 'inside-out' approaches (Dawson, 1994) which recognise the individual and how they could be supported to become a teacher.

The initial development of teachers is referred to in literature in different ways including 'teacher education,' 'teacher training,' 'teacher development' and 'teacher formation.' These reflect both different political contexts for teacher development and philosophical conceptualisations of what it means to become a teacher. Looking back, different emphases have been placed on teacher development at different times including competency-based models and those which are more personalistic in their approach (Diamond, 1991). Schepens *et al.* (2009) identify various traditions in the pedagogy of teacher education including those focused on academic and practical factors which shape the aims of teacher education programmes. Teacher knowledge, cognitive models of teacher thinking, and the role of reflection have also been identified as ways of conceptualising teacher development (Olsen, 2013). More recently, there has been a focus on understanding teacher development through the lens of teacher identity. The shift to conceptualising teacher formation as identity development has focused on the individual – that is, away from reference to 'teachers' to 'people who teach' (Beijaard, 2019). Mapped back to Erikson's work in the mid-1950s and his introduction of 'identity' as an 'reasonably neutral and interdisciplinary term' (Weigert *et al.*, 1986, p. 29), the concept of identity in academic research experienced something of an explosion in the mid-1990s (Hall, 1996). The field of identity studies has grown rapidly ever since, particularly in the social sciences (Côté, 2006). The focus on teacher development articulated as an issue of identity has endured despite changes in the political climate over the last twenty years or so. Criticism of competency-based approaches is therefore not a new debate. However, what the more recent emphasis on outcomes, data and assessment might have brought into focus is the lack of recognition and understanding about an individual's affective experience of professional development and the ways in which they make sense of their own identity. The increased importance of data and valuing only that which can be easily measured highlights the worsening effect of government reforms since the then Education Secretary, Michael Gove and his comment in the schools' White Paper 'The Importance of Teaching,' DfE (2010). This greater political involvement underpinned by neoliberal ideology that has shaped education policy and practice in recent years (Moore, 2018), has led to the 'intensification of teaching' (Braun, 2017) which emphasises teacher performance and achievement over pastoral care. My concern is that this intensification exists in initial teacher education reflected in the ways in which universities prioritise their performance and outcomes over care of their students. Transitions between university and school-based placements seem to be a particular point in professional programmes where a

focus on performance dominates an interest in students' personal development and wellbeing.

The PGCE programme I taught on was led by a university in partnership with local schools and it was during the school-based placements that students would be expected to demonstrate their competence measured by the Teacher Standards. I noticed that the university-based element of the programme before the first professional placement was marked with students' ambivalence: there was great excitement about getting into classrooms but also anxiety and apprehension about whether they would be successful in meeting the expectations on them. Engagement in a professional context was necessary to qualify but was also a time where students would be assessed, judged and graded. It was in this space that they would succeed or fail. The first professional placement seemed particularly problematic for some students, perhaps because it signified the unknown. In my research, the focus on this first transition into practice became particularly significant as it represented a threshold through which students could only pass once.

When I started this research, political changes shaping education more broadly emphasised pupil progress as a measure of a teacher's success. Students often associated their placements with teacher cynicism, burnout and high teacher attrition rates. Many of the students I worked with thought that teaching would be their long-term career path, however, statistically, that was unlikely to be the case. The current attrition rates in teaching have recently reached critical levels in England (Worth, 2018). The overall number of teachers in England has declined (of concern not least as pupil numbers continue to rise) and the rate of entry into teaching and leavers out of teaching were reported to be at the same level (DfE, 2018). Thousands of students who qualify as teachers in England each year never take up their first post in state-funded schools and of those who do, only 69% are still teaching five years later (DfE, 2017).

Given these statistics and the overall shortage of teachers, evaluation of initial teacher education and ways in which an individual develops might offer ways to understand what goes wrong. Although the partnership between the university I worked at and the hundreds of linked schools was strong, many students experienced fragmented development during the year. Despite the various processes in place to support student progress and continuity between their placements, I wanted to better understand the holistic developmental process of how an individual becomes a teacher. Working in the

partnership team, I had had experience of meeting with students when things had gone wrong on a placement, when students struggled with particular issues triggered by their experience on the programme and when they dropped out. The PGCE had become almost a feat of endurance in itself and I questioned why the process of becoming a teacher was so difficult for some students.

I explored this difficulty through a concept I had recently encountered associated with impossibility. Freud's comment on the impossibility of education was included in his references to three 'impossible professions.' In his 'Preface to Aichhorn's *Wayward Youth*' which is an application of psychoanalysis to the theory and practice of education, Freud notes that 'At an early stage I had accepted the *bon mot* which lays it down that there are three impossible professions – educating, healing and governing – and I was already fully occupied with the second of them' (1925, p.273). Then, in his late work on the potential and limitations of analysis, 'Analysis Terminable and Interminable,' Freud comments that 'It almost looks as if analysis is another of those 'impossible' professions in which one can be sure beforehand of achieving unsatisfying results. The other two, which have been known much longer, are education and government.' (1937, p.248).

Having become familiar with the process of teacher development, I was aware that my assumptions and generalisations about initial teacher education might inhibit me from recognising new insights into an individual's identity re-formation. I was also interested in the ways in which students were prepared and equipped to work in other impossible professions. I therefore broadened my research focus to explore identity development for students in other professions thus allowing me to 'make the strange familiar and the familiar strange' (a phrase attributed to thinkers in several different fields including anthropologist Miner, 1956). Loosely translated from Freud's 'impossible professions' and determined by other professional education programmes running at the university I worked at, I included student nurses (paediatrics) and police officers (a new university programme) in the focus of my research. My findings have potential application for other practice-based professions such as social work and medicine, however I keep my focus on the professions of teaching, nursing and policing in this thesis. Initiated by Freud's comment on the impossible professions of pedagogy, healing and governance (1925, p.273), I next explore meanings of the 'impossible profession' and how this relates to my research.

## **2) The impossible professions translated to teaching, nursing and policing**

This section explores various meanings of impossibility linked to teaching, nursing and policing through the perspective of psychoanalytic theory. Freud's meaning of impossibility is associated with the nature of these professions and how they are understood as a defence against anxiety at a societal level. I outline my interpretations of Freud's comments together with consideration of the implications for those who work in these impossible professions.

Psychoanalytic theory which recognises an individual's unconscious dynamics posits that the individual does not always know why they feel, think and behave in certain ways. Theoretical assumptions include the dynamic nature of the unconscious and leads to a state where internal and external meanings and associations are forever in flux. This might lead to unpredictable, disjointed or fragmented professional development that is not easily assessed within time-bound, outcomes-based frameworks. Furthermore, an individual's unconscious is shaped by others and by society and thus the individual can be understood as psychosocial: psychological and societal factors combine to influence behaviour. This understanding contrasts with the certainty and clarity assumed by outcomes-based models of professional education which provide a limited understanding of the individual's sense of self within their experience of professional development. Moore (2014) critiques the use of frameworks predicated on the certainty of data-driven outcomes such as auditing, evidencing and tracking to measure the complex process of learning. Such monitoring frameworks allow little room for uncertainty, ambiguity, doubt and human complexity. This illuminates the need for more meaningful ways to explore processes of learning in professional development. Understanding the individual must therefore look beyond the standardising effects of working to particular professional standards which can turn students into, 'self-monitoring, self-motivating persons who use audit to align themselves with...regulations,' (Dunn, 2005, p.189). Outlined in further detail in next chapter's conceptual framework and in the methodology chapter, my research positions the individual as a defended subject where psychical defences manage unconscious conflict and anxiety. These concepts from psychoanalytic thinking underpin my exploration of impossibility within the three focus professions. I raise a number of questions to think

about how impossibility might be understood at both the organisational and interpersonal level.

Relationships lie at the heart of the impossible professions - both those between colleagues and those with the families and public who come into contact with, or need the services of, teachers, nurses and police officers. The dynamic unconscious of the individual also influences, and is influenced by, the dynamic unconscious of others in unpredictable and sometimes disruptive ways. Students joining a professional team are highly visible and by their presence, they disrupt and disturb the psychic life of the group. Bibby (2011, p.38) notes that, 'there is a terrible ambivalence and tension around being seen – wanting to be recognised, valued and acknowledged but knowing that visibility can also bring misrecognition, contempt and dismissal.' This ambivalence may manifest in different ways. For new students, anxieties associated with wanting to be accepted and liked, together with a desire to belong, will shape their interactions with those they work with and work for. For example, they might imitate those who they work closely with hoping that by becoming like the other, they will be accepted by them. Or they might adopt a specific role such as being 'the helpful one' to create a dynamic in which they are needed, accepted and thus they start to belong. Simultaneously, they may be repressing how they really feel about another or a group within the organisation. Anxiety associated with giving away how they feel or acting in unacceptable ways has to be defended against if the individual wants to fit in and might lead to an element of performance and dishonesty within relationships. Perhaps the adoption of a specific role of helping someone else becomes an attempt to hide their dislike or contempt for another. Displacing such negative feelings by diverting them towards somebody such as 'the management' or something - such as the latest governmental policy - can thus enable interpersonal relationships to function well enough. Impossibility within the professions may then refer to this complexity of relationships whereby an individual is identifying with a colleague – they are both police officers and wear the same uniform – but also disassociating themselves from them as they do not want to be like 'that sort of police officer.' These variables and layers within human relationships might be impossible in that they are unbearable or intolerable.

More than being recognised as a uniform or as a competent professional, the individual might desire to be known and accepted for who they are – but what are the appropriate boundaries? What from life outside of the workplace can be shared with others? How

much is really known of the other in their professional role and context? This personal invisibility might be in tension with the very physical proximity of the work in the impossible professions. Greater emotional proximity may also develop through the nature of the work: the teacher's relationship with the children they spend all day with in the classroom; a nurse overseeing long-term treatment and intimate medical procedures; or a police officer working with an abuse victim over a number of months. The nature of the work in the impossible professions can be highly personal and through this, relationships between pupils and their teacher are likely to deepen throughout the year during which a range of emotions are shared; nurses and police officers often experience something of the pain and vulnerability of others at all times of the day or night. Within the intensity of some contexts and situations, those being helped and cared for have a freedom to express their emotions - for example, frustration, fear and aggression in response to difficult learning or managing pain or being threatened. Those working in these professions have what might be the impossible task of being human but not showing their emotions such as grief, hate, despair, guilt, disappointment, frustration or anger. Students' fears (for example, their own inadequacies) and fantasies (their idealised-self), might cause inconsistencies and unpredictability in their behaviour through which the work of the unconscious is illuminated. Defence mechanisms as part of these unconscious dynamics may enable those who work in the impossible professions to contain their anxieties - and perhaps those of others - and to function in acceptable, professional ways.

These intra-psychic relations were noted by Freud as being in parallel with those of civilisation. Through this, he explored the ways in which social defences developed. His theorisation of the pleasure principle involved the individual seeking a state of happiness and the absence of pain. However, as the individual develops in relation to others with their conflicting interests, he theorised that the reality principle reveals that this happiness cannot be obtained. Freud named three ways in which suffering continued to be experienced by society linked to suffering from the self, from the external world and in relation to others:

We are threatened with suffering from three directions: from our own body, which is doomed to decay and dissolution and which cannot even do without pain and anxiety as warning signals; from the external world, which may rage against us

with overwhelming and merciless forces of destruction; and finally from our relations to other men, (Freud,1930, p.77).

Although civilisation is the source of suffering, Freud suggested that regulations in the group evolved to protect itself from the three named threats or terrors. He refers to the community super-ego as a structure of moral standards under which cultural development can proceed. This development can be mapped to the three impossible professions whose existence was established to defend against anxiety associated with the named suffering: healing to reduce the suffering of pain brought on by our feeble, weak, mortal bodies; pedagogy to develop knowledge and explanations to understand and control the overwhelming forces of nature and the external world; and governance to control the threat of others and to master what Freud (1930, p.145) referred to as the 'disturbance to their communal life', threatened by the human instinct of aggression and self-destruction.

Freud's reference to impossibility is therefore associated with the nature of the professions themselves. Preventing forgetting, preventing death and preventing bad mutual treatment are all impossible and thus the professions of teaching, healing and governance - established to defend against these anxieties - are expected to complete impossible tasks. The professions can be understood by their perceived purpose whilst knowing that this purpose is unachievable, and that suffering will persist. This conflict leads to anxiety associated with forms of suffering. Psychoanalyst, Isabel Menzies Lyth (1960, p.440) identified what she named the 'primary task' of a hospital: 'to care for ill people who cannot be cared for in their own homes.' However, within this straightforward description, she identifies the nature of anxiety inherent in this task. Of significance to my research is the recognition of a social defence system in which situations that might evoke anxiety are covered over and thus enable the primary task to be carried out. For example: through depersonalisation of the patient - 'the pneumonia in bed 15,' (Menzies Lyth, 1960 p.444); a denial of feelings; or the establishment of ritual task performance, can eliminate the potential stress of decision-making.

Ways of doing things that are not acknowledged or talked about become the accepted ways of doing things in practice. These social defences might be able to contain anxiety for a time - but in the current climate of greater government control, or in the face of parental and public opinion expressed via social media, these defences may break down. The media's political perspectives, linked to pay cuts and understaffing, can

exacerbate public fears and anxiety of not being provided for, not being cared for and not being protected:

London primary school to become first in England to cut working week to four-and-a-half days (Grafton-Green, 2018);

Three-quarters of public worried about nurse staffing (Triggle, 2018);

Police forces are 'failing the public' due to cuts, Police Federation chief warns (Dearden, 2018).

These impossible professions which exist to defend against human suffering highlight a society which cannot meet its own needs. These professions have already failed to meet the demands on them. This emphasises Burston's (2002) suggestion that the lack of agreement about the nature and aims of a profession can exemplify this type of impossibility.

One example is the link made between mental health issues and recent knife crime in England. Professionals' responses to the increased demands, which suggested that they might play a more central role in preventing and managing knife crime, was reported in the press: 'Police officers, teachers and nurses have criticised Government proposals that could make them accountable for failing to "spot warning signs" of violent crime among young people,' (Press Association, 2019). With high vacancies in nursing and the loss of pastoral support in schools reported, Dr Mary Bousted, joint general secretary of the National Education Union said, 'Neither the blame for or the solution to violent crime can be laid at the door of schools or frontline hospital staff,' (NEU, 2019). There are two key issues underlying this kind of demand on the professions. One is associated with the individual who may be protected at an organisational level but is still deeply affected by anxiety provoked through their work. The other is the question of who will meet the needs and pain of a society if the impossible professions are not able to?

Berry (2014, p.22) conceptualises education's impossibility through its goals and purpose and suggests that, like psychoanalysis, its 'overarching objectives are inherently impossible.' If this is the case, what sort of discussions do we as a society need to be having about these professions? Is having this discussion an admission that these professions are indeed impossible and that the needs of society cannot be met? Britzman (2009) questions whether those working in the professions can live up to the high ideals and demands placed upon them. And if they cannot, she questions how they are able to live with - and even value - the impossibility linked to the uncertainty of

completion or of not knowing the other. This exemplifies the tension in what Green (2010, p.5) describes as,

...the fundamental dilemma of professional practice, enacted constantly and even unceasingly, at all levels: the impossibility of knowing enough, of having enough information on the basis of which to make the right decision, in all the urgency and drama of the moment; and yet, the necessity of doing so, of acting, of moving on – the imperative to act, and doing so, but without guarantees.

Having to act in the 'urgency' of the situation without time to think things through and without any guarantees - of doing things well, or not causing harm - can be linked to Britzman's suggestion that engagement in these professions 'takes us into the heart of our educational neuroses' (2009, p.128). She suggests that love and hate, resistance and repression are inherent in the impossible professions and questions whether these professions can tolerate such internal conflicts. This emphasises Green's reference to the 'drama' of the moment and all that is going on externally and internally within the individual as well as all that is being projected, transferred and interpreted between individuals. Roberts' (1994, p.110) reference to the 'self-assigned impossible task' outlines how an individual's needs and inner conflicts are brought to their work and how these might make them vulnerable to the shared anxieties of the organisation. She notes how an individual's own idealism and defences can shape their conscious choice to pursue a particular profession. Insight into reasons for this choice might be a way of identifying and resolving unconscious conflict that arises due to the expectations that individuals have of themselves and their work.

In the 'impossible space' (Bibby, 2011, p.21) of the professional context, many complex conscious and unconscious dynamics contribute to a profession's impossibility. Higgins (2012, p.213) acknowledges these difficulties in the professions as being 'so closely woven into the fabric of the work' and suggests that Freud's reference to impossibility should not mean that they are not attempted but that they call for something other than 'the normal can-do attitude.' But what exactly is this 'something other' that those working in the professions need? Acknowledging unconscious dynamics is a significant dimension of my research in which I consider how those entering the impossible professions might manifest and manage anxiety in order to function in their impossible work. This might be particularly demanding when the professions themselves are subject to change and scrutiny as outlined in the following section.

### **3) Teaching, nursing and policing: political influences and partnership working**

Political ambition to raise the status of teaching, nursing and policing has seen each of these professions move to the level of a graduate profession. When I started this research, graduate pathways were already a prerequisite for teaching and an optional route into nursing and policing. Under recent governments, political involvement, regulation, inspection and control has intensified. Through a brief overview of political influences on each of the professions included in my research, I outline the current context for training/professional education and highlight potential challenges and tensions during the process of identity formation.

There are some obvious differences between teaching and the other two professions such as the way that work might be structured in day and night shifts for nurses and the police, and the way that these professionals can be immediately recognised by the uniform they wear. However, an important commonality to all professions, and of relevance to my research, is the significance of the placement embedded in professional programmes. In the second section below, I discuss the ways in which this has been conceptualised as a site of professional identity formation.

#### **3.1) Teacher, nurse and police education: professions, political influence and recent changes**

An overview of politically influenced changes to teaching, nursing and policing is preceded by reference to qualifying standards and followed by a consideration of the implications of political change for initial professional education. The site of learning for students on professional programmes has particular relevance for my research.

##### ***i) Qualifying standards***

For teachers, nurses and the police, the way in which professional status is recognised and awarded is through meeting a set of standards agreed by the relevant professional body. In addition to academic work assessed by the university partnership (which may

be at undergraduate or postgraduate level depending on the route taken), all students are required to meet a set national standard although the specificity and detail varies across professions. The current list of specific Teacher Standards (DfE, 2011) includes the assessment of students' teaching skills as well as their personal and professional conduct. These competencies define the minimum level of practice expected of student teachers in order to be awarded Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). When I started my research, nurses worked towards the demonstration of competences (NMC, 2010) in order to gain registered status. The new 'standards for proficiency' introduced in 2018 include a list of topics to be taught but lack detail about content, teaching and assessment. They fail to address the recommendation of The Francis Report (Francis, 2013) for a consistent, national standard for nurse education. The College of Policing was established in 2012 'to provide those working in policing with the skills and knowledge necessary to prevent crime, protect the public, and secure public trust,' (College of Policing, 2019, para 1) through its focus on knowledge, education and standards. To some limited extent, within each field, once the qualifying standards are met, the individual has become a teacher, nurse or police officer. However, the qualification achieved through the demonstration of skills or knowledge during specific placement contexts reveals little about how the individual has constructed and internalised a sense of what being a teacher, nurse or police officer means to them and their identity.

Ongoing debates about the nature and level of knowledge and which skills are required for each profession questions where – within the HEI-professional partnership - this is best taught, modelled and developed. White and Heslop's (2012) comparative study of university educators on teacher, nurse and police officer programmes focus on how lecturers are positioned between academic and professional fields and how this influences students' experience of development.

They identify how the restructuring and changes made by Michael Gove - as a result of Neyroud's review of police leadership and training (2011) - shifted teaching and policing respectively towards the then model of nurse training in Teaching Hospitals. As the approach to professional partnerships seemed to gain some cohesion, subsequent changes have seen teacher education move increasingly towards school-based professional development through the establishment of Teaching Schools, whilst university-based learning has an increasing prominence in nursing and policing

education programmes. Relevant influences for initial education programmes are set out for each profession in the following sections.

## ***ii) Teaching***

The establishment of Teaching Schools in 2011 were set up to 'play an important role in a school-led system, working with others to provide high-quality training and support for school improvement in their local area,' (Clarke, 2017 webpage ref). Their remit includes the initial education of teachers. Furlong *et al.* (2000) evidence that although some school-centred and some employment-based routes into teaching were in the top ten of providers (Smithers and Robinson, 2011) before the 2010 Administration, the Higher Education Institution-led (HEI-led) partnerships provided higher quality professional education than school-led partnerships and employment-based routes (HMCI, 2011). HEI-led partnerships were deemed to be most cost-effective and responsible for the development of the majority of new teachers entering the profession. Although universities were to remain involved in most routes into teaching, the Coalition Government (2010-2015) orchestrated a clear shift 'to put schools rather than universities firmly in the lead' (Whitty, 2014, p.469) through the introduction of the School Direct initiative (Jackson and Burch, 2016). This programme, 'based on the skills providers are looking for in a newly qualified teacher' (DfE, 2020) places students into alliances of Teaching Schools with minimal input from the linked university responsible for validating the Master's level components of the programme. Given that the autonomy is given to schools, it is perhaps surprising that, as for the university-centred teacher education programmes which continue to run (with diminished numbers), it is the university that is responsible (and assessed by Ofsted) for the quality of the initial teacher education provided by the Teaching Schools. Although multiple routes into the teaching profession is seen to promote choice and competition, which may attract the much-needed teachers into the profession, these changes could be seen as a political strategy to further regulate and control the workforce through the Government's existing control of schools. Despite the recent creation of the Chartered College of Teaching in 2017 - as a professional body aimed to connect research and practice and to raise the status of teaching - Government views undermine the importance of academic awards such as the PGCE (DfE, 2016). Although the HE sector is located within the Department for Education, Government proposals of radical reforms include paid work-based apprenticeships that abolish the role of the university altogether. This creates hierarchy which further emphasises the shift in power and influence on the education of new

teachers from universities to schools. The role of the university in initial teacher education continues to be a contested space and directly impacts on the way in which professional knowledge, understanding and skills are valued and developed within the profession.

### **iii) Nursing**

At the start of my research, nursing also included multiple routes into the profession. Although some nurses were graduates, the then Labour Government's announcement in 2009 that from 2013, all new nurses would have to hold a degree-level qualification had the aim to 'increase skills and train a medical workforce capable of operating in a more analytical and independent manner,' (Bowcott, 2009, para 2). This marked a shift away from programmes located primarily in Teaching Hospitals which were responsible for the development of future and existing healthcare workers. Whilst Radcliffe (2009) reports the criticism by some of moving the centre of learning from hospitals to universities (as though ideas became more important than patients), recognition of a required level of knowledge was welcomed by many as a way of professionalising nursing. The Royal College of Nursing (2019) stipulates that as nursing 'requires a high level of technical competence and clinical decision-making skills,' half of the nursing degree is focused on supervised placements (in local hospital and community settings) in order to develop these. This highlights the possible tension in HEI-partnerships regarding where knowledge, practical skills and informed decision-making skills can be meaningfully developed. With claims that nurses with degrees are more likely to reduce death rates (Aiken *et al.* 2003), the Willis Commission (2012) states that, 'only a degree education can make the nurse analytical, assertive, creative, competent, confident, computer literate, decisive, reflective, embracers of change and the critical doers and consumers of research'. However, Bradshaw (2018) argues that raising the status of the profession to degree level was a distraction away from patient care and standards of nursing and that there was a lack of clarity about where various aspects of the training programme were taught. Whilst such changes might attract new cohorts who want to pursue graduate careers, there may be potential conflict with the novice-expert relationship where the majority of the existing workforce is differently qualified. This debate emphasises the question of where and how professional knowledge,

understanding and skills are developed and how an individual can integrate different components of their programme.

#### ***iv) Policing***

At the start of this research, degree routes into policing had just been introduced. The most recent change to policing relates to the way that police constables are recruited. By January 2020 the three entry routes available all require degree-level qualification reflecting an ongoing professionalisation of the workforce through greater involvement of universities. Historically, policing conceptualised learning in terms of task performance and vocational competence (White and Heslop, 2012) so university involvement in police education was ambiguous. Alex Marshall (2016, para 6), the then Chief Executive of the College of Policing (established 2012), supported the new system of university involvement claiming that, 'Policing is more complex and difficult than it used to be and police need better training and education than they have had up until now.' Whilst this ambition to professionalise the workforce might have refocused attention on what training and education was required for today's policing, Hobbs (2016), a former Metropolitan police officer criticises the changes and argues that a degree does not necessarily equip new officers with the skills required for the job and is a distraction from other issues that the College of Policing should be prioritising. Furthermore, he identifies the potential reopening of the rift within the workforce between the College tutors and experienced officers who do not hold a degree. This highlights the tensions in the ongoing debate about what learning is necessary for the development of new professionals and who is best positioned to teach this.

#### ***v) Implications for professional development***

This overview of recent changes to teacher, nurse and police education links to discourses in professional status and how occupations, vocations and professions might be conceptualised and characterised. The relevance for my research focuses less on professional status and more on where learning and professional development takes place. The participants in my research were all on courses at the same university and each included university-based and practice-based learning. Across the year, student teachers on university-centred PGCE programmes undertook three distinct blocks of practice-based placements in different age-groups in different partnership schools.

During their first year, student nurses had a set number of shifts to complete in three different placements arranged by the university. These shifts were arranged by the student to fit in with university-based sessions and therefore were not in set continuous blocks of time away from university. The student police officers included in my research were the very first cohort at the university who had chosen to enter the profession via a new degree programme. In the first year, this included university-based learning, a four-week skills development placement at a police training college and two distinct placements with qualified officers on the beat.

Unresolved questions associated with where professional learning best takes place identifies possible discontinuity and disconnection in students' experiences of professional learning. Implications for professional development include the management of relationships within HEI-partnerships and how both voices can be valued. This might become particularly problematic within the novice-expert dynamic where many students are on programmes to become more highly qualified than their experienced mentors in placement settings. These debates question how partnerships can work in ways to support students' development.

Increased political involvement in these professions takes the locus of control away from the professions and has implications for my research for two main reasons. The first is associated with increased regulation and accountability which determines professional identity through top-down technicist assessment of students against competences and outcomes. The second is concerned with where the professional learning takes place and how students make sense of their experience. How these aspects of professional development enable, support or disrupt identity formation is directly relevant for my study.

### **3.2) HEI partnerships: placements as transitions and identity development**

Common to all three professions in HEI partnership models of professional education are practice-based placements which I conceptualise as sites of identity development and re-formation of the self. An important aspect of professional development that I focus on in my research is the transition from university-based learning to professional placement settings during the programme and how this might influence an individual's sense of self. A student's dual identity as both concurrently a university student and a

'trainee-professional' was relevant to explore in relation to my focus on identity re-formation and the development of self.

Transitions between different learning spaces have the potential to lead to the fragmentation of students' development and raises questions about how students make sense of their experience. A possible tension for students is the lack of continuity between university and placement-based contexts in terms of the nature of the knowledge and experience developed in each. How this can be joined-up in ways that contribute towards a meaningful development of their identity as a teacher, nurse or police officer is in part based on relationships – both those formed by the student in each setting and the relationships within the partnership. Bromme and Tillema (1995) identify a theory-practice dilemma and the difficulties associated with novices having to apply newly acquired academic knowledge to vocational practice. They state that, 'Quite often, novices perceive a gap between the theoretical knowledge they have acquired and their actual performance in concrete settings, where the former type of knowledge seems to become increasingly irrelevant. Novices may also be confronted with the opinions of experienced practitioners, and in such situations their theoretical knowledge will not take them far,' (p.261). They argue that this tension between theoretical knowledge and application in practice may hinder professional development and render academic knowledge irrelevant. White and Heslop (2012, p.344) emphasise this tension in professional education for new recruits in nursing and policing who are often advised to 'forget everything you've been told, this is where you learn the job for real'. This raises questions about why this widely accepted problem of the theory-practice divide exists and how students make sense of the different elements of professional education programmes in an integrated and coherent way.

Learning does not take place in a vacuum and so as not to lose face with their professional mentors, to promote a sense of belonging, and to increase the likelihood of passing the placement, students might adopt an acceptable identity (possibly modelled on the placement mentor) which they are able to perform for the duration of the placement. However, this identity might have to be deconstructed and re-formed on the next placement to meet the demands of a different context or mentor. This problematises the possibility of individuals creating certain identities to meet particular temporary demands to avoid failing, rather than internalising a more meaningful identity as a teacher, nurse or police officer. Whilst competence, technicality of skills, individual ability and academic achievement might all contribute to an individual's identity as a

professional, my research explores the personal experience of how an individual's sense of self might be re-formed. This includes the acknowledgement of their inner world and how they might work through personal conflicts during their professional development. The process of learning can thus be transformational for the individual. My research opens the possibility of considering how the individual's personal past and present experience might impact on the process of becoming a teacher, nurse or police officer and the extent to which they can meet the demands made of them. The placement as a time of transition has the potential to become much more than the required 'training' weeks or the between-world of layperson and qualified professional, but a space in which the individual's possible-self begins to emerge. Perhaps if time and freedom allowed, this space could become a time when individuals could play with different versions of themselves aligned with their own motivations and desires rather than shaped by attainment, assessment against professional standards and the perceived expectations of others. This emphasises the need to avoid 'the paralysis of being hurried and harried' (Diamond, 1991, p.1) during the process of their development.

In whichever way a programme is structured, any process that provokes identity change and possible discontinuity is likely to cause some difficulties for - or within - the individual student. What is the firm foundation which offers stabilisation when everything is shifting? How can they cope with possible failure? To what extent do they feel they belong within a series of new beginnings at the start of each transition into a new placement or back to university? And how can they create an acceptable version of themselves as they progress through the programme?

My research includes the psychoanalytic idea of unconscious defences against anxiety which may be associated with the re-formation and potential unravelling of identity and self. I use this perspective to consider how, within the space of assessed placements, hanging onto something - even if a fantasy - might offer some stabilisation at a time of change and disruption.

#### **4) Research aims**

My initial research aim was to understand the influence of a professional education programme on a new student's sense of self and, within this process of 'becomingness,' to focus on their emotional development. That is, the ways in which individuals might be

transformed through the requirements and processes of professional development that extend beyond simply training to fill a specific role. Rather than focusing solely on the development of technical skills and knowledge, I wanted to explore why the process of becoming a teacher, nurse or police officer might be difficult for students and how they were able to manage any challenges associated with the demands the programme. Influenced by the language of teacher education versus teacher training, my initial research ideas included the aim of understanding whether students thought they could be trained for their chosen profession and how their sense of self was positioned in this. This exploration of students' perceptions of themselves and how this related to the meanings they associated with being a teacher, nurse or police officer led me to situate my research in a psychosocial perspective. Adopting this perspective offered tools to trace the interaction between individuals' constructions of self and their beliefs about how society constructs what it means to be a teacher, nurse or police officer. My original aims also included an understanding of the extent to which students perceived their profession as competitive or collaborative. These ideas were included in the questionnaire that participants completed towards the start of the programme, prior to their first professional placement.

My intention was to map students' progress across an academic year during which they would experience university-based learning and multiple placements in professional settings. However, following analysis of the questionnaire data which revealed students' ambivalence about the first professional placement in particular, I began to search for a method and an approach to analysis that might allow me to develop the necessary insights into what psychoanalysis calls the 'internal world.' My research evolved to include interpretations of students' affective and unconscious dynamics to understand how their identity or sense of self might be re-formed during the process of professional development. Whilst not aiming to generalise findings to all students, there was potential to understand more fully some of the difficulties that might be experienced when preparing to work in what Freud had called the 'impossible professions.' For example, noticing when students encounter challenges, when they resist or adapt to change or when they rush ahead or get stuck.

The ambivalence and anxiety that I identified in the questionnaire data led me to adopt a psychoanalytic framework to analyse the interview transcripts. This offered a way for me to interpret how individuals' unconscious dynamics might have influenced the process of becoming a teacher, nurse or police officer. Discussed in greater depth in the

methodology chapter, the iterative process of analysis and interpretation of interview transcripts led me to refine my initial aims into five specific research questions. These questions are introduced in the methodology and centre on students' conceptualisations of their future-selves, how anxiety is managed and what significance is associated with the first professional placement. Rather than follow students' development across an academic year, the temporal aspect of my research focuses on a very early transition in the programme as students move from university-based learning into professional practice for the first time.

## **5) Overview of thesis**

In the following chapter, I review literature focused on sociological and psychological influences on professional development through adoption of a psychosocial perspective. I consider the ways in which conceptualisations of what is often referred to as 'professional identity' and 'teacher identity' are meaningful and helpful ways to understand professional development. I argue that language focused on 'the self' is a more integrated way to think about the developing individual as they undergo a process of becoming. Contextualising this largely within teacher education - with some reference to other professions - I demonstrate how affective and unconscious dynamics offer insight into individuals' inner worlds which can be used in productive ways to understand identity development as re-formation of the self. I include a conceptual framework which draws from psychoanalytic theory to explain the concepts I used in my analysis to explore the development of individuals undertaking professional training. As key concepts, I identify Freud's structural model of the conscious and unconscious mind, the presence of anxiety and mechanisms to defend against this in order to maintain a coherent sense of self.

This is particularly relevant at times of change and transition such as the first professional placement which, borrowing concepts from anthropology, I situate as a liminal space and threshold experience. By linking literature on psychological defences with that on transitions, I demonstrate the value of looking at these in parallel as part of professional education programmes to provide insight into the individual's unique experience.

In Chapter 3, the methodology, I map the journey of my research to demonstrate how I used my questionnaire data to refine my research focus and subsequently, inform my approach to interviewing and data analysis. I explain how I interpreted anxiety and identified mechanisms to defend against anxiety in the interview transcripts. This included noticing contradictions, inconsistencies and specific use of language within students' narratives. Using this psychoanalytic perspective, I outline how I identified a range of themes which iteratively and eventually led to my conceptualisation of anticipatory and emerging selves associated with specific characteristics. Finally, reflecting on the dynamics of the research interview, I consider ethical issues and debates about the extent to which this space could be considered transformative.

In Chapters 4 and 5 I present my analysis of interview narratives. Analysis of transcripts from the first interview led to my conceptualisation of students' 'anticipatory-selves' articulated through prospective reflection of idealisations of possible future-selves. My analysis of narratives from the second interviews led to my conceptualisation of students' 'emerging-selves' characterised by three specific aspects common to all: professional competence, professional responsibility and professional recognition. I interpreted possible anxiety associated with times of change and identity development through each individual's psychic relationship to these aspects which included identification of specific defences to manage anxiety.

In the final chapter, I present the overarching findings from my research and contextualise my contribution to the field of professional education and development. I connect my research to questions emerging from the literature review and outline the potential impact of my work. My conclusions emphasise the value of adopting a psychoanalytic perspective to understand how anxiety is managed during the complex process of the re-formation of self during a specific time of transition. I reflect on the limitations of my study and link these to possible gaps for further research.

## **Chapter 2**

# **Conceptualisations of identity, self and transitions in the context of professional development.**

### **Introduction**

The ways in which professional development might be influenced by the interdependence of sociocultural factors and an individual's conscious and unconscious dynamics, particularly during times of transition, is the focus of this review of literature. The first part of this chapter sets out an understanding of psychosocial influences on an individual's identity which includes an account of existing conceptualisations of identity in the context of initial professional development. These conceptualisations notice the ambiguity of different, or multiple, identities and how they might more helpfully be understood as a sense of self. How the self develops within a particular professional role draws on literature highlighting the importance of personal biography and emotional dynamics. This literature raises questions that can productively be answered by a psychoanalytic perspective. In Part 2, the key ideas in psychoanalysis, focused on the development of Freud's conceptual contribution, are linked to the ways in which they have been interpreted and previously applied to professional development. The final part of the chapter maps the literature on transitions conceptualised both as a time of being between two stages and as a distinct threshold into a new space. This literature questions how the disruptive and disorienting nature of transitions might be navigated and leaves a space where a psychoanalytic perspective could offer new and productive insights.

### **Part 1) Conceptualisations of identity and self**

#### **Introduction**

Part 1 includes four themes. The first reflects on psychosocial perspectives to consider how sociological and psychological factors might influence an individual's identity formation for a specific and recognised professional role. This includes how expectations and behaviours of professional groups might be in tension with the individual's values and beliefs. The second theme explores conceptualisations of both

personal and professional identity and how these might be compartmentalised or connected. Reflecting on identity as a more holistic and integrated concept is the focus of the third theme which emphasises affective domains and the complications encountered during self re-formation which are difficult to explain. The final theme considers the temporal dimensions that influence the development of self and how past biography, present experience and future aspirations interact, conflict and combine.

### **1.1) Psychosocial perspective of identity formation: the integration of sociological and psychological factors**

The individual's own experience of becoming a teacher cannot be separated from wider social and cultural influences. This emphasises the value of locating an individual's identity development in a psychosocial perspective. First attributed to Erikson (1950), the concept of the psychosocial provides a way of understanding how the integrated influences of the individual's psychological factors and their social context might shape their identity. This dual lens enables a deeper understanding of the complex process by which an individual's identity is formed and avoids unnecessary oscillation between theoretical standpoints or disciplines. This section considers how combining both perspectives offers a productive way to understand the complexity of how a student's identity is shaped by individual, psychological factors within their social environment.

Sociological and sociocultural discourses focusing on professional identities demonstrate how factors such as global and national policy, cultural norms, inherited characteristics, power relations and conformity might shape an individual's identity. Sociological constructions of what it means to be a teacher, nurse or police officer tend to focus on unifying aspects to define an individual by the groups to which they belong and identify. For example, distinct knowledge, practices and values (Schein, 1978) and the cultural attitudes, values and beliefs manifest in behaviours (Charman, 2017). This links to the way in which an individual might legitimately fill a specific professional role - a role shaped by societal expectations and which may change over time. The evolution of shared understandings of specific professional roles in any society or specific context can be discussed through cultural and historical discourses and norms and emphasise the societal dimensions of power through the interplay of structure and agency (Ruohotie-Lyhty and Moate, 2016). Thus, identity construction can be viewed as a

socially legitimated process where the context enables individuals to interpret themselves in a particular way (Cobb *et al.*, 2018). A psychosocial perspective seeks to understand how the individual makes sense of their developing identity within their sociocultural context by noticing the individual differences and how the individual positions themselves to the expectations of others. That is, how the individual makes sense of themselves in relation to others and to the world (MacLure, 1993).

This influence of social processes on the individual's thinking, feeling and behaviour can be explored through Bourdieu's (1977) conceptualisation of habitus. Applied to professional development, it can explain how unspoken but yet collective agreement of what, for example, 'being a teacher' means to groups with shared or similar backgrounds and therefore why multiple understandings exist of what a 'teacher identity' is - or what teacher identity could or should be. This 'vocational habitus' (Colley, 2006), incorporates idealised dispositions as well as the expectations on the teacher to perform effectively in their professional role. These internalised dispositions which guide the individual (Navarro, 2006) are played out in their participation in situated learning such as professional practice - a highly visible space. Teacher socialisation, including pressures to conform to a particular version of a teacher, are explored by Macdonald and Kirk (1996) in their work on how teachers' practices, appearance and lifestyle were under surveillance by the school and by the wider community. This visibility and scrutiny have been applied to aspects of identity including the teacher's gender (Braun, 2011) and choice of clothing (Gurung *et al.*, 2018) and reflect how constructions of teacher identity do not belong entirely to the individual. This is emphasised for nurses and police officers who wear a uniform historically associated with gendered professions. Roach and Eicher (1973) identified nurses' uniforms as functionally utilitarian (for convenience) and police uniforms as functionally symbolic (easily identifiable) although both uniforms have evolved to become more practical and symbolic (Steele, 1989). A uniform is not neutral; it transmits something of the individual's identity but yet simultaneously anonymises them (Joseph and Alex, 1972). This corporeal quality of professional life, explored by Courpasson and Monties (2017), links physical selfhood to understanding identity and the ways in which police officers' bodies are recognised and politicised. Police officers' construction of self (fitness, intimidation, cleanliness and toughness) link directly to their professional recognition. Associated with status, hierarchy, gender and authority, clothes highlight the ways in which identity is both communicated and constructed (Cohn, 1989). For example, Aperibense *et al.* (2019) identified the nurses' uniform as a

determinant strategy of professional identity linked to expectations of behaviour and responsibility. Therefore, what individuals wear – whether chosen or mandatory – is an embodiment of certain values but is also a way to develop a sense of belonging as part of their socialisation into a professional group. For example, a police uniform that might both reflect and influence the wearer's attitudes and behaviours (Bell, 1982).

Social models used to explore situated learning provide a way of understanding participation in practice (Holland and Lave, 2001) and has application for students in professional education. The way in which individuals make sense of their own professional identity is, according to Adams *et al.* (2006), developed through experience rather than a theory and is defined as the professional knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and beliefs shared in a professional team. Stemming from anthropological roots (Scribner and Cole, 1981), 'Communities of Practice' highlight how the 'person in the doing' (Keating, 2005, p.109) might become part of a group through shared use of language or repertoires. These informal dimensions of learning in groups that are thought to shape the individual include the expression of their identity (Lave and Wenger, 1991). This informal learning through social interaction has been applied to the socialisation of new police officers (Charman, 2017) to reflect the historic nature of their learning 'on the job' rather than through development of theoretical knowledge. The principles underpinning Communities of Practice have been identified as particularly helpful for the identity construction of nurses who bridge academic teaching and shifts in practice-based settings (Andrew *et al.*, 2008) and police officers who often work in isolation away from a community of professionals (Campbell, 2007). Although criticised for its emphasis on external behaviours and a tendency to homogenise (apparently harmonious) groups within set boundaries (Gee, 2000), recent application of concepts borrowed from Communities of Practice have been used to suggest more powerful models of identity development. Extending Lave and Wenger's theoretical ideas, Johnston (2016) analyses the nature of difficult experiences that student teachers face when constructions of the self conflict with social structuring to explore how identity trajectories were shaped. These difficult experiences emphasise the influence of individual beliefs and perceptions in the establishment of teacher identity and argue for greater emphasis on individuality than models that focus mainly on socialisation (Walkington, 2005).

Individuality linked to psychological factors include what Olsen (2013) refers to as the 'incoming self' – the person who exists before they engage in professional development. Although this incoming identity is psychosocially constructed, the individual's unique, psychological factors can be identified in ways that might go unnoticed if the individual is seen only as part of a cohort. Psychological factors include the individual's: personality and character; inherited characteristics; values, ethics and beliefs; emotions; interests outside of work; personal biography; subject knowledge; motivation; and ideas and hopes for the professional they want to become. An individual's understanding and internalisation of their existing identity influences, and is influenced by, the context in which they undertake professional development. Social factors which interact with these psychological factors include: the political context; the current status of the profession; the culture, value, practices and status of the university responsible for professional education; the values, opportunities and influence of mentors in the placement settings; the way in which subject knowledge and skills are taught; shared experiences with the cohort; and the expectations of others. The way these factors are interpreted cannot be disconnected from the individual's psychological influences. The relational interdependence between the individual and the social (Billett, 2006), offers a helpful way to understand the complex process of identity development.

The combined influence of psychological and sociological factors on identity formation is unique to the individual with different factors having greater influence at different times. How these factors interact and influence identity formation is important because it might lead to an understanding of how an individual is enabled to develop in their professional role. It is also of importance because the factors might conflict and disrupt the development of professional identity. Various models to conceptualise identity have been proposed to explore the ways in which an individual's professional identity might develop. These draw on sociological and psychological factors and are discussed in the following section.

## **1.2) Personal and professional aspects of identity**

Learning to teach is thought to include both personal and professional aspects (Leeferink *et al.*, 2019). However, reference to a 'professional identity' suggests that this is in some way a separate entity from the individual's personal identity. Gee (2000) argues that reference to such terms is not necessarily helpful as it suggests that those

in a profession have a homogenous identity shaped by the social context and the expectations of others. It also suggests that a specific 'identity' is something to be attained and thus static. It might be that an individual develops profession-specific language or behaviour for a specific professional role (Barton and Tusting, 2009), and for teachers has been referred to as a teacher 'demeanor' (Freedman and Holmes, 2003), or 'persona' (Porfilio and Malott, 2011). However, this offers a limited understanding of how the individual's identity develops in ways other than replicating what they think is expected of them in a specific professional role. This section considers how a 'professional identity' is conceptualised, either as an overlapping or separate identity whereby an individual's different identities might combine or conflict (Anspal *et al.*, 2019), or as something integrated into a sense of self.

Defining identity is problematic - in particular, the unclear distinction between personal and professional identity and the ambiguous connection between identity and self (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009). Although different meanings have been attributed to the concept of identity in literature, one commonality across studies is the idea that it is relational and not fixed (Beijaard *et al.*, 2004). That is, identity can only really be understood in relationship to the social context and to others and that this changes over time. The social context includes the expectations (or perceived expectations) of others and together with the individual's own background, is thought to form what is recognised as a teacher identity (Tickle, 2000). More specific reference to a teacher identity raises questions of what is really understood by this term as it is an unclear concept (Knowles, 1992). Trede *et al.*, (2012) note that there is uncertainty about how professional identity develops and propose the need for a clearer conceptualisation of what professional identity development actually means. Even between teachers there is little agreement of how teacher professionalism is conceptualised (Swann *et al.*, 2010), so it is unclear what any meaningful generalised understanding of 'teacher identity' would be. Professional identity for nurses and police officers has been connected to the move of these occupations towards professional status. Nurses' professional identity has been overshadowed by suggestions that care and professionalism are at odds with each other (Gardner, 1992) and by tensions between work-based vocational learning and academic knowledge (Andrew and Robb, 2011; Arreciado Marañón and Pera, 2015). This highlights the possible disruption in identity development where individuals have a dual identity of being a university student and being a student based in a professional setting often referred to as a trainee - something that Wood and Tong (2009, p.294) refer to as

a 'contradictory status' for police officers. For qualified professionals in the police, notions of identity emphasise the influence of a unifying police culture associated with understanding the nature of risk and the role of authoritarianism (Lauritz and Karp, 2014). This suggests that the individual's identity is shaped by issues in the police force that in some way shape the culture of the group. It is interesting to note that risk and authority are issues that extend beyond the job role and involve, or potentially threaten, who the individual is as a person - thus emphasising the difficulty of separating off a specific professional identity.

Attempts to measure development of teacher professional identity (Cheung, 2008), or professional identity more generally across other professions (Tan *et al.*, 2017), demonstrates the limitations and simplicity of such metrics. These scales are not able to capture the reasons why an individual might score poorly, nor what the individual desires to become or how their professional identity is associated with their sense of self. To understand this more complex process of development includes acknowledgement of who the individual is (Walkington, 2005) and how they perceive the roles they are expected to fill (Welmond, 2002). The language of role filling suggests an emphasis on external behaviours and the successful demonstration of particular knowledge and skills that might lead to recognition of 'being a teacher' but it is unclear how an individual might accept this recognition as part of their identity (Kelly, 2006; Hobson *et al.* 2008). Being in role is not unique to professional identity; it is likely that an individual already fills many roles and has multiple identities - such as female, black, mother, graduate, successful. The diversity of inherited and achieved identities that any individual can associate with demonstrates the multiple ways in which individuals might understand, represent or evaluate themselves. These multiple identities which Turner-Zwinkels *et al.*, (2015) argue are maintained as largely coherent might, however, change in different contexts (Thomas *et al.* 2009). This reflects the impact of both the individual's personal perspective and the way in which they are recognised by others. Monrouxe (2010) identifies the possible tension caused when the new, developing professional identity of medics is not consonant with a pre-existing identity and requires a process of negotiation to promote identity convergence (Roccas and Brewer, 2002). This highlights the importance of recognising the student's existing construction of their identity and their self-understanding (Kelchtermans, 2018) and how this sits alongside, overlaps or integrates with their identity in a new professional role. It questions how an individual might - or might not - internalise and accept the demands on them and could help to

account for the possible difficulties associated with how students are recognised by themselves and by others. For example, the dissonance in expectations that might lead to tensions such as ‘who you want me to be as a professional does not align with who I am as an individual.’

Reference to an individual’s different identities can potentially cause unnecessary fragmentation or compartmentalisation of an individual’s understanding of who they are. This can lead to disorientation where teacher identities are recognised as unstable and continually shifting and questions how student teachers experience the process of ‘becoming’ (Rodgers and Scott, 2008). This instability, Trent (2013) argues, is a process of repositioning during which contradictions between different professional and personal identities are experienced. Mockler’s (2011) conceptualisation of how an individual’s multiple identities combine to an identity of ‘being’ a teacher is an overlapping model constituted from personal experience, professional context and external political environment. She suggests that it is only in the overlap of all three that ‘being’ a teacher is recognised. In this model, the personal and the professional cannot be separated when the individual is being a teacher. The personal dimension includes teachers’ own experience of school, the roles they hold, and interests pursued outside of the profession and are considered influential factors in the process of how teachers are formed. This suggests that only certain aspects of the individual’s personal experience play a part in being a teacher and no mention is made of their emotions, hopes or desires. A nurse’s professional identity has been conceptualised as an integral part of their personal identity and that this personal identity is a prerequisite for the development of a professional identity balancing external and internal attributes of professionalism (Hermansen, 1987). Stenbock-Hult (1985) notes the way in which nurses perceive themselves in the context of their practice as the way in which they construct their professional identity. This is emphasised by Rasmussen *et al.* (2018) in their review of research to identify factors influencing perceptions of nurses’ professional identity, namely: the self, the role and the context.

Conceptualising teacher identity as a product of both sociocultural influences and the way in which teachers construct themselves in their daily work, Olsen (2013) notes the multiple and dynamic influences on how identity might be understood. Models which espouse some sort of balance between an individual’s different identities conceptualise the developing teacher as someone or something other than who the individual already is and seem to outline a fixed idea of what this should look like. For example, Alsup

(2018, p.20) claims that 'a teacher's identity should balance the personal and professional, or the self and the other...' An emerging issue from the literature thus questions the extent to which 'professional identity' is embedded within, or separate from, 'personal identity' – that is, the extent to which teacher identity is conceptualised as a new or compartmentalised part of an individual or whether it is integrated into an existing identity and becomes part of who the individual is. This highlights the ambiguity in terminology between identity and self and how these concepts might link. Tan *et al.* (2017, p.1505) suggest that 'professional identity is the self that has been developed with the commitment to perform competently and legitimately in the context of the profession.' This separation of a form of the self which performs within a particular context suggests a bounded and thus limited view of understanding the whole person. It questions how the rest of the individual is positioned within the process of becoming a professional.

Whilst identities are orientating, they are incomplete understandings of who the individual is (Oyserman *et al.*, 2012). Reference to the development of a 'professional identity,' or 'teacher identity' is still prevalent in literature in the field of teacher education (Schepens *et al.*, 2009; Clarke, 2009; Coward *et al.*, 2015), however, rather than understanding the development of a professional as an 'identity making process,' Beijaard (2019, p.1), notes that this development might more helpfully be conceptualised as a process of identity renegotiation or re-formation of the self. This is acknowledged by Kissling (2014) who recognises that who the individual is as a person has a strong influence on how they learn their profession. This includes an individual's physicality and emotions as well as the individual's cognitive engagement with subject knowledge and skills. Recognising emotions is important because becoming a teacher (or a nurse or police officer), involves the whole of the individual - 'teaching and learning are matters of both head and heart, both reason and passion' (Cochran-Smith, 2003, p.374). Instead of understanding professional development as an ongoing process of integration of the personal and professional sides of becoming a teacher, or as the growth of an additional identity, Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) refer to a shift in a student's identity. This aligns with the approach by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) who propose that the formation of identity is a dynamic process during which the self is continually in the process of becoming. The focus is more on the process of development than on an endpoint. Whilst acknowledging that professional identity is formed by intersubjective social processes (Jenkins, 2008), the focus on and use of the language of 'self,' rather than reference to

different 'identities' suggests a more connected and integrated way of understanding how an individual develops as a professional and how their professional education shapes them. Whereas the language of identity might be a way for an individual, or others, to conceptualise an aspect of who the individual is (perhaps for a particular role), the language of self encompasses the entirety of the individual. It focuses on how they make sense of the various identities they have. This relationship between identity and self is understood by Sökefeld (1999, p.424) as considering the self as, 'superordinate to (though not detached from) the plurality of identities.' Therefore, use of the language of self does not contradict the language of identity but promotes a more holistic and integrated conceptualisation of an individual and their development of becoming a teacher, nurse or police officer. Emphasis on conceptualisations and constructions of 'self' incorporate studies of identity development discussed above but enable a deeper insight into the influence of an individual's emotions and of their 'incoming self' (Olsen, 2013) on the professional they become.

### **1.3) Identity understood as an integrated self: the influence of emotional and unconscious dynamics**

Conceptualising professional development as a change in the individual's existing sense of self includes consideration of how the individual is transformed or re-formed during their professional education. Mead (1934) outlined the way an individual's self develops through the particular professional role they assume and through transactions with the environment. Language of the self may be less tangible than language associated with a recognised professional identity because conceptualisations of the self can be subjective or less clearly defined. However, the process of development is experienced as reality by the individual who perceives themselves in relation to their learning (Purkey, 1970). This section considers professional education as a potentially transformative process that involves a holistic understanding of the individual in the process of becoming, with a particular emphasis on their emotions and ways in which development might become difficult.

The emphasis on a sense of self or self-concept focuses on the individual's understanding and knowledge of who they are. This includes their identities associated with traits, social relations, roles and group memberships (Oyserman *et al.*, 2012). Whilst an individual's sense of self might include perceived expectations by others,

emphasis on selfhood places value on how the individual makes sense of who they are and who they are becoming even if their assumptions are flawed. From a humanist perspective, the 'self' is the term for the inner personality. Central to Rogers' personality theory is the concept of the self or the self-concept which he defined as, 'the organised, consistent set of perceptions and beliefs about oneself,' (Rogers, 1959, p.481). Underlying this approach are assumptions that the individual has the innate potential for 'self-actualisation,' or personal growth, suggesting that whilst an individual's sense of self is consistent, it is not fixed. A particular idea within Rogers' theory that has useful application to professional development is the idea of congruence: the consistency between an individual's self-image and, judged through the individual's behaviour, how others see them. Rogers' theory posits that where consistency between self-image and reality is lacking, emotional disturbance and anxiety is likely. Such inconsistency can also be experienced between an individual's self-concept and their ideal-self. For professional students, how they see their developing self, the future self they hope for and how others might assess this, is brought into particular focus.

Drawing on Rogers' concepts, reference to an individual's 'teacher-self' (Diamond, 1991; Zembylas, 2003; Brown, 2006) offers a helpful way of conceptualising the individual and the many ways they may identify themselves including the integration of the teacher they are becoming. This integrated conceptualisation is recognised by Bullough (1997, p.21) who argues that 'what beginning teachers believe about...self-as-a-teacher is of vital concern to teacher education' and therefore 'teacher education must begin...by exploring the teaching self.' Conceptualising self in a specific role in this way could be extended to the language of a 'nurse-self' and 'police-self' to think about how the individual understands themselves as a developing professional.

This focus or pre-occupation on the self constitutes the first stage of Fuller's (1969) widely cited concerns-based model of teacher development that must be overcome before students can engage meaningfully with tasks and with pupils. This highlights the importance of understanding students' beliefs about themselves and how they manage their emotional responses to the demands placed on them. Reio (2005) identifies how emotional reactions might influence the success of learning and development. Placing importance on affective dimensions of professional education processes, Zembylas (2007, p.356) links teachers' personal and pedagogical knowledge as 'emotional knowledge' and argues that teachers must be able to connect themselves emotionally with their classroom practice. Day and Leitch (2001) highlight the importance of

recognising values within professional education and argue that teacher educators should explore how these connect to students' emotions in order to acknowledge the individual within the process of professional development. Links between an individual's values and their emotions have been identified for police officers whose emotional exhaustion has, in part, been influenced by the dissonance between policing values and their own individual values (Schaible, 2018). This raises an important question of how emotions influence the re-formation of self during professional education and how these are recognised by the individual and by those they work with. The importance of attending to the emotions that individuals bring with them to professional education is emphasised by Shoffner (2009). She evaluates how student teachers who, 'manage anger, frustration, excitement, giddiness and disbelief on a daily basis' (p.788) can be encouraged to look inward in order to acknowledge how their emotions contribute to their development as teachers and what they might be concerned about.

Focusing on the affective dimension of development can provide a richer insight into how the individual reacts to their circumstances and the demands made of them during their professional education (Schutz *et al.*, 2018). This is brought into particular focus when specific incidents are difficult or upsetting. For example, the way in which nurses are expected to establish emotional boundaries as a way to manage their anticipated, evolving or felt emotions when working with patients and their families (Hayward and Tuckey, 2011). The purpose of such emotion regulation is to enable them to maintain a nurse identity which is calm, clear-thinking, able to carry out clinical tasks and make decisions whilst being available to support patients and their family members who themselves might need emotional support. The active suppression of emotions in order to fulfil required expectations of being in role has been linked to nurse burnout (Mann and Cowburn, 2005) and reveals how professional identity and a nurse-self are intimately connected. Personal feelings have been noted as severely limited in police culture where individuals hide their emotions for fear of being seen as inadequate (Pogrebin and Poole, 1991). They identify how the constant guarding of emotions is perceived as necessary to maintain a calm and in-control identity as a police officer. Pickering (2001) noted how emotionality in policing has been largely ignored. Recognition of the effects of emotional dissonance - both the ongoing suppression of anger in a police officer's day to day work and the emotions associated with tragic, violent or threatening events - have been linked to stress, burnout and other adverse outcomes (Schaible and Six, 2016). This suggests that whilst officers might learn how

to manage and regulate emotion to maintain a police identity as someone in control within their position of authority, the effects have an impact on the individual at a deeper level of self.

The conscious expression or recognition of a teacher's concerns and anxiety is not a newly identified area of research – it was highlighted as a neglected topic by Keavney and Sinclair in 1978. However, it continues to have an ambiguous place in professional education despite evidence that anxiety can negatively impact student teachers' ability to 'function efficiently' (Hayes, 2003 p.153). The ways in which an individual might experience and manage their emotions during professional education can potentially have a disruptive effect on their development as professionals (Yoo and Carter, 2017). Conflicting or unanticipated emotional responses and reactions cannot always be explained, and it is not always clear why students feel the way they do. Such responses, particularly when coupled with the student's language of 'concern' and 'anxiety' indicates something in an individual's experience that extends beyond conscious awareness of emotional responses and their underlying reasons. This links to Rogers' (1959) identification of emotional disturbance and anxiety arising when there is inconsistency between self-image and reality, and between an individual's self-concept and their ideal-self. Hidden dynamics within the student's inner world, and which might impact their professional development, are beyond the limits of what is known to them and thus requires a different conceptual model to understand them. Adopting a psychoanalytic perspective offers a way to understand unconscious influences on an individual's experiences during professional development. This perspective enables students' past experiences and future versions of their conceptualisations of self to be acknowledged. A conceptual framework of Freud's model of the unconscious is outlined in Part 2 with application to the development of new teachers, nurses and police officers. To complete this section, the influence of temporal dimensions on professional development is discussed with an emphasis on the self and the re-formation of self.

#### **1.4) Temporal dimensions of professional development: the influence of past, present and future**

An individual's identity develops during a lifetime (Erikson 1968) and professional identity is influenced by factors such as promotions, pay and policy change and is therefore not static (Dobrow and Higgins, 2005). Drawing on conceptualisations of professional identity development as re-formation of the self (discussed in previous

sections), one way of understanding professional development is through temporal dimensions – past, present and future - and the way an individual's experience, constructions and internalisations of these might connect and interact. This might be influenced by conscious and unconscious dynamics where it may not be clear why or how certain emotions, thoughts or behaviours are triggered. This section outlines the ongoing process of self re-formation not as linear development but a complex and dynamic process of negotiating past biography, present experience and hopes for the future.

Emphasis on the importance of connecting with the past recognises how personal histories shape teacher identities (Flores and Day, 2006). Such pre-existing dispositions and histories were found to influence the way police officers constructed understandings of their identity (Campbell, 2012). Jones *et al.* (2000) suggest that students' perceptions of themselves in the present are influenced by memories of the past and how together, future concepts of the professional self are constructed (in their study, primary teachers of mathematics). It is the recognition of emotions attached to these past incidents and histories that can bring significance to the way individuals' pasts are represented (Mitchell and Weber, 2003). Much of the 'memory work' discussed in their research draws on conscious representations of the past and through a range of activities with new student teachers, reveal their hopes, aspirations, fears, disappointments and frustrations. This potential influence of an individual's personal history links to the construction of a future-self in a particular professional role. Thomas and Beauchamp (2011) linked the influence of student teachers' past experience with an ideal of the teachers they hope to become. They emphasise the complex and disruptive process that student teachers experience when making sense of their developing professional identity in the first few months of their first placement - between being a student and being a professional. Furlong (2013) noted that the interplay between teachers' histories and their idealised future selves highlighted a push and pull between the progressive teacher they wanted to be, and the more traditional archetypes of teachers expected of them. This reveals the potential difficulties experienced when students' developing-self does not match past hopes for who they might become.

The importance of future-oriented discourse has been argued as an essential part of students' constructions of their sense of self (Urzúa and Vásquez, 2008). This future-looking links to a form of prospective reflection that Conway (2001) refers to as 'anticipatory reflection' which he claims is important in the process of teacher education.

The concept of 'possible selves' (Cross and Markus, 1991) as future representations of the self are identified as dynamic and influence how the self responds in the present. Henry (2016) emphasises the volatility and instability of student teachers' identities. Particularly at times of uncertainty, attempts to stabilise a sense of self through the human tendency to strive for continuity were identified by van Rijswijk *et al.* (2016). Their findings reveal how student teachers tend to maintain their current self-concept even if this contains unrealistic beliefs and expectations about their professional selves. They conclude that students' past perceptions and future expectations determine perceived continuities and discontinuities of self-concept and illustrate a tendency to protect and maintain a sense of self-belief. This aligns with the findings of Erdem and Demiral (2007) who explored student teachers' beliefs based on Bandura's (1994) social cognitive theory. Their study revealed that prior to a professional placement, student teachers optimistically overestimated their own influence, skills and impact. Schwarzer and Hallum (2008) suggested that self-belief might act as a protective personal resource as they linked teachers who had lower self-efficacy with burnout. The function of possible future-selves, even if unrealistic, seems to be a way to stabilise a present sense of self when in an unknown stage.

Focusing on subjective associations of the past, present and future self, de Sousa and Bôas (2012) applied social representation theory to their research with student teachers and demonstrate the importance of engaging beyond cognitive domains. This could be enabled through Kelly's (2006) recommendation for students to explore the relation between their 'personal' and their 'workplace' identities through autobiographical writing. Such activity identifies a way in which individuals might become more aware of how different parts of themselves connect and why tensions in their professional development might arise. Engaging with student teachers, nurses and police officers' emotional responses to their development might reveal how they are experiencing difficulty, tension or conflict with the changes demanded of them. This includes: difficulties reconciling theory and practice; not being known or understood by university tutors and practice-based mentors; resistance to new knowledge and learning that demands a cognitive shift; how they can fulfil what is expected of them; and the emerging gap between how they see the current version of themselves contrasted with their hoped-for self. The possible disappointment and frustration that might arise when their developing selves do not align with their hoped-for selves might disrupt an individual's progress - even if their hoped-for self is an unachievable idealisation.

Students may not know why they feel in a certain way; their emotional responses to such tensions may indicate a deeper, perhaps unconscious, reason for why some students become stuck. Exploring how the present might be influenced by unconscious dynamics can be understood through psychodynamic framework outlined in the next part of the chapter. These dynamics might be developed through past experience and through anxiety associated with the demands of the future.

## **Conclusion**

Understanding professional development through a psychosocial perspective acknowledges the influence of the individual's unique psychological factors and how they combine with the influence of their sociocultural environment. Language associated with professional identity which suggests a compartmentalisation of the personal and professional might more helpfully be replaced by reference to language of the self. This more holistic conceptualisation of development acknowledges an individual's multiple identities and how these might be integrated. Conceptualising professional development as the re-formation of the self enables exploration of affective and unconscious dynamics and helps to understand the complex process of becoming. This includes incomplete memories of the past and idealisations of a future-self which shape the way in which an individual might interpret and respond to current experience. Ways in which they can manage any dissonance between their current experience and their future hoped-for self might determine how they can maintain stability within their sense of self. When tensions arise during the process of professional development, it may not always be clear why emotional or behavioural responses are triggered in the individual. In order to further understand such potential difficulties and disruptions within the self during professional development, relevant and helpful ways of thinking about the influence of an individual's internal, emotional world can be established through the explicit acknowledgement and speculative interpretation of an individual's unconscious dynamics. Exploration of these hidden dynamics in the psychosocial process of becoming is enabled through a psychoanalytic conceptual framework. This is discussed in Part 2 and includes application to professional education.

## **Part 2) Conceptualisations of the unconscious in professional learning - a psychoanalytic perspective**

## Introduction

Professional development conceptualised as the development or re-formation of the self incorporates understanding of how the individual might identify themselves in a number of roles. Focusing on the self as a more holistic way to understand professional development includes the way in which an individual's multiple identities might connect or overlap (Sökefeld, 1999). Rogers' (1959) theorisation of the self includes the way that emotions and anxiety might be experienced when an individual experiences incongruence – both between their self-concept and reality, and between their self-concept and their ideal-self. Acknowledging emotional responses to the development of self during professional education promotes an understanding of what a student might find difficult or disruptive during the process of becoming a teacher, nurse or police officer. Whilst emotions serve as a useful way to signal possible problems, understanding emotions is often limited to what is consciously known. Sometimes it is not clear why a student feels or reacts in the way that they do or why they get stuck in their development. Emotional responses might indicate something unknown and hidden in the individual's unconscious where unresolved conflict is impacting their development. A psychoanalytic perspective offers a productive way to explore and interpret what hidden dynamics are influencing professional development.

In 1969, Bettelheim commented that psychoanalysis had a 'great deal to offer education' and that it was strange 'that we are still without any psychoanalytic theory of learning' (1969, p.73). He reiterated Freud's suggestion that psychoanalytic insight be brought to all teachers with the aim of preventing neither 'a repressive molding (sic) of the young nor an acting out on them of old fears and resentments,' (p.74). Hinshelwood (2009) notes the early application of psychoanalytic concepts to education in the work of A.S. Neill and Susan Isaacs whose practice focused on the individual pupil in contexts where educationalists (rather than the State) had agency. Although such progressive philosophies of learning contrast with the current organisation and monitoring of mainstream schooling, there is ongoing interest in the influence of the unconscious on learning. Whilst there is not yet widespread acceptance or promotion of psychoanalytic approaches to professional education programmes, this ongoing interest in the influence of the unconscious has subsequently prompted theoretical application to learning in the fields of teaching (e.g. Britzman, 2003, 2009), nursing (Allan, 2011) and policing (Bonifacio, 1991). These links provide a way to think about how the unconscious has an

active influence on conceptualisations of self and how this might re-form during professional development.

In the first section below, Freud's model of the mind is mapped out as a conceptual framework. This is followed by a section focused on interpretations of Freud's ideas and how they link to my research. The final section considers how, borrowed from their original purpose of therapeutic cure, psychoanalytic concepts introduced by Freud might be applied to a student's development as a teacher, nurse or police officer. This includes consideration of why there might be resistance to psychoanalytic models of professional education.

## **2.1) Freud's development of psychoanalytic theory**

This section introduces Freud's key concepts including his model of the conscious and unconscious elements of the mind. This is linked to an individual's psyche as their sense of self. The nature and role of anxiety resulting from unconscious conflict is outlined followed by the ways in which psychological defences might manage this conflict in a variety of ways.

Through Freud's development of the practice of psychoanalysis whereby he explored meanings of a patient's narrative using a variety of approaches and techniques - such as their use of language in free association, recall of dreams, slips of the tongue and forgotten memories - he laid down theoretical foundations that explained the role and possible influence of the unconscious. This he defined as those memories, thoughts and feelings outside of conscious awareness. Using Freud's model of the human psyche, conflicting aspects of the self within the unconscious can be understood to continue to shape behaviour despite being defended against.

Freud's formulation of different types of unconscious processes is an important distinction:

There are mental acts of very varying values yet have in common the characteristic of being unconscious. The unconscious comprises, on the one hand, processes which are merely latent, temporarily unconscious, but which differ in no other respect from conscious ones and, on the other hand, processes such as those which have undergone repression, which if they came into consciousness must

stand out in the crudest contrast to the rest of the conscious mind. (Freud, 1915, p.122)

Freud refers to the latent unconscious as the preconscious whereas the second conceptualisation of the unconscious outlined above refers to repressed aspects of self – repressed perhaps because they are in some way unacceptable, shameful or unthinkable. These Freud refers to as the ‘dynamically unconscious repressed,’ (1923, p.17) and could be used to interpret the inner psychic conflict experienced during professional education programmes including possible disruptions and difficulties.

Freud based his theories on interpretations of psychological life and are therefore concerned with constructs that are tentative, ambiguous and uncertain. These constructs are established through speculations about internal conflicts within an individual and through identification of possible unconscious causes of certain behaviours or emotions. Freud noticed inconsistencies and contradictions in his analysis of individual narratives in an attempt to understand human subjectivity. His theorisation of the unconscious is a way to understand the force within the human subject that is beyond individual rationality. Although the human subject is irrational and Freud’s understanding was incomplete, his scientific approach to interpretative techniques established evidence of the unconscious. The following two sub-sections outline Freud’s key concepts applicable to this research including his model of the mind as a way of understanding the ‘psyche,’ the nature of anxiety and defence against this.

### ***i) Freud’s model of the mind and the ‘psyche’ as a sense of self***

In the first of five lectures on psychoanalysis, Freud identifies a ‘splitting of the personality’ (Freud, 1909, p.16) whereby in one and the same individual there can be several mental groupings. These can remain more or less independent of one another, which can ‘know nothing’ of one another and which can alternate with one another in their hold upon consciousness. This idea that an individual is at any time, many things - some of which are known and not known - led to Freud’s triple division of the unconscious (completely unavailable to consciousness), preconscious (potentially available) and conscious (completely available). Freud’s revised structural model of the mind (1923) re-theorises three distinct components which he named the id, ego and superego. He posits that conflicts between the primitive, instinctive, pleasure-seeking id

and the governing moral conscience of the superego - shaped by societal norms and rules - are moderated by the ego. Freud's proposal that the ego is the component that balances the demands of the id and superego suggests that a strong ego equates with a healthy and balanced personality.

Freud theorised that the id operates by a self-seeking pleasure principle which demands instant gratification to fulfil its instinct and desires, for example, food, safety or recognition. The superego, however, operates by a morality principle and includes internalised parental and societal expectations such as the right way to behave. Connected to the superego (and sometimes used interchangeably), Freud (1914) identified a concept of the ego-ideal or the ideal-self. This function of the superego is a form of perfection which the ego strives to emulate. Whereas the superego offers a normative aspect within the psyche, the ego-ideal is associated with goal-oriented motivations. The role of the ego, operating by the reality principle, is thus to mediate between the potentially conflicting dynamics of the impulsive drives of the id and the internalised moral expectations of the superego in order to make conscious decisions. The unacceptable, unconscious desires of the id are in conflict with the partly-conscious and partly-unconscious ego and superego. This means that whilst each component shapes the behaviour of the individual through mental processes, the individual does not always know why they feel, react and behave the way they do.

Freud's concept of the mind gives rise to the question of how the three components of the individual's mind are linked to the concept of the self as an identifiable subject. Through his work interpreting dreams, Freud himself recognised this difficulty of conceptualising the self in multiple parts as though, 'an amalgamation of two separate people' (Freud, 1916-17, p.215-216). Rather than referring to 'the subject,' Freud's use of the 'psyche' as a conceptualisation of the self indicates the plurality of an individual without having to identify which of the three components might be thought of as the most real sense of self. This suggests that although distinctive parts of the self were named, the self is in some way coherent.

## ***ii) Anxiety and psychological defences against anxiety***

Freud explored how individuals are torn between the pleasure principle (the force of the id) to experience gratification and to avoid pain, and the reality principle (governed by

the ego) to meet the demands of the id whilst behaving in acceptable ways to fit into the boundaries of a given context. Such conflict between Freud's component parts of the psyche raises questions about how the ego is able to meet the demands of the id and meet the expectations of the superego's morality principle (that demands the individual behaves in socially acceptable ways) to maintain a sense of coherence between the components. This psychic conflict inherent in the balancing of the id's unfettered demands within the expectations and regulation of the superego is, according to Freud, the source of anxiety. In his later work 'Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety,' (1926), Freud treated anxiety not as a response to unconscious repression but as a danger signal to indicate possible conflict and therefore a need to defend against this. Anxiety is an interpretation of a symptom or emotion which Freud (1930) outlines as follows:

Anxiety is always present somewhere or other behind every symptom; but at one time it takes noisy possession of the whole of consciousness, while at another it conceals itself so completely that we are obliged to speak of unconscious anxiety, or if we want to have a clearer psychological conscience, since anxiety is in the first instance simply a feeling, of possibilities of anxiety. (Freud, 1930, p.82).

This emphasises the idea that anxiety is present even if the individual is not aware of it or why they feel as they do. Freud (1926), referred to the state of anxiety where a rational cause was known as 'reality anxiety' (p.23) understood as a response to real threats. He differentiated this from states of anxiety caused by unconscious conflict and included 'moral anxiety' (p.91) associated with feelings of guilt and shame when the expectations of the superego were not lived up to. 'Neurotic anxiety' (p.153) associated with overwhelming feelings such as aggression was defined as anxiety arising from the sudden demands of the id.

This potential inner, emotional conflict might lead to a range of feelings or impulses experienced by an individual. These might be manageable feelings of awkwardness and difficulty or may be feelings that are disturbing to live with. It was these disturbing conflicts which led to Freud's identification of a range of defences – or defence mechanisms. To avoid being overwhelmed with anxiety, Freud theorised that the ego can utilise a range of defence mechanisms which operate at an unconscious level and whose function is to defend the ego against disturbing conflicts and thus reduce the experience of anxiety. The function of defence mechanisms is therefore to maintain a stable, independent and robust ego.

In his paper 'Repression' (1915), Freud outlines further complexities in the function of defence mechanisms and the management of anxiety: 'It is possible for the original instinctual representative to be split in two, one part undergoing repression, while the remainder, precisely on account of this intimate connection, undergoes idealization' (p.527). This complex process of splitting what is perceived as: good or bad; acceptable or unacceptable; or worthy or shameful, might be revealed through individuals' ambivalent responses detected in their contradictory and inconsistent language and behaviour.

Freud's model of the mind and defence mechanisms against anxiety are enduring concepts developed and subsequently applied to a range of professional fields. The next section explores interpretations of Freud's ideas and is followed by a review of the ways in which psychoanalytic perspectives have been used to interpret professional development and practice.

## **2.2) Interpretations of Freud's concepts and links to this research**

Although Freud's concepts have endured, they have been debated and interpreted over time. There is some debate about which component of Freud's structural model offers the closest conceptualisation of the self. Although described by Freud as 'the core of our being' (Freud, 1938, p.197), the unconscious id is difficult to understand as being the part that is the individual's self as it 'is accessible even to our own knowledge only through the medium of another agency' (Freud, 1938, p.197). This raises questions regarding how the self is or is not in control of all its constituent parts. Hall and Lindzey (1957, p.36) suggest that 'in a very general way, the id may be thought of the biological component of personality, the ego as the psychological component and the superego as the social component'. This reflects how each component might be recognised and shaped during an individual's lifetime. Watson (2014) dismisses the ego as an understanding of the self by outlining its lack of power and lack of knowledge. This emphasises Freud's rhetorical address to the ego, 'In every case, however, the news that reaches your consciousness is incomplete and often not to be relied on' (1917-19, p.143). This suggests that whilst conceptualisations of the three components can be distinguished and serve different purposes, they are connected in complex conscious and unconscious ways. To accept Freud's model is thus to accept a model of the self which is both known and unknown to the individual – they may not always know why

they feel and behave in the ways they do. Freud's theorisations of anxiety and how this is managed by an individual demonstrates the potential to more fully know the self. This would require a change within the individual's psychic structure, the extent of which is influenced by how heavily defended the unconscious is.

Kohut (1977), a psychoanalyst whose psychoanalytic theory of self opposed that of Freud's, purposefully did not define the 'self' despite his work developing self-psychology which focused on individuals' subjective experiences. Although, based on Freud's ideas, Kohut argued that it is through the ego's formation that any changes to an individual's identity might be more accessible and clearest to interpret. The most helpful use of the term 'self' is used to refer to all that makes up an individual, conscious and unconscious, which Ogden (1992, p.520) refers to as the 'discourse of all three' – the id, ego and superego. Specifically, the way that the self maintains some sense of coherence and continuity in the process of re-formation and change is of relevance to this thesis.

Watson (2014, p.8) notes that, 'The id and the ego do not share common goals...In fact the id can threaten the very existence of the ego: though it cannot do away with it altogether, it can shatter its carefully built-up structure or change it back into a portion of the id.' This reflects the important role of the ego's defence mechanisms against the demands of the id. The ego is also in conflict with the superego and its demands. Although there has been debate regarding the position of the ideal-self as either part of the superego (Schafer, 1967) or as a separate structure (Blos, 1972), there is agreement that it is shaped by parental and societal values to form a picture of how the individual ought to be. If the ideal standard is set so high that the individual can never realise it, there may be a risk that the superego becomes punitive. An ideal-self might thus enable an individual to function in acceptable ways and to believe they can work towards a more idealised version of their future-self - however, this high expectation might become debilitating if the ego cannot live up to its demands. The ego thus also needs defending against the superego.

Defence mechanisms have their origins in early attempts to cope with anxiety, abandonment, loss, conflict and emotional pain (Howe, 1995). The function of defence mechanisms is therefore to manage anxiety and to promote stability within the psyche. Freud theorised that operating at an unconscious level, the individual may never know that psychic conflicts have occurred, however, sometimes defences might be only

partially effective and ‘...the unconscious comes to the surface in the compromise form of neurotic or ‘acting out’ symptoms,’ (Farrell, 1963, p.19). This suggests that the symptoms of anxiety might be observable. If so, these observations could lead to the exploration of underlying anxiety and the nature of a defence mechanism might be interpreted. Howe *et al.* (1999) differentiate defence mechanisms for different purposes – those such as denial and avoidance which keep painful experiences out of consciousness and those which function to redefine or control painful experiences, for example, projection, distortion or repression. This distinction offers a helpful way to think about how the unconscious might enable or prevent engagement in professional, hands-on practice. More detailed conceptualisations of defence mechanisms are outlined in a glossary presented in Appendix A.

Freud’s model offers a helpful way to conceptualise how unseen, unconscious dynamics might influence the process of self re-formation during professional education. Applied to professional development, this can be explored through interpretations of the conflict between the individual’s unconscious drives for gratification of their own needs (demands of the id) and the expectations on them (standards of the superego) during professional practice. Freud’s model of the mind is represented in the table below to show how different components might influence the individual during professional development. It includes examples of the id’s drive for pleasure but also the threats to the id through what could be considered the shadow aspects of each profession - the antithesis of the primary task of each profession. Freud’s (1925, p.273) three ‘impossible professions’ whose existence were established to defend against anxiety associated suffering include: healing to reduce the suffering of pain brought on by our feeble, weak, mortal bodies; pedagogy to develop knowledge and explanations to understand and control the overwhelming forces of nature and the external world; and governance to control the threat of others and to master the human instinct of aggression and self-destruction. The antithesis of these professions could therefore be conceptualised as: conscious and unconscious ‘unlearning’ - a forgetting of knowledge, or a resistance to learning; becoming more sick or dying; ongoing deviance which overpowers those in authority. The ego therefore has to defend against the id’s demands and fears associated with the possible unravelling of self and society if these primary tasks are not fulfilled – even if these tasks are impossible.

The perceived expectations of the superego identifies important questions linked to an individual’s professional development in two ways: the first is whether there is just one

acceptable version of how to be a teacher, nurse or police officer; and the second is how an individual has internalised parental or societal influences within their superego. There may be little or no shared understanding between professionals, society and the individual's internalised meaning of what being in a particular professional role means, and if so, confusion and conflict might arise.

Shaped by the superego's high standards, an individual's possible idealisations of their future-self are included in the table below. The unrealistic nature of these can conflict with the ego's reality principle - that is, how the individual might manage their current experience and development if it is very different from the idealised version of themselves that they hope to become. The way in which the ego can defend against both the desires and fears of the id and the expectations of the superego might be perceptible in the individual's speech, emotions and behaviour.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Id</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Pleasure principle Wholly unconscious</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Ego</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Reality principle Partly conscious</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Superego</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Morality principle Partly conscious</p>
<p>Drive for safety, recognition, success, and acceptance.</p> <p>Unacceptable fear, disgust, love, hate or anger.</p> <p>Contains repressed material.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Potential inner conflict leading to anxiety. Signalling of anxiety</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Attempts to meet desires of the id in a socially acceptable way. Contains defence mechanisms and the capacities to reason and plan.</p>	<p>Internalised expectations of behaviour shaped by parents, society, university tutors, professional mentors, assessors, professional standards</p> <p>Seeks to suppress the urges of the id and works to make the ego behave morally – rather than realistically. Harbours a fear of punishment.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Shadow aspects of professions</b></p> <p>These include: unlearning and resistance to learning; incurable sicknesses and death; and uncontrollable crime and lack of safety. Collectively this might include fears of hurting, abusing or causing the death of those in their care - or being hurt, abused or killed by others.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The superego and id become perceptible in the state they produce in the ego. For example, when the superego's criticism evokes a sense of guilt.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Idealisations</b></p> <p>Constructions of an ideal-self as teacher, nurse or police officer include unrealistic, near-perfect versions: unlimited availability to others; making a difference to the lives of others; making society a better place.</p>

*Table 1 My representation of Freud's model of the mind applied to professional development*

The individual's experience of professional development is conceptualised as reorganising and reshaping an existing holistic sense of self understood through conscious and unconscious dynamics. Banyard *et al.* (2015) interpret Freud's (1915, p.122) reference to unconscious 'mental acts' as memories, thoughts and feelings which indicate the presence of some influencing dynamic that the individual cannot access. For example, an adult returning to their old primary school might remember particular

incidents or feel more generalised nostalgia, ambivalence or fear but might not know why they feel the way they do. Memories, thoughts and feelings evoked by walking back into the school might be connected, partial, distorted or idealised and thus indicate how the individual has managed anxiety associated with their experience of early education.

The ability to manage anxiety is of particular relevance when students encounter new experiences during professional education that might threaten the coherence of their ego. Reber *et al.* (2009) compare fear with anxiety and propose that, whereas fear often has a known cause (even if irrational), anxiety describes a generalised emotional state where the sense of threat or danger cannot be easily identified. For a student teacher, nurse or police officer in a new situation and in a new role, such reactions can be confusing or disorientating and can disrupt their development as a professional. For example, an unconscious desire to hold onto a carefree sense of self might come into conflict with the growing demand to take responsibility for others. This might lead, for example, to a student sabotaging their development but not recognising or understanding why they are doing this. This can be particularly disorienting if expectations inherent within education programmes are of linear, unproblematic professional development. Britzman (1986) recognises that whilst a sense of disequilibrium in teacher education might be necessary for transformation, students tend to interpret this as a 'threatening experience' (p.452). A more important question therefore is not how to reduce or eliminate any conflict but how to notice and support students when they do experience this. Through the acknowledgement and interpretation of psychic defences, further insight into individuals' experiences of how they make sense of their developing selves might be enabled. Whilst not conceptualised as symptoms to be cured, clues in students' narratives about their professional development might indicate defence mechanisms that reveal a lack of psychic safety. This might indicate times when their psyche was working to promote and preserve coherence - perhaps when impulses from the id or expectations of the superego were overwhelming, or when their ideal-self was under threat. Interpretations of Freud's concepts of neurotic (id) and moral (superego) anxiety in students' narratives are drawn on in this research to explore possible anticipated or internalised conflict and how the ego might defend against this. Application of psychoanalytic concepts to professional education is the focus of the next section and locates this study in the research field.

### **2.3) Application of psychoanalytic concepts to professional education**

Although not mainstream practice, psychoanalytic concepts interpreted from Freud's work in clinical fields have been applied to the field of professional learning. Moore (2006) links sociological and psychological factors with psychoanalysis to demonstrate how meaningful bridges can be made with the field of education in the context of implementation of education policy. Productive application of distinctive theoretical ideas to different empirical contexts within professional education identifies the complex influence of unconscious dynamics on individuals and organisations. Extending the recognition of the role of emotional dimensions in learning, the influence of the individual's inner world has been applied to professional development including the fields of teaching, and perhaps due to their more recent links to HEI, less so to nursing and policing. This literature demonstrates a useful vocabulary to think about how individuals are psychically positioned to the expectations and changes demanded of them during learning and through the process of becoming a professional.

Although psychoanalytic understanding can be tentative and speculative, and the status of psychoanalytically informed knowledge ambiguous, professional education analysed through a psychoanalytic lens can offer richer and fuller ways of understanding selfhood and identity development. For example, the findings of Lamote and Engles (2010) which suggested a decrease in self-efficacy due to students' experience of a more realistic idea of teaching. This could be interpreted from a psychoanalytic perspective as a renegotiation of their idealised-self. This theoretical perspective can offer insight into the role of anxiety and tension in the learning process which Gilmore and Anderson (2016) suggest might lead to meaningful and reflexive outcomes but also might also cause learning inaction (as outlined by Vince, 2014). Accepting that learning is shaped by unconscious and conscious dynamics, they espouse a psychoanalytic approach to highlight the productive and paralysing effect of anxieties and tensions associated with learning. Hinshelwood (2009, p.517) notes that, 'new knowledge is essentially disruptive to the sense of self. All knowledge is personally transforming...' This emphasises the unique psychic positioning of the individual in the learning process and highlights the challenge to those leading professional development programmes when students' development might seem stuck for no apparent reason. For example, Traynor and Buus (2016) identified destabilisation arising from the dissonance between a student's idealism and their experience on placement. In their study with student nurses who had completed at least one placement, their articulated idealised selves confirmed an

identity of care and compassion; however, they also noted students' cynicism in response to their feelings of powerlessness and the way that they behaved 'just to pass the placement.' Traynor and Buus (*ibid*) interpreted the apparently contradictory findings of idealism and cynicism as responses to the anxiety evoked by the placement setting. The acknowledgement of anxiety in their study provides an opening for further investigation of unseen aspects within the process of professional development. Whilst consideration of cognitive aspects - for example, prior beliefs and self-efficacy - can offer valuable insight into a student's developing sense of self, recognition of unconscious dynamics provides a conceptualisation and vocabulary to think about the complex nature of idealised past and future selves within the re-formation of self during professional development.

Britzman (1998), widely acknowledged as a leader in the field of psychoanalytic understanding of education, applies psychoanalytic concepts to the field of learning and education. This linking of fields connects the conscious with the unconscious, the outside with the inside, and engages the individual in 'deeply disturbing' (p.30) processes. Britzman's questioning of how the self is put into question through learning and how learning might 'become entangled in the vicissitudes of unhappiness, suffering, conflict, accident, and desire,' (Britzman 1998, p.30) demonstrates how psychoanalytic theories of learning cannot be separated from theories of the self. The way in which individuals encounter various difficulties in learning is the focus of much of her work in the field of education. Britzman (*ibid*) identifies what she terms 'difficult knowledge' to conceptualise representations of social trauma and how an individual might respond to these. This demanding and uncomfortable learning applied to the field of teacher education evokes emotional responses (Räihä *et al.*, 2018). The significance that Britzman gives to emotions and biographical aspects of professional education 'relates to the ways in which becoming a teacher is so much an intimate, personal and internal drama,' (Bloomfield, 2010, p.222). Drawing on Klein's theory of object relations which outlines how an individual's early, internalised positive and negative relationships have dynamic influence on future relationships, Britzman (2003) identifies how these can disrupt the process of becoming a teacher. She thus encouraged educators to notice what is lost in the process of learning – what is not learned, and how meaning is made and remade as learners engage with the unknown.

Garrett (2011) suggests that this difficult knowledge can be helpfully understood not as an abstract concept but as a 'process of engagement' (p.322) with difficult topics and

curriculum themes such as those included in moral and peace education (Zembylas and Bekerman, 2019). Applied to the field of teacher education, difficult knowledge includes the topic of formation of identity linked to safeguarding issues and whether students can touch children in their care (Jones, 2003). Garrett (2011) associates difficult knowledge with taking risks in learning and thus demands something of the learner and the teacher. Through this, the entanglement of self with the content and process of learning difficult knowledge highlights internal conflict which might resist learning, and which can demand a 'shattering of self...to make way for the construction of something not yet defined,' (Heybach, 2012, p.25). Garrett (2013) acknowledges this complex subjectivity of student teachers' pasts and argues that individuals' development as teachers might also be impacted by personal narratives of schooling including the relationships formed at that time. He argues that students need to come to terms with their past to enable them to teach effectively – a process that can be very difficult due to a preference of holding onto familiar orientations and a resistance to new ways of thinking.

Whilst some aspects of a sense of self may be readily accepted by an individual, some might be more problematic - as recognised by Brown (2006, p.677), '...students can experience the emergence of an ambiguous, complex, irreducible and potentially problematic teacher self.' Placing value in individuals' biographies, he distinguishes between student teachers' emerging identities and their historic, non-professional selves and adopts psychoanalytic theory to interpret potential conflict between these. Brown (ibid) argues that the development of a teacher-self is ambiguous and confusing and might lead to the co-existence of contradictory selves. This suggests a potential fragmentation of the self into multiple identities which might disrupt the process of developmental transformation; identity is thus experienced as 'split and antagonistic' rather than 'harmonious and integrated.' This suggests that an important underlying aim of professional development is therefore to foster and retain identificatory coherence between, 'the person I used to be; the person I want to remain; the person I hate to be; the teacher I fear to be; the teacher I want to be' (p.677). This highlights the complex relationship between embodiment of a particular role and a sense of self. It includes how any demands to change are negotiated consciously and unconsciously and highlights the problematic ways in which an individual might accept, resist or reject the person they are becoming.

Brown's later collaborative work (Brown *et al.*, 2020) focuses less on identity and more on transformation of the self during the process of becoming a teacher. They analogue

the reflections of a student teacher's professional practice with a client in a series of psychoanalytic sessions 'making sense of their world by talking about it and reflexively pointing to herself through the perspectives revealed,' (p. 5). This reflects the potential value in adopting psychoanalytic approaches to help understand the accounts of students' experiences.

Anxiety associated with change might be reduced through students' constructions of their possible-selves (Hamman *et al.*, 2013). This links to Britzman's (1991) claim that, for beginning teachers, the most powerful self-image is the one that captures the self as the author of the teacher she is becoming. This locates agency and a sense of power within the individual rather than having change imposed upon them. Jacobson's (1964 cited in Milrod, 1982) reference to individuals having a 'wished-for self-image' might reveal something of a student's desire for their future-self. Psychoanalytic concepts of the 'ideal-ego' and the 'ego-ideal' - associated with possible future selves - have been applied to the development of teacher identity through the relationship between mentoring and development during professional placements (Clarke *et al.*, 2017). This emphasises the importance of noticing the individual's desires aligned with models of professional development that start with the individual's sense of self rather than identity formation shaped by external factors. This could provide useful insight into potential conflict and anxiety during professional development if discrepancies emerge between the individual's wished-for self and the self they see developing. Pillen *et al.* (2013) who examined a range of identity tensions in beginning teachers found that conflicts between what students desired, and what was possible in reality, were often mentioned. Although students had some coping strategies and asked for help, they often experienced feelings of helplessness and other internal struggles.

Psychoanalytic concepts applied to the fields of nursing and policing tend to focus on understanding particular aspects of their work. For example, the widely researched handover process between shifts was found to evoke anxiety for nurses (Evans *et al.*, 2008). Application of psychoanalytic theory identified how prohibited knowledge (such as the way a nurse was moved to love and hate a patient), was communicated in disguised form. The handover thus became a way to defend against anxiety which could otherwise overwhelm the nurse. Psychoanalytic theory has also been applied to the theory-practice gap in nurse education (Allan, 2011). Rather than focusing on development of theoretical ideas, adoption of a psychoanalytic framework in small group work with student nurses enabled the tutor to explore students' uncomfortable feelings

and anxiety associated with caring for dying patients, feeling like an outsider and feeling incompetent. Recognition of unconscious dynamics underlying the students' behaviour and emotions helped to understand how they were making sense of their professional development. This might be particularly important when professional roles demand dissociation from the emotions that individuals might be feeling. By focusing on police stress, Bonifacio (1991) explores emotionality and anxiety associated with the professional role and noted how the police officer's ego-ideal has the potential to become real only when they are engaged in their work. He suggests a psychodynamic explanation for the tendency for police to overwork is that the policeman's work, 'gratifies his unconscious desire for power, for mastery over danger, and of the sexual gratification of being 'the man,' (Bonifacio, 1991, p.130). He speculates that through antagonistic communication and provocation with the public, some police officers escalate low level deviance to create dangerous scenarios through which they can demonstrate their control, dominance and power. This interpretation of behaviour identified a defence against anxiety associated with feelings of powerlessness and fear. Such an understanding has the potential to effect change in an enduring way because it has engaged with the individual at a level deeper than their conscious or behavioural reaction to particular situations.

However, the value of psychoanalytic theory to understanding professional development is contested. West and Bainbridge (2012) suggest that there is a resistance to using psychoanalytic ideas in education partly due to the reliance of cognitivist approaches which promote an overly rational view of the learner. Psychoanalytic perspectives are at odds to positivist approaches - often sought after when needing evidence for change - and tend to be viewed as tentative and subversive (Petriglieri, 2020). Resistance to psychoanalytic understandings of learning is not new, particularly when applied to the fields of professions that exist to defend against society's anxiety in some way. Bonifacio (1991) recognises the unpopular position that police stress could be linked to unconscious conflicts and defence mechanisms. He argues that the lack of evidence in this area is partly due to the difficulty of applying such concepts to research paradigms and partly due to the lack of simple solutions that result. However, of greater influence is that the language of the unconscious does not fit well with the police community where suggestions of emotional disturbance, internal conflicts and anxieties are seen as a threat to perceptions of powerful police officers.

Given the current context of regulated, measurable, competence-based approaches to professional development, perhaps the lack of emphasis on emotions and associated anxiety is seen in more stark contrast than in the past. However, with high attrition rates for teachers (Foster, 2019) and nurses (NHS, 2017) in England and the increase in mental health difficulties in recent years (NHS, 2018), there might now be greater receptivity to understanding the relationship between inner and outer worlds. West and Bainbridge (2012) argue that this gap in understanding matters in the, 'notion of transformative possibilities in liminal spaces and experiences of becoming,' (2012, p.246). That is, it is important to notice the individual and the way that they are required to change during the process of becoming a professional. Embedding psychoanalytic approaches to learning in professional development programmes may not be straightforward. Elliott (2014, p.57) articulates the potential mess of adopting such approaches: 'By uncovering the import of unconscious irrational forces for the conscious intellect, Freud rewrote our understanding of rationality and selfhood as shot through with emotional ambivalence, uncontrollable forces and unconscious anguish.' However, although not logical, measurable or predictable, there is growing recognition of the value of adopting psychoanalytic approaches within the field of professional development.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, Freud's model of the self and human psyche offers a conceptual framework to think about the role of the unconscious and how this impacts an individual's emotions, thoughts and behaviour. The role of anxiety and how this might be expressed, managed or defended against can be applied to the process of professional education and the re-formation of self. Over time, Freud's concepts have been adopted, developed and criticised but the value of recognising the unconscious as a dynamic influence on the formation of new professionals has endured. Using psychoanalytic concepts can therefore be a productive way to understand how professional development might link to and influence constructions of the self. Accepting that anxiety and psychic defences against anxiety might lead to disruptive effects, this perspective enables exploration, and possible explanation, of why professional development might be difficult and how these difficulties might be overcome.

## **Part 3) Conceptualisations of transitions in professional education**

## **Introduction**

Identity and selfhood conceptualised as dynamic and in constant flux might be brought into focus at times of change where particular demands on the individual trigger anxiety. One such time is the specific transition embedded in many professional education programmes which is the first move from university-based learning to professional setting-based learning; from theory to practice; from hypothetical, imagined futures to lived, embodied experience. These practice-based placements embedded in professional education programmes mark a time of change. University students become professional practitioners and the locus of learning moves to a practice-based setting. This transition, as a necessary element of professional education, is a time of possible disruption for a student's sense of self as they become a teacher, nurse or police officer. This section draws on related literature about the nature of transitions. The first professional placement is conceptualised as a liminal space which becomes the threshold for entry into a profession – a point to which the individual can never return. Literature conceptualising this in-between world, which offers opportunities for the process of becoming, illuminates transitions as times of both possibility and conflict. Using the concept of liminal spaces to explore students' re-formation of self during professional development, literature drawing on psychoanalytic models can offer insights into how anxiety associated with transitions might be managed and defended against. This insight might be particularly useful to apply to understandings of students' developing selves which seem disconnected from their idealised-selves as they begin to engage with practice during the professional placement.

### **3.1) Transitions as liminal spaces: possibilities and disruptions**

Bridges (2004) connects times of transition with a sense of loss and new beginnings and suggests that these times can be viewed as a natural process of disorientation and reorientation linked to personal development and growth. He distinguishes between change and transition. Transition is associated with an inner process, it is, 'psychological...a...process that people go through as they internalize and come to terms with the details of the new situation that the change brings about,' (Bridges 2009, p.3). Analysis of transitions in a range of contexts has led to various conceptualisations all of which are associated with some form of change or challenge to identity and selfhood. For example, the return to work after maternity leave which Moffett (2018,

p.62) refers to as 'adjusting to that new norm'. Prisoners' transitions back into the community have been found to require some form of reconstruction and role transformation (Hlavka *et al.*, 2015) and transitions to involuntary unemployment have been linked to questions about social identification and belonging (Hetschko *et al.*, 2014). For refugees who transition between physical spaces, understanding how they identify with a sense of place can be explored through liminal zones whereby they move from the margins towards social integration (Lloyd *et al.*, 2017). Such examples of transition could be aligned with theories of emerging adulthood which stress the psychological and subjective experience of individuals, 'characterizing the age period as one of identity explorations, feeling "in-between," instability, self-focus, and possibilities,' (Tanner and Arnett, 2016, p34). This highlights both the problematic nature and the expansive potential associated with times of transition and change.

This in-between stage can be seen in professional development where the individual is located between being a university student and being a professional whilst being both at the same time. Concepts of liminality can be a useful way to gain insight into the possible tensions that students experience during transitions into professional settings. Liminality can be understood in two distinct ways - as a time of being in-between different stages and as passing through a threshold. These will be discussed respectively.

The status of students on professional education programmes can be conceptualised as inhabiting a form of liminal space – often associated with a feeling of 'betwixt-and-between,' a concept introduced in van Gennep's anthropological work (1909, cited in Turner 1969) and developed in Turner's (1969) research on sociocultural rites of passage. He specifically explored the relationship of the free individual and the social structures of the communities in which they live. Turner (*ibid*) attributes different meanings to the concept of liminality as both a stage within which a transition takes place and also as a state experienced by the person making the transition. He associates these neophytes - those in this in-between stage - as having no status or role. According to custom, during rites of passage, they were often presented by their cultures in near-naked states. Turner notes that they are in the 'limbo of statuslessness' (p.97). Metaphorically applying these concepts to students who are not yet qualified highlights a potential ambiguity and vulnerability associated with this stage of becoming. Turner's perception of those in transition as being on the margins and in some way inferior to the community they are about to enter into outlines how being in a 'not-yet' stage might also impact on identity and selfhood. It suggests that it is difficult to embody

the role of a professional when the individual's sense of self is still that of student and in some way inferior to those within the profession; students have not yet qualified and thus have not yet 'proved' their worth within the profession. Another link with identity is Turner's observation that liminal entities during certain initiation ceremonies were '...as though they were being reduced or ground down to a uniform condition...' (1969, p.95). Disturbing parallels with professional programmes which emphasise training (rather than education) could be drawn from this image as many programmes emphasise a standardisation of performativity and competence - and perhaps conformity - over individuality and development of self. An important question thus emerges from the literature concerning the extent to which professional education programmes emphasise being a professional as filling a pre-defined mould, or, in relation to this research, how the individual is enabled to develop into their version of what it means to be a teacher, nurse or police officer.

Borrowing from anthropological literature in her ethnographic study with student teachers, Head (1992) concludes that more explicit recognition of concepts of initiation rites and rites of passage could be applied to student teacher education as they have the potential to enhance the experience of individuals who are 'no longer just students but nor are they fully teachers,' (p.94). This acknowledgement of particular 'rites of passage' in professional development - for example, the first time a student successfully carries out a task associated with being a professional - might help to support students through the process of becoming. However, the decision of others to decide what is important within such passages might limit the potential development of self and would fail to acknowledge what is important for each individual student. This emphasises the very public and visible aspects of professional education associated with 'initiation' into a profession; learning (including making mistakes) in context means learning in front of others.

Making sense of the process of becoming a professional might take place in both public and private spaces, however in their work with women undertaking skills development, (specifically those with dependent children and low prior educational attainment), Buckingham *et al.* (2006) suggest that this binary disconnect of private and public simplifies what is a complex and interconnected process of change and suggest that there are spaces in-between. They identify an interesting conceptual frame to theorise the dynamics of possible difficulties associated with levels of visibility in the process of development where students are in very public domains whilst still novices. That

students bring their private worlds into public spaces has implications for how learning spaces themselves can support transitions – or as Buckingham *et al.* argue, the conceptual space within the physical learning space can itself become an ‘active agent of change’ (2006, p.898). Cook-Sather (2006), who draws directly on Turner’s work, proposes a revised theory of liminality in the process of becoming a teacher that reflects cultural changes. This includes the liminal spaces of email exchanged between preservice teachers and experienced mentor teachers. Such a space created by technology is the focus of Wood’s (2012) study on blogs as liminal spaces for student teachers. Both these studies demonstrate how the ambiguous stage of being both a student and a teacher – yet fully neither – can be supported by the use of a virtual space that holds students during the time of transition while they make sense of their developing identities. Parallels with in-between spaces can be linked to concepts of third space theory (Bhabha, 1990) in which new signs of identity might be recognised. Drawing on this theory in their study analysing how external mentors support student teachers’ identity development, McIntyre and Hobson (2016) identify the importance of non-judgemental support in motivating and safe spaces. These studies emphasise the value of how a form of liminal or third space can support the renegotiation of self during times of transition or when difficult demands are made of an individual. O’Sullivan’s (2019) research with qualified social workers demonstrates how safe, reflective spaces can become places where they can make sense of, and contain, the emotions and anxiety associated with their work. She identifies that this might be particularly helpful in a climate concerned with efficiency and certainty.

Transitions are not often associated with certainty. Shields (1992), who uses concepts of liminality in his analysis of the cultural positioning of a particular place refers to an ‘imaginary geography’ and to ‘a phantasmagoric landscape of affects’ (p.39). Through this language, he captures the complex personal layers of meaning that can be associated with a physical place. Similarly, a professional placement with an agreed time limit, physical venue and required outcomes might be seen by programme providers as a set or agreed entity within the programme. However, individuals embarking on a journey in the unknown landscape of their first professional placement may overlay their own imaginations onto this time of transition. Shield’s (1992, p.39) ‘imaginary geography’ and Turner’s reference to Japanese ‘floating worlds’ related to imagined universes (1969, p.vii) suggest that transitions can be a time of instability and ambiguity but also of potential and possibility. Turner (1981, p.159) refers to this time as

'a bridge between what is and what can or will be.' This suggests that although associated with uncertainty, times of transitions are opportunities for students' imagined or hoped-for selves to begin to emerge.

Although a time when aspirations were expressed, it has been established that transitions can also cause or reveal anxiety (Britzman, 2009). From a psychodynamic perspective, Giddens (1993, p.304) claims that 'transitions in individuals' lives have always demanded psychic reorganisation...' During such reorganisations - particularly if a transition is difficult - the inner subjective world of love and hate, anxiety and desire may be harder to defend. At such time of possible disruption to the self, defence against anxiety may thus manifest in observable ways revealing something of the individual's inner world. Giddens' (ibid) ideas offer useful insights into the process of becoming within professional education programmes as links can be made with how students' anxieties might be held and contained during times of transition. An emerging issue from the literature is how students might be supported to talk about their experience of the transition and what safe space might be offered for this.

The particular significance to liminality that relates to the meaning of 'limen' as threshold is now considered. This concept refers to a passing over into a new stage – a fixed, period in time that cannot be reversed as there can be no return to a place of not knowing and not experiencing. Within the contexts he studied, Turner (1969) identifies threshold as following a stage of separation and prior to aggregation. This mirrors the separation from a student identity in a university context. That is, the stepping into a time of taking on professional responsibilities whilst still students but not yet aggregated into the body of qualified professionals they are hoping to join. The concept of limen indicates a stepping through into something new as though passing through a portal - as suggested by Meyer and Land, (2006, p.3) in their work with students and the development of knowledge. They outline conceptual thresholds as ways of '...opening up a new and previously inaccessible way of thinking about something. It represents a transformed way of understanding, or interpreting, or viewing something without which the learner cannot progress.' Neve *et al.* (2017), who adopted a threshold approach in their research with medical students to analyse how they learn professionalism through their lived experiences on placement, found that threshold concepts related to students' developing professional identities were linked to the way that they were learning to think like practitioners.

Transitions conceptualised as liminal spaces include a stage of being in-between and also as a particular point in time of passing through a threshold into something new. Both concepts are associated with how an individual might change or be transformed in some way – whether cognitively, emotionally or unconsciously – and reveal how such times are linked to potential disorientation. Support as significant factor in the success of the transition highlights the importance of stabilising and reorienting a sense of self and identity during times of flux and ambiguity. Focusing on early professional development, Dearmun (2000) argues that the support given to newly-qualified nurses during the time of transition into their first job is crucial. The nature of the support to help manage disorientation and the potential loss of the old during a transition may be a key influence in shaping the outcome of how successfully an individual can live with what is new – particularly if the transition is stressful or demands some identity re-formation. Dearmun (ibid) claims that a lack of support in the early stages of their career can lead to nurses leaving the profession altogether. The suggestion is that this support - or lack of it - during the early stages of a new professional's career is thought to set the individual's trajectory and longevity within that career based on the formative stages of identity construction and re-formation of self. These implications link to the very early stages of an individual's first qualified role. By looking at the even earlier stage of the first professional placement, insight into how an individual begins to navigate a transition into practice can be explored. Whilst this transition from student to professional might be a positive time of growth, such times of change are not necessarily straightforward. They are associated with emotions which can become problematic (Jones *et al.*, 2000). Conceptualising the first professional placement as a particular kind of transition and how students navigate their way through this is the focus of the next section.

### **3.2) The first professional placement as a liminal space**

There are different perspectives on the value of the professional placement as a means of understanding identity formation and renegotiation of self. The importance of the professional placement for the development of professional identity is well established for student teachers (Yogev and Michaeli, 2011; Rots *et al.*, 2012). Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) link the potentially destabilising adjustments provoked when moving from university to a school-based setting to a period of identity change. Coward *et al.* (2015, p.196) note such consensus among researchers and teacher educators and

suggest that the professional placement, 'may be one of the most important foundational experiences of the development of professional identity.' Poom-Valickis and Löffström (2018) found that all student teachers in their study listed the professional placement as instrumental in the development of their teacher identity. Walkington (2005) also emphasised the importance of placements and concluded that the formation of teacher identity during placements should challenge students' experiences and beliefs to enable them to grow as a professional rather than simply learn to fit in. Although aspirational for individual development, rather than simply replicating what they see, this is a challenge for students whose identities are still unformed and who have limited agency to question those in positions of power responsible for assessing their progress.

In their study with student teachers, Coward *et al.* (2015) questioned whether the student teaching experience impacted the early emergence of professional identity and that if some impact occurred, what the underlying factors of any changes were. Their findings concluded that most of the participants exhibited some kind of change and that across a number of factors - including confidence, motivation and belief about what made effective teaching - these changes took place when evaluation of experiences and subsequent interpretation were not consistent with prior beliefs and self-views. Where interpretations of experiences were consistent, Coward *et al.* (ibid) noted that professional identity was confirmed, and that change did not take place. This suggests that some knowledge or articulation of prior beliefs and self-views might be beneficial before a placement begins so that when cognitive dissonance or disequilibrium (Piaget, 1936) arises within the placement, students can be supported in the required changes.

Within the in-between space of the professional placement, Korthagen (2004) disputes whether the focus on identity is helpful given the relatively short time frame. He emphasises that the process of an emerging new identity is slow and only meaningfully takes place during an individual's career. Britzman (1991, p.8) highlights this for teacher education, 'Learning to teach – like teaching itself – is always the process of becoming; a time of formation and transformation, a scrutiny into what one is doing, and who one can become.' Whilst formation of identity may continue to change throughout an individual's career, it could be argued that the first professional placement offers insight into the very early influences on students' emerging selves. These may in turn lay a foundation for the success or failure of a construction of self associated with being in a professional role. Johnson *et al.* (2012) recognise that nurses' professional identities will continue to evolve during their careers but that education – including professional

placements – is a critical period as, ‘it is during this time students gain the knowledge and skills that separate nurses as professional healthcare workers from lay people,’ (p.562). The separation from a past identity as a layperson to a recognised ‘professional’ questions how new identities and understandings of self might begin to emerge. This highlights the importance of understanding what meaning and significance students attribute to the very early stages of their professional development. Retention of nurses on professional programmes has been linked to the first clinical placement (Hamshire *et al.*, 2012) which Leducq *et al.* (2012) identified as a specific transition. They found that preparing students with knowledge of what to expect and the nature of support through the placement were key factors influencing retention. The emerging question from the literature thus concerns issues of how the first placement might be seen as a specific transition in which to understand the re-formation of self.

## **Conclusion**

Being in transition, conceptualised by liminality - both as times of being in-between and as passing through a threshold - is linked with change and instability. Focusing on transitions can thus reveal how an individual might maintain a coherent sense of self and how new understandings of identity and selfhood might emerge. Conscious and unconscious dynamics associated with vulnerability, loss, and the unknown can influence how an individual might successfully navigate unknown imaginary landscapes. Contextualised in professional development, how these dynamics influence the re-formation of self is considered an important focus within the specific landscape of the first practice-based placement.

## **Chapter conclusion**

This chapter first outlined the ways in which the complex relationship between the individual and their social environment could be productively understood by adopting a psychosocial approach to conceptualisations of identity. Recognition of the potential dissonance between society’s expectations of individuals in particular professional roles and individuals’ own constructions of their identity highlighted the ambiguity of language used in the field of identity – for example, ‘professional’ or ‘workplace’ identity versus a ‘personal’ identity. Drawing on literature focused on professional education, the value of conceptualising an individual’s multiple identities more holistically as a sense of self was outlined. This conceptualisation argued that professional development could be more

clearly understood as a renegotiation or re-formation of self rather than as developing a separate or entirely new identity. However, the role of personal histories and emotions recognised as influencing the re-formation of self could not give a complete account for some of the more complex dynamics experienced by individuals during their development as teachers.

Key concepts from Freud's psychoanalytic theory were outlined in Part 2 and included the role of the unconscious focusing largely on anxiety and psychic defences to this. This perspective offers a productive way to analyse complexities associated with the re-formation of self that cannot be accounted for by other previously discussed theories. Understanding the unconscious as active and dynamic can provide insight into how a student might navigate transitions embedded into professional programmes. The final part of the chapter conceptualised the specific nature of the first professional placement as both a time of being 'betwixt and between' and as passing through a distinct threshold. The concept of liminality used to explore experiences of transitions identified them as times that were particularly disorienting and when an individual's sense of self is illuminated as vulnerable and volatile. Adopting a psychoanalytic lens can be a productive way to understand how students navigate the ambiguous and complex landscape of the first professional placement. This includes how constructions of an idealised, future-self might offer continuity and stability as they enter the unknown.

The overarching argument presents the value of applying psychoanalytic concepts to analyse the re-formation of self during times of transition. Once recognised, it is difficult to ignore the potential value in understanding the role of affective and psychic dynamics during the processes of identity re-formation which lie at the heart of professional education. The lack of established models for professional education programmes which incorporate psychoanalytic theory identifies a rich field for further research and the development of knowledge concerning the re-formation of self.

# Chapter 3

## Methodology

### Introduction

The motivation for this research was my growing dissatisfaction with teacher education programmes which focused on the development of particular competencies and outcomes and which seemed to overshadow the individual's experience of development of becoming a teacher – a process that remained largely unexplored within the programme. I had observed that student ambivalence regarding the first professional placement reflected an urgency to get on with the practical aspects of their development (a necessary step towards qualifying as a teacher) but also some anxiety associated with whether they would be successful. Through my experience of working with students over a number of years, their perceptions regarding the placement seemed to indicate a theory-practice disconnect, as though the placement was the only space in which their development took place. My decision to begin a doctorate grew out of these experiences. As a tutor on the university-based programme, I wanted to know more about students' experience during the placement to understand the process of identity re-formation from their perspective. Although I visited students during the placement, this was for the particular purpose of monitoring the school's assessment of the student's progress, largely against a set list of professional competencies and expected outcomes. There was limited opportunity to discuss the individual's emotions and personal difficulties beyond the scope of teaching related issues.

For me, teacher education had become a very familiar process of professional development. I decided to broaden the scope of the research to unfamiliar professions in order to look at student teacher development in a new way. Loosely based on Freud's 'Impossible Professions,' I included student nurses and police officers in the study. The initial research aims were to understand:

- The impact of professional education on new students' sense of self
- The process of 'becomingness' focusing on an individual's emotional and internal development

In the first part of this chapter, I map out the journey from my initial research aims, investigated via a questionnaire, to my more focused research questions. In response to the identification and interpretation of idealisations, fantasies and anxiety in the questionnaire data, I used psychoanalytical concepts more centrally within my research to explore the psychological mechanisms used in the re-formation of self and identity. In Part 2 I outline my approach to unstructured interviews with students before and towards the end of the first professional placement. This included discussion of the interview process and the opportunities that research interviews offer as a potentially transformative space. In Part 3, I outline my analysis of interview transcripts which focused on the use of a psychoanalytic framework to interpret anxiety – both in the constructions of students' hoped-for selves from the first interview and in their emerging identities from the second interview following experience-based practice. I then explain my approach to data analysis whereby my identified themes led to a specific conceptualisation of a student's emerging-self. This section also includes ethical issues arising from the process of analysis.

## **1) Research strategy to refine research questions: questionnaires**

### **1.1) Data collection method: Questionnaires to inform focus of interviews**

Aligned with the overall research design, I decided to use in-depth, unstructured interviews as the most appropriate method of data collection (further discussion below). To maximise the potential of these interviews, I wanted to first understand more about the students' thoughts and feelings associated with the forthcoming professional placement whilst they were at the start of their programme. Of particular importance for me was to develop an understanding of the perceptions of student nurses and police officers as I had not worked with these professional programmes before. I wanted to allow this unfamiliarity to help me look at the experiences of student teachers in a new way. I used the same questionnaire for each of the three professions. A range of questions were included; closed questions allowed me to record quantitative data linked to their professions and how long students had been thinking of becoming a teacher, nurse or police officer; and open questions, intended to explore motivations, feelings and perceptions.

Perhaps the greatest strength of questionnaires is their ability to generate a lot of data in a relatively short time period (Walliman, 2011). Given the practicalities of my research including the very limited time I had with the student nurses and student police officers, use of questionnaires proved to be an effective method. Widely accepted limitations of using questionnaires is that they are impersonal, potentially ambiguous and can lead to a low response rate (Walliman, *ibid*). However, the responses from the questionnaires enabled me to construct more focused interviews, offered some triangulation and importantly, developed my understanding of the students at this stage of their development.

## **1.2) Research context: setting, participants and sample**

All the participants in my research were students at the same English university on professional education programmes for primary teaching, paediatric nursing or policing. Gender, age and previous careers were not taken into consideration when selecting my participants. The only criteria were that all were in their first year of a professional education programme for one of the three focus professions and were on programmes with the first professional placement in the Autumn term. Student teachers were selected from the one-year PGCE programme rather than from the three-year undergraduate degree programme due to the timing of the first professional placement in the Autumn term. Given the focus on the first professional placement in my research, the PGCE cohort's first placement aligned most closely with the timing of the placements for the student nurses and police officers. The student nurses were on a three-year degree programme which was part of an established partnership with the NHS during which students undertook placements in a variety of settings. The student police officers were on a new two-year foundation degree programme that had been set up as a partnership between the university and the local police force; participants in my research were the first cohort on this programme. Each group of students were based on a different campus in the same city.

To arrange the interview times, I contacted each student separately, so unless the students themselves decided to tell others that they had volunteered to take part in the interview, there was no way for the cohort to know who had participated in this phase of the research. All audio files of the interviews are password protected. Throughout this

thesis I have anonymised all names but have reflected the gender of the participant through the assigned name.

### **1.3) Data collection: questionnaires**

At the start of their programme, students from each of the focus professions were invited to complete a paper-based questionnaire at the end of one of their university-led sessions. I did not previously know my colleagues on other professional education programmes but contacted them to outline my research and the possibility of meeting their cohorts of nurse and police officer students at the end of a specific timetabled session for the completion of the questionnaires. During this time, I explained the purpose of the research to the students and presented an overview of this in written form (Appendix B). Students were given the choice to leave the session at that point or to stay to take part in the research on the understanding that they could withdraw at any point; all students chose to stay and they all completed the questionnaires. I stayed in the room throughout the process of data collection to clarify any questions that arose. The tutors who had been leading the sessions also stayed which offered some familiarity for their cohorts. Their presence also endorsed my research and they supported their students' optional involvement in follow-up interviews which students were invited to indicate an interest in at the end of the questionnaire.

### **1.4) Questionnaires: analysis and key findings**

Arising from my dissatisfaction with the outcomes-focused preparation of teachers, and aiming to discover how the process of professional development impacted personally on students, the purpose of the questionnaires was threefold: to explore students' motivations and perceptions of their suitability for their chosen profession; to question the extent to which they thought they could be 'trained' for the profession; and to identify students' thoughts and feelings about the forthcoming professional placement.

Within the overarching aim of establishing how professional education might impact on an individual's sense of self, I now discuss responses to three questions from the questionnaire in detail. Although more usually presented as findings within a thesis, questionnaire responses are included here to demonstrate their dynamic impact on the direction of my enquiry and the subsequent methodology. These three specific

questions revealed students' anticipations, idealisations and anxieties associated with their professional role and with the first professional placement:

Qu. 3 List three things that attracted you to this profession

Qu. 6 What are you most looking forward to about the professional placement?

Qu. 7 What are you least looking forward to?

My analysis of the responses of what had attracted students to their chosen profession identified particular idealisations about helping others, making a difference and giving back to society in some way. Although they had not yet had direct experience in the role, they articulated constructions of what impact they might have in the future. These desires were echoed in the responses to Question 6 where students identified their hopes for the first placement and more broadly, conceptualisations of their future-selves. Responses to Question 7 outlined a range of concerns about failure and of the unknown. At this point in their programme, students were stuck in an unknown stage with contradictory and conflicting feelings about the first placement; I was surprised by the strength of feeling revealed through the students' responses which indicated both excitement and anxiety. This insight into students' ambivalence about the placement developed my understanding of their inner tensions and led to the adoption of a psychoanalytic approach within my research. Key findings outlining students' fantasies and fears about the first placement are presented here to contextualise my understanding of their perceptions and feelings and the part this played in my research design.

The sample of participants from each professional programme varied depending on the size of the cohort in a particular taught session. The number of completed questionnaires for each cohort is indicated at the top of each column in the data tables: student teachers 87; student nurses 18; and student police officers 16. All of the responses to question 3 that I interpreted as in some way altruistic were included in the table.

For questions 6 and 7, I only included a selection of questionnaire responses for each theme I identified. Numbers presented in brackets in the tables represent the frequency of responses aligned with the focus of each distinct theme. For example, in response to the question asking what students were most looking forward to about their placement, I identified one theme of putting theory into practice. I included nine responses by

student teachers which represented the breadth of responses associated with this theme. I did not include all 36 responses as the wording of the other 27 responses was very similar and thus repetitive of the data presented in the tables. The number indicated in brackets sometimes matches the number of responses listed in the table for a specific theme. This is particularly the case for themes with few responses and for student nurses and police officers who were part of smaller samples where there were fewer repetitive responses. As participants could include one or more response - or leave the question blank – the number of responses does not reflect the number of participants in the sample.

**1.4.i) Question 3: List three things that attracted you to this profession**

Students from all three professions named many self-focused aspects of what had attracted them to the profession including: their own enjoyment; career prospects; possibilities to travel; status of the role; the salary; developing their own knowledge and skills; and doing what they love – which one respondent named ‘soul rewarding.’ Factors attracting new students also included outward-looking, more altruistic aspects:

Student teachers	Student nurses	Student police officers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– To be part of a profession that makes a difference.</li> <li>– Inspiring young children.</li> <li>– Helping to make children’s lives enjoyable by helping them reach their potential and keeping them safe.</li> <li>– Building friendships with children and their families to help children flourish.</li> <li>– Nurturing and impacting growth of children.</li> <li>– To make a difference in young children’s lives.</li> <li>– Helping people understand that having a learning disability does not stop your dreams.</li> <li>– Desire to ensure that children are not just ‘shipped through the system.’</li> <li>– Working with children of deprived backgrounds.</li> <li>– Civic contribution. Philanthropy.</li> <li>– Contributing to the advancement of society.</li> <li>– Enabling social mobility.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Worthwhile.</li> <li>– Making a positive change.</li> <li>– Helping others.</li> <li>– Helping to improve someone’s life.</li> <li>– Giving back to the community. Desire to nurse people back to health.</li> <li>– Make a difference to sick and vulnerable children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– It’s a worthwhile job.</li> <li>– Give something back to community.</li> <li>– Help the community/ people.</li> <li>– Maintaining the law/bring offenders before courts</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Interested in helping those who struggle with school.</li> <li>– A bit deep but helping society improve.</li> </ul>		
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*Table 2 Students' altruistic responses to Qu 3: List three things that attracted you to this profession*

The desire to 'make a difference' to another individual's life reflected students' idealisations of these professions as being 'worthwhile' and their future-self idealised as having influence to effect some form of change for the better. I was struck by students' fantasies of broader societal impact and transformation indicated through references to 'giving something back' to society or making a 'civic contribution.' I wondered whether they really believed that they would be significant in this way or whether such idealisations of a particular role had a stabilising function for their identity within the process of professional development – a question that later shaped my analysis of interview transcripts.

Further idealisations about making a difference and other transformative aspects of the professional role were included in students' responses to the question of what they were most looking forward to about their first professional placement. Responses also included looking forward to getting into a real-life context and applying theory to practice. An overview of their responses is included here:

**1.4.ii) Question 6: What are you most looking forward to about the professional placement?**

	Responses of students from each focus profession (No. of responses)		
	<b>Student teachers (87)</b>	<b>Student nurses (18)</b>	<b>Student police officers (16)</b>
Setting-specific comments	<p>The classroom/teaching environment.</p> <p>The school setting. Seeing different schools.</p> <p>Being in the classroom.</p> <p>Actually being in school all day. (25)</p>	<p>Working on the ward.</p> <p>Working in a hospital.</p> <p>Getting to work on a ward. (3)</p>	<p>Getting out and doing police work.</p> <p>Real-life situations.</p> <p>Night-time policing.</p> <p>Catching drug dealers. (6)</p>
Reference to theory/practice	<p>Putting all the reading and theory into practice.</p> <p>Putting skills/knowledge/information learned so far into practice.</p> <p>Putting all my ideas into plans!</p> <p>Teaching is based around a hands-on approach.</p> <p>Putting into action what I have learned – doing what I enjoy.</p> <p>Getting to grips with the practical side of teaching.</p> <p>Getting real, hands-on experience working with different age ranges.</p> <p>The opportunity to test the things I've learnt.</p> <p>Getting on with the job. Getting stuck in! Learn most on placement. (36)</p>	<p>Being able to apply skills that I have learnt in practice and getting involved.</p> <p>Getting real-life experiences and experiencing a variety of situations.</p> <p>Interacting with the public – putting my training into practice.</p> <p>Getting hands-on experience.</p> <p>Being able to put into practice everything I have learnt in the past, both in education and life experiences. (10)</p>	<p>Chance to put new skills into practice.</p> <p>Get a feel for the realities of the job.</p> <p>It'll give me a chance to put what I have learnt into practice.</p> <p>Doing something practical and relevant.</p> <p>Actually getting hands-on experience. (8)</p>

<p>Reference to new skills and opportunities unique to the professional placement.</p>	<p>Learning tricks of the trade.  Gaining further...knowledge.  To start learning in a real-life situation.  Observing the 'expert.'  Observing and learning new skills.  Discussing with teachers and learning from them.  Learning more about my role in the classroom as the main teacher. (22)</p>	<p>The learning opportunities and meeting people.  Learning about different illnesses and medical procedures.  Learning hands-on skills which are related to nursing.  Learning so many new skills.  Experiencing new situations.  Working as part of a team.  Having new experience. (8)</p>	<p>Learning all the new skills and techniques.  Developing new ...skills.  Facing new challenges. (7)</p>
<p>Transformative aspects of the job</p>	<p>Encouraging the next generation. Being a role model.  Inspiring young people to work to their greatest ability and achieving everything they desire with my help.  Making a difference to a child's learning environment.  Helping children learn.  Helping them through something difficult and seeing them understand.  Working with and hopefully inspiring young children.  Seeing how I have helped them learn - seeing children enjoying my lessons. (12)</p>	<p>Helping others in the real community.  Making someone's hospital visit that bit better, whether it be the patient themselves or the parent of an unwell child.  Being able to help people who aren't well. (3)</p>	<p>Helping people.  Community interaction – helping people. (2)</p>

<p>Identity</p>	<p>Beginning to develop my teacher identity.          Seeing what I'm actually like as a teacher.          I can continue to learn about the type of teacher I want to be (or don't want to be!).          To try to find my natural inside teacher – a little bit anyway. It's a bit abstract at the moment too...          [Being] able to get a real feel for the end result: when I am a teacher and I have my own class. (10)</p>	<p>Starting to become a professional being involved with the care of a patient. (1)</p>	<p>Being able to experience what the role is actually like.          Seeing police as a full-time officer. (2)</p>
<p>Reference to emotions</p>	<p>Initially I am excited about realising how this initial stage of my PGCE will have impacted my approach in the classroom.          Doing what I enjoy. (2)</p>	<p>(0)</p>	<p>Developing new and exciting skills. (1)</p>

Table 3 Students' responses to Question 6: What are you most looking forward to about the professional placement?

## **Responses: What are you most looking forward to about the professional placement?**

Students' responses indicated a clear desire to get into settings where they could experience the 'real-life' and 'hands-on' practice of being in a professional role. Reading through the collective responses suggested students' impatience to discover whether the skills, knowledge and information that had been learned through university-based sessions could be applied successfully in practice. The language used about the forthcoming placement was positive and reflected a readiness to move into the professional setting:

- 'Facing new challenges'
- 'Experiencing new situations'
- 'Putting all the reading and theory into practice'
- 'Interacting with the public – putting my training into practice'
- 'Doing something practical and relevant'

Students across all professions also recognised their related setting as a site for the construction of new knowledge; references were made to learning that could only take place in the professional context:

- 'To start learning in a real-life situation'
- 'Observing and learning new skills'
- 'Learning all the new skills and techniques'
- 'Learning hands-on skills which are related to nursing'

Such responses indicated the perceived significance of this different professional space for embodied learning and development of practice.

Students outlined a range of fantasies about being in a future role. Projections of their future-selves included being transformational through helping others and making a difference to the lives of others in some way:

- 'Helping them through something difficult and seeing them understand'
- 'Being able to help people who aren't well'
- 'Community interaction – helping people'

This reflected students' sense of their future-self as being successful and significant. These idealised responses were particularly interesting when contrasted with those from the next

question which highlight the students' concerns about the unknown. Together with the responses to Question 3, students' idealisations of their future selves were explored and refined through the use of a psychoanalytic conception of psychological defences used in the analysis of interview data. Constructions of students' anticipatory-selves became one of the main focuses of my research.

Although many students included profession-specific ways that they could make a difference to the lives of others, very few included responses about their identity. A response from a student nurse and a student police officer included reference to becoming a professional and experiencing the role as aspects they were most looking forward to:

- 'Starting to become a professional being involved with the care of a patient'
- 'Being able to experience what the role is actually like'

The concept of a 'professional' and a 'role' suggested a more removed identity to that referred to by some of the student teachers which included:

- 'Beginning to develop my teacher identity'
- 'Seeing what I'm actually like as a teacher'
- 'I can continue to learn about the type of teacher I want to be (or don't want to be!)
- 'To try to find my natural inside teacher – a little bit anyway. It's a bit abstract at the moment too...'

The teachers' responses suggested some recognition that there was a choice about the type of teacher they wanted to be. The last response about finding their 'natural inside teacher' conceptualised an identity that was lying dormant or was already part of them in some way. The ways in which students re-formed their sense of self in order to integrate a new professional identity became a focus for this research.

The lack of students' comments regarding personal change and development suggested that at this stage, they were more outward focused on their future professional role and on their anticipations of the professional setting they would be going into. This lack of focus on the self was echoed in the lack of reference to emotions for which there were just two responses: one student teacher commented that, 'Initially I am excited about realising how the initial stage of my PGCE will have impacted my approach in the classroom;' and the other response was from a student police officer who also referred to excitement, 'Developing new and exciting skills.' It was interesting to note that the skills were exciting

rather than that the individual felt excited. The lack of reference to emotions was particularly striking when compared to the emotive language associated with what students were *least* looking forward to about the forthcoming placement.

**1.4.ii) Question 7: What are you least looking forward to about the professional placement?**

	Responses of students from each focus profession (No. of responses)		
	Student teachers (87)	Student nurses (18)	Student police officers (16)
Doing something wrong, failing or not succeeding	<p>Failing</p> <p>When things in the classroom may go wrong.</p> <p>Failing and lesson plans going wrong. Not being able to get my point across.</p> <p>Getting things wrong/making mistakes.</p> <p>Struggling with it/failing.</p> <p>Doing it wrong or making a big mistake.</p> <p>Potential of failing/confusing the children.</p> <p>Possibility of not doing well. (11)</p>	(0)	<p>Not fulfilling what is expected of me.</p> <p>Maybe getting things wrong.</p> <p>Pressure to make the correct decisions. (3)</p>
Uncertainty associated with doing the job well or effectively	<p>The unknown – especially working in years I have no experience in; the other year groups.</p> <p>Feeling out of my depth.</p> <p>Worries over planning.</p> <p>Asked to teach with no notice.</p> <p>Being caught off guard and not having the answer.</p> <p>Feeling lost or out of my depth. Being unprepared for the unexpected in the classroom.</p>	<p>Feeling in the way/unsure what to do.</p> <p>Being a student and knowing so little about nursing!</p> <p>It's difficult to know if I am confident enough to take on some responsibilities but the support network is good and so I just need some confidence within my own capabilities.</p> <p>Not knowing what to do in certain situations.</p> <p>If difficult cases arise and I am unsure what to do and feel helpless in the situation.</p>	<p>Not knowing what to do in some situations.</p> <p>The unexpected.</p> <p>Being put in danger because I don't have sufficient skills to deal with the situation.</p> <p>Expectation that I know everything already.</p> <p>Possibly don't enjoy the full-time role as I thought I would.</p> <p>The experience of the transferring from one force to another and whether it was the right thing to do. (6)</p>

	<p>Seriously, I can imagine the learning curve being steep so dreading the inevitable 'why am I doing this?' moment.</p> <p>Being 'the student,' I want to be able to make a good contribution but am worried I won't necessarily be given the opportunity.</p> <p>It's always a bit intimidating going into a new environment but I'm excited about all the learning opportunities it will present. (12)</p>	<p>Not knowing what to do or if a situation arises and I don't know how to deal with it.</p> <p>I feel nervous about being in a new environment. And seeing things that may be difficult to deal with emotionally.</p> <p>Difficult situations that may arise and not knowing how to deal with it. (8)</p>	
General concerns	<p>Workload.</p> <p>Working to an ethos I don't agree with.</p> <p>Time management/stress – not having enough time to feel like I'm completing each task to my best ability.</p> <p>Travelling, being late, traffic etc.</p> <p>Issues around safeguarding issues. (19)</p>	<p>Long days/hours. (1)</p>	<p>Slightly worried about the long hours and raising a child.</p> <p>Excessive amounts of paperwork and time-wasting bureaucracy.</p> <p>Any space filling drivel packed in e.g. PC-ness. (3)</p>
Profession specific concerns	<p>Lesson planning.</p> <p>Unsure how to deal with children whose first language is not English.</p> <p>Paperwork.</p> <p>Behaviour management.</p> <p>Remembering the children's names.</p> <p>Parents' evenings. (34)</p>	<p>Dealing with children who aren't going to get any better.</p> <p>Seeing severely ill children, I'm worried it will be upsetting.</p> <p>Emotional cases. (4)</p>	<p>(0)</p>
Being observed and assessed	<p>Observation – pressure and stress.</p> <p>Inspectors – Ofsted.</p> <p>Being observed and the whole assessment process.</p>	<p>(0)</p>	<p>Being judged. (1)</p>

	<p>I am not so keen on being 'observed' as part of my placement but appreciate that this is part of my PGCE.</p> <p>Observations by staff/[university] tutors. (9)</p>		
<p>Social – interpersonal aspects</p>	<p>Hoping I will fit in with the staff and they are helpful and kind.</p> <p>Hope that the school/teacher I'm working with is helpful and supportive.</p> <p>Annoying the class teacher.</p> <p>Having an unsympathetic mentor.</p> <p>Being cut off from my peers.</p> <p>Teachers not liking me may create an awkward environment.</p> <p>Difficult to plan with [teaching] partner. (11)</p>	<p>Being the new one on the ward and facing new challenges.</p> <p>Dealing with difficult parents.</p> <p>Conflicting parents.</p> <p>Aggressive, confrontational parents.</p> <p>Being a burden and not being able to help. (7)</p>	<p>(0)</p>

*Table 4 Students' responses to Question 7: What are you least looking forward to about the professional placement?*

## **Responses: What are you least looking forward to about the professional placement?**

As might be predicted, students' response to this question outlined some general concerns such as long hours and workload and for student teachers and nurses, some profession-specific concerns. What I had not predicted was the strength and frequent use of language and emotion associated with uncertainty and fear of failure. Although responses to the previous question about what they were most looking forward to reflected a desire – almost an impatience – to get on with the hands-on experience, the responses to this question revealed students' ambivalence about the placement. That this was the first placement was significant. Although student teachers had spent years in the classroom as children, and the professions for all students were in some way known about, there were a lot of unknown aspects of becoming a professional. Language included reference to feelings:

- 'Feeling lost or out of my depth'
- 'Feeling in the way/unsure what to do'
- 'I feel nervous about being in a new environment'
- 'If difficult cases arise and I am unsure what to do and feel helpless in the situation'

The concern of not knowing was also articulated by students across professions: being unprepared; the unknown; being caught off-guard; not knowing what to do; the unexpected; and the expectation that I know everything already.

Given the limited reference to emotions in responses to the question about what students were most looking forward to, the inclusion of language associated with anxiety seemed significant in the responses to what they were least looking forward to. It was as though the questionnaire was a channel for the force of their feelings to be expressed and raised the question of whether any of the professional education programmes gave space for or acknowledged students' anxiety and uncertainty associated with the forthcoming placement. Also noticeable was the lack of reference by any of the student nurses to failing or doing something wrong. Whilst student teachers and police officers had referred to concerns about making mistakes, failing and not fulfilling what was expected of them, the nurses had made no reference to this at all. Perhaps this was an area of anxiety that was so heavily defended it was not mentioned; if they did something wrong or failed, it could mean the death of a child. Three of the student nurses had named emotional cases, severely ill children and children who were not going to get any better as factors they were least looking forward to suggesting that there was anxiety about how they would cope in these situations.

Furthermore, although student nurses expressed concern about difficult, conflicting, aggressive and confrontational parents of the children they were nursing, they did not include any concerns about being observed or assessed. Perhaps this too was a defended area of practice. This contrasts with the responses from one policing student who had indicated that they were least looking forward to being judged and with the many responses from student teachers which included observation from teachers, university tutors, peers and Ofsted.

The questionnaire data that was most productive in exploring how professional education might impact on an individual's sense of self, including their emotional dynamics, were responses to the three questions outlined above. Analysis of the responses were instrumental in shaping the direction and focus of my research questions and were based on the following findings: students' articulated idealised versions of themselves linked to a range of fantasies of their future-self in a particular role; students' ambivalence about the first professional placement suggested internal conflict that was perhaps not discussed as part of the programme; students' conceptualisations of how their professional identity would begin to emerge varied; and students' use of language associated with emotion largely indicated anxiety associated with failing and the unknown.

The responses from the questionnaire suggested that I had revealed the students' internal and perhaps unconscious conflicts in relation to the first professional placement which was worth exploring further. Such exploration had potential to reveal students' anxieties associated with how they would become a professional (rather than simply completing the programme) which extended beyond the anxieties focused on just the first placement. Although there was some excitement associated with students' anticipation of the placement, the anxiety I interpreted seemed to overshadow this and thus raised questions about the role of students' idealisations – were their constructions of successful future-selves a way of stabilising a sense of self at a time of change - or perhaps a mechanism to defend against anxiety of failing and of the unknown?

## **1.5) Research aims and questions**

The initial aim of my research was to understand the impact of professional education on a new student's sense of self and within this process of 'becomingness,' focus on how their emotions and inner world might shape their development. The use of language in students' responses to the questionnaire was associated with both fear and excitement and gave me insight into their ambivalence regarding the first professional placement in particular. This led me to want to know more about an individual's unique personal story and how their inner world might shape their sense of self as they develop an identity as a teacher, nurse or police officer. Given that all students were required to undertake a placement for the profession they were hoping to join, why were some so anxious about it and how might this affect their development?

Through analysis of transcripts from interviews before and towards the end of the first professional placement, I interpreted further ambivalences which I discuss later in this chapter. These include how individuals responded to their physical appearance, how they thought others perceived them in their role and the relationships they established with others. I noticed tensions between what students wanted to become and whether this was realised during their placement. Integrating a psychoanalytical conceptual framework enabled me to interpret and explore the role of anxiety within these tensions. This included how and why anxiety might have led individuals to construct idealised versions of themselves and how they managed anxiety when their experienced-based practice conflicted with these idealisations. Such tensions between an individual's construction of self before and towards the end of the first placement led me to introduce a temporal dimension to my research. These questions emerged from - and were answered through - analysis of students' interview transcripts using a psychoanalytic framework to interpret their responses:

- How do students articulate ideas of their future-selves before their first professional placement?
- To what extent is the first professional placement important to students' development of self and identity?
- How do students develop and articulate a sense of an emerging-self during their first professional placement?
- What similarities and differences within students' development of selves emerge in an analysis across three professional education programmes?
- What psychical mechanisms do students employ to stabilise a consistent sense of self during times of transition?

The following sections in this chapter offer an overview of - and dilemmas within - my process of data production and analysis.

## **2) Methodological framework: the unstructured interview as a space for data production and personal transformation**

### **2.1) Unstructured interviews: freedom and flexibility**

The force of emotion expressed in the questionnaires which had indicated a language of anxiety led me to adopt an approach to interviewing that would enable participants to talk about their experience on placement in a way that might allow me to explore their inner world. It also led to my decision to interview my participants before the first placement began as they could not later return to this pre-threshold place of not knowing. This offered the opportunity for 'prospective' or 'anticipatory' reflection which Conway (2001) argues is more productive than the 'temporally truncated' reflection models commonly embedded in teacher education programmes - often limited to a cognitive post-mortem (Greenaway, 2011). Working with student nurses, Alden and Durham (2012) outline more holistic approaches to reflection as reflection-before-action and reflection-beyond-action as ways to acknowledge the subjectivity of experience. They recognise that individuals embark on professional programmes not as a blank slate but with a unique set of knowledge, skills, attitudes, experiences and emotions which might impact the trajectory of their development. Alden and Durham's model of reflection acknowledges the challenges of painful experiences associated with failure - or perceived failure and thus promoted spaces of psychological safety within which students could make sense of their experiences. Edwards' (2017) development of these concepts (of reflection-before and reflection-beyond action), recognises how students' self-exploration is enhanced through this emphasis on accessing and preserving their lived experiences. Although constructed as a research interview with the purpose of data collection, the spaces I created overlapped with spaces designed to provide opportunities for students to reflect before and towards the end of their experience on placement.

The value of oral rather than written accounts or video diaries enabled me to follow-up on what the participants said in the moment and to clarify my understanding when required. Bryman (1988) describes how qualitative research is concerned with the detailed,

contextualised understanding of events and experiences. The reported experiences of students' development of self within professional education programmes fit within an interpretivist paradigm through which the meaning and the significance of their experience could be uncovered. It was therefore important to me to allow opportunity for uninterrupted responses about potentially difficult issues which participants might feel willing to share with me. For this reason, I selected individual interviews rather than group interviews or focus groups. Through unstructured interviews which allowed participants time and opportunity to talk about what was of interest and concern to them, data in the form of transcripts was produced, analysis of which is outlined in Part 3.1.ii. Following an overview of my participant selection process, I outline the process and dynamics of the research interview and its potential as a transformational or therapeutic space.

## **2.2) Interview participants: the productivity of a small, self-selecting sample**

The participants for the interviews were self-selecting. All interviewees had completed the questionnaire and indicated at the end that they were interested in taking part in the research interviews by including their details for me to contact them. The advantage of a self-selecting sample is the motivation inherent in their involvement; if they have volunteered (particularly if given no incentive), the hope is that they are less likely to drop out. Although I did not know what motivating factors influenced participants' willingness to take part, there was no coercion or promise of incentives involved. The possible disadvantage of this method of selecting participants is that it is not representative of the whole. Thomas (2017) notes the problematic nature of the language of a 'sample' which suggests in some way that a research sample should reflect something about the nature or the quality of the whole – something that might not be relevant or possible in some contexts but does not diminish the quality of the research. The kind of in-depth analysis of emotional dimensions explored using a psychoanalytic perspective does not aim to produce generalisable findings. Rather, it offers insights about affective relations associated with identity re-formation that can be transferred, although not replicated, when understanding the development of other individual students.

I planned to interview three students from each profession with individual interviews lasting up to an hour with the aim of collecting in-depth, detailed reports. These were to reflect the student's perceptions before the placement and again towards the end of the placement in order to record their interpretation of their experience. Given that each individual's

experience was unique and I was not looking for norms, a small number of participants was not a limitation in my research and supports Flick's (2014) assertion that the decisive factor in approaches to sampling is whether, 'it is rich in relevant information' (p.177).

Self-selecting participants have a direct impact on the potential size of the sample. In already small cohorts, there were fewer student nurses and police officers willing to be involved than I had hoped which caused me some concern - especially if these participants dropped out during the interview process. The table below shows the number of questionnaire respondents who volunteered to take part in the interviews.

	<b>Professional Education Programme</b>	<b>Number in cohort</b>	<b>Number of responses to questionnaires</b>	<b>Number who volunteered to take part in interview</b>	<b>Number of participants interviewed</b> (see table 6 below)
<b>Teachers</b>	1-year PGCE	172	87 Lecture with half the cohort	35	3
<b>Nurses</b>	3-year Undergraduate Degree BSc	19	18 All those present in a taught session on a particular day	2	1
<b>Police officers</b>	2-year Foundation degree (with option of 1-year top-up to honours degree)	16	16 All those present in a taught session on a particular day	7	2

*Table 5 Number and selection of participants*

Given I had to complete all interviews before the first placement, I aimed to interview nine participants, three from each profession. This was immediately limited by only two nursing students volunteering, one of whom changed her mind following an initial phone call to arrange a time for the interview. I chose three policing students and when the interviews had been arranged, only two of these were able to meet for an interview. When selecting participants from the larger pool of student teachers who had volunteered, I decided to omit my personal tutees and (due to time constraints), those that requested more information before they could make a decision to commit. I chose three student teachers to interview based on the responses in the questionnaire that I had found interesting including the apparent lack of any concerns about the forthcoming placement. Given that my starting point was to use the experiences of other professions to refocus my understanding of student teachers' development, the inclusion of three teachers and three non-teachers seemed to offer a balanced perspective despite the unequal numbers from each profession.

The lengthy process of meaning-making during my analysis of the interview transcripts led me to explore each student's future or anticipatory-self prior to the first placement and an emerging-self that developed through the placement (this is discussed in greater depth in 3.2). By tracing patterns of development across the transcripts from all six students, I noticed that although participants encountered different difficulties when thinking about and experiencing their placement, they all had similar developmental trajectories: they all articulated an idealised future-self that was later changed in some way once they had experience of a professional context in a specific role. Albeit a small final sample in my analysis chapters, discussion of the three participants' narratives – Tim, Martha and Holly – all reflect this trajectory. Rather than use excerpts from all participants to support my conceptualisation of the temporal aspects of a developing self, I decided to include my interpretation and analysis of these three in-depth accounts. I felt this offered a more coherent and holistic understanding of the process of becoming and enabled me to demonstrate how my conceptualisations of anticipatory-selves and emerging-selves were formed.

Although the transcripts of other participants are not included in my analysis chapters, the process of analysing their narratives shaped the way I understood similarities and differences between individuals' experiences. I draw on all of these other transcripts in this chapter (Mary, Rachel and Becky) to demonstrate how they informed and supported my reflection on specific methodological approaches and issues that arose during the process of my research. I did not include the final interviews with any of the students (which took

place at the end of the academic year) in my analysis as during the process of this research, my focus evolved to centre on the significance of the first professional placement as a very early transition. This emerged as a particular experience associated with students' anxiety of the unknown.

The following table presents an overview of who participated in each phase of the interviews.

	<b>Interview 1</b> Before the first placement	<b>Interview 2</b> Towards the end of the first placement	<b>Interview 3</b> At the end of the academic year	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Student teachers</b>	Tim Becky Mary	Tim Becky Mary	Tim Becky	Mary passed the final placement, but it had not gone well and unlike most of her peers, she had not yet secured a job. She first rearranged and then said that she was unavailable for the final interview.
<b>Student Nurses</b>	Martha	Martha	Martha and two of her friends	Martha turned up to the final interview with two of her friends from the programme who wanted to take part. This evolved into a focus group.
<b>Student Police Officers</b>	Holly Rachel	Holly Rachel	Holly Rachel	The other student from this cohort who I contacted later withdrew their interest.

*Table 6 Overview of interview participants*

### **2.3) Data production: research interviews and the use of questions**

Aligned with the psychosocial context of this research, adoption of a psychoanalytic perspective developed my awareness of the possible unconscious dynamics associated with the interview space and the relational aspects of the interactions. These factors shaped the production of data through both the way I set up the interviews and through the nature of the questions I asked. However, whilst I promoted an environment for open dialogue, the interviews themselves did not follow a psychoanalytic frame. My aims for the interviews did not include the facilitation or promotion of change within the participants although in section 2.5, I recognise the therapeutic potential of research interviews.

I decided that the use of unstructured interviews was most appropriate for my research. As the experience of each individual was different, I considered semi-structured interviews were too restrictive. Hollway and Jefferson (2013) suggest that research is just a more systematic

and formalised way of getting to know people and thus I aimed to enable the participant to respond as fully as possible. The unstructured interview is sometimes referred to as an 'informal conversational interview,' (Zhang and Wildemuth, 2017, p.239) which suggests that the interview's success (in terms of the generation of useful data) depends on factors other than just the composition of questions asked. Minichiello *et al.* (1990) define such interviews as relying on the social interaction between the interviewer and participant. My adoption of an interview approach which was more of a conversation therefore liberated me from having to be concerned or preoccupied with the questions I asked; furthermore, my interest in the participants' experiences supported the establishment of a positive rapport which seemed to encourage them to talk openly about their emotions and perceptions associated with their placement. Although I had the overarching purpose of my research in mind, I thought it was important to have the freedom to pursue lines of interest and to be responsive to what participants chose to focus on.

Whilst the control of the interview was located with me, I wanted to ensure that a high degree of 'epistemological agency' (Silverman, 2011, p.152) was conferred on the participants. The interviewee was a person whose responses - although subjective - were a valid account as they were reporting their interpretations of their own experience. The direction of my questioning emerged from the participants' responses and reported experience, however as interviewer, I took responsibility for instigating the interaction. I had the participant's completed questionnaire (Appendix C) with me in the interview to shape my questioning but was mindful not to make assumptions based on the individual's past responses made when filling out the questionnaire nor on assumptions based on collective but unrepresentative responses to the questionnaires. The questionnaire data had usefully developed my understanding of students' perspectives across the three professions, but I did not want to assume that the named idealisations and anxieties were shared by my participants.

My aim to promote richer responses through use of open questions and to allow time for participants to respond allowed me to follow-up what seemed important or relevant to each participant. Although I have referred to my interviews as a research conversation, my aim was to talk as little as possible and to ask questions only in order to stimulate participants' narratives, something I succeeded in as was reflected in a calculation from one transcript (taken at random) which showed that of the 5244 words within the transcript, 4206 were those of the participant – about 80%.

The examples of questions that follow are all taken from the second interviews which took place towards the end of the first professional placement and demonstrate different ways in which I engaged participants in talking about their experiences.

Some questions were used to change the focus or direction of the interview, for example:

- Do you think you've changed your perception of the role of a nurse since you have been working on this placement?
- So what are some of the top qualities for a police officer would you say?
- Has there been anything that you found quite difficult to handle? Maybe personally rather than not knowing what to do?
- What's the biggest challenge of the job would you say - from the bits that you've seen?
- Is there anything else that you would like to say that we haven't covered or anything else that you've been thinking about whilst on placement?

These questions reflected the times when I was most obviously leading the research conversation and were used when I felt that the discussion about a particular issue had come to an end or when I did not want to follow-up a participant's comment, perhaps due to disinterest – or as explored below – I did not want to respond due to some resistance within me.

Some of my questions had a clarifying purpose to ensure that I had understood the meaning of their responses and to offer an opportunity for them to talk further or to confirm my thinking, for example:

- So, it's almost as if they are more wary than they are expecting too much from you?
- So, it sounds as though it's quite a supportive environment for you to be in?
- What...by the lack of or not?
- I imagine that would seem quite important?
- So that was quite reassuring?

These clarifying questions were useful to ask in the interview to promote my understanding and to inform my later analysis of the transcripts. As subjective interpretations of their personal experiences of the placement, I wanted to ensure that within the interview, I had understood meaning within participants' responses.

Most questions were responses to what the participants talked about asked intentionally to prompt further or deeper responses, for example:

- Did you feel prepared to do all those things that you were asked to do?
- How do you handle that? The balance between under and over-stepping...?
- So why do you think it's exciting?

- What about how you think other people see you?
- How does that feel?
- So, what do you think you enjoy about that environment?
- Have you got some strategies for dealing with all of that stuff that is going on in your head?
- So, was it as you thought it was going to be?
- Was there anything that you thought if you were on your own you wouldn't know how to deal with in that situation?
- Do you have coping mechanisms for that? I mean do they teach you what to do if you feel you're on the edge of breaking down emotionally...?
- Is that what it felt like?
- Did you question yourself?

These questions were most useful in stimulating responses that were valuable in the later analysis of interview transcripts. For example, when I asked Martha about her nurse uniform, she had referred to feeling excited, a noteworthy reference to emotion in itself, however through following-up her response, I elicited a much richer response that later contributed to my interpretation of Martha's identity development:

HGB: So why do you think it's exciting?

Martha: Because I've had it in my head that I wanted to do nursing for so long now, that when I finally got into the uniform, with a fob watch which is the mark of a nurse isn't it?... that I was feeling that I was doing what I wanted to do, and it has really felt like that. It has been better than I hoped it would be, and I'm just really pleased that I have got there in the end. [Int.2:102-107/375].

Reflecting on the questions I asked in the interviews - particularly those follow-up questions to further explore students' inner dynamics - demonstrated the value (and in order to gain richer data, necessity), of being able to think quickly and to articulate spontaneous questions in response to the participants' comments with the overall aim of useful data production. This process of questioning stimulated in part by the students' responses reflects a largely cognitive process in my interview technique the success of which depends, in part, on the relationship established between me as interviewer and my participants. Given my acknowledgment of the role of the unconscious, there was also an interpretative dynamic within the interview process that, although hidden and not often recorded, shaped the complex personal meaning attributed to the space of a research interview and also what was said and not said.

## 2.4) Psychoanalytic ontology: narratives of defended subjects

The production of a detailed transcript for later analysis was my main priority in the interviews, however, there is value in exploring the process, context and dynamics of the research interview that shaped the transcripts' formation. Within my research I refer to these transcripts as the participants' 'narratives' as they were narrating their version of their experience on placement and their associated thoughts and feelings. The interviewees' narratives in my research were personal reflections and therefore highly subjective and included only that which they wanted or chose to tell me.

As I asked some questions to participants, it might be argued that my approach did not adopt the specific technique of narrative interviews which employ a biographical approach (Flick, 2014). However, my data collection does align with the essence of this approach as outlined by Josselson (2007, p.539), 'The essence of the narrative research approach, what gives it its meaning and value, is that the researcher endeavors to obtain "data" from a deeply human, genuine, empathic, and respectful relationship to the participant about significant and meaningful aspects of the participant's life.' The suggestion that the interview relationship is the important factor - rather than set interview techniques or question types - can be understood in a much richer way if the presence of unconscious dynamics both within and between individuals are acknowledged. Whilst a narrative methodology *might* acknowledge the unconscious, a psychoanalytic approach is based on an understanding that the unconscious is an influencing dynamic between the interviewer and interviewee.

My approach therefore combined conceptions of narrative and psychoanalytic ontology. Positioning the research subject as psychosocial, - that is, concerned with the relationship between the individual's inner world and the external social world - opens up the opportunity to explore contradictions and inconsistencies within what they say. Although critiqued by Frosh and Baraitser (2008) regarding the extent to which psychoanalytic insights can be taken out of the clinic, Hollway and Jefferson (2000 and 2013) introduced and developed a methodology (specifically, the Free Association Narrative Interview method which they adapted from the biographical interpretative method) which applies a psychosocial understanding of subjectivity to research practice. They combined narrative methodology with a psychodynamic approach. This foregrounded the concept of a 'defended subject' which recognises the individual's unconscious defences against anxiety. The underpinning assumption is that threats to the self can create anxiety which in turn precipitate defences

at an unconscious level. As defended subjects, participants' unconscious dynamics might lead to contradictory, incomplete or disguised responses.

Although I did not systematically note my emotional responses, hunches or possible interpretations of, for example, students' projections or defence mechanisms in the moment, I did recognise that their presence shaped the content of the transcript. For example, I was aware of times in the interviews where I noticed that something had changed in the relational dynamics such as when I did not believe what one of the student teachers said:

Tim: The second weekend I had twenty-six books to mark and they were up to three pages of writing long. So that was the entire weekend. ... That weekend I managed two trips to the gym, a platelet donation at the [hospital] ... and cooking dinner for somebody else on Saturday night. So it's tiring actually. You just, you know, you get a bit of a buzz about filling your weekend and yes, again weekend just gone...no the weekend before that was a platelet - I'm doing platelets twice a week at the [hospital] so that's every Sunday...every second Sunday. You know fitting food shopping in when you can, getting to the gym in the morning. I think I did all my laundry on Sunday morning before I went to the [hospital] and I was doing my marking in the computer room next to the laundry room. It's not the most kind of glamorous of weekends but if you're getting it done, you're getting it done...[Int.2:278-287/600].

HGB: So, looking ahead to a career with potentially those kind of weekends once you take on the full load of teaching... is that OK? [Int.2:291-292/600].

It was interesting to note that my response did not praise Tim's productivity or benevolent platelet donation. Together with the apparent contradiction between the marking taking up 'the entire weekend' but yet apparently fitting everything else in, I felt that something had changed within the relationship dynamic of the interview and for some reason I did not entirely believe what Tim had said. During his uninterrupted recount of the weekend, I was aware of my own internal monologue: 'Why was he telling me all this?' 'Did this really happen?' 'Why don't I believe him?' 'Am I meant to be impressed with this?' 'What does he want me to think about him?' 'Have I responded in a way that shows that I don't believe him?'

Perhaps I had unconsciously picked up on Tim's anxiety about how the demands of teaching had begun to take over his spare time. Was being able to achieve so much at the weekend an idealisation of his future free time when in reality he would have a pile of books to mark? Although not aware of making such an interpretation during the interview, I later noted my response led to a further contradiction in Tim's narrative:

HGB: So, looking ahead to a career with potentially those kind of weekends once you take on the full load of teaching... is that OK? [Int.2:291-292/600].

Tim: Yes. I'm quite happy to do it, yep. I mean, even if there is a couple of weekends ...even if it's a month of weekends where you're marking ridiculous amounts of work ...um...then so be it. But...the second week was all these autobiographies...and instead of marking them, my teacher said 'why don't we do self-assessment?' and I was like 'yes [laughs] I like this idea' looking at some of these things that are twelve pages long and you're kind of going 'yes, I'll make a self-assessment form - this is genius [laughing] you're a very smart man..' and you know, obviously it's great for me because I get different experiences of assessment and all that sort of stuff but it's also smart teaching because you're you know, sharing the workload with the children and then teaching them something else. [Int.2:293-302/600].

Again, there was contradiction in what Tim said between being 'happy' to mark 'ridiculous amounts of work' but yet seemingly relieved when his teacher had suggested the children self-assess their work thus providing a way out from such a task. Looking back at these excerpts of the transcript now reveals a possibility for me to have followed-up my hunch during the interview and asked about anxiety associated with the job of teaching taking over his life. Instead, the interview developed into a point I made about the value of self-assessment which on reflection, may have been to divert what I had perhaps wanted to say - that self-assessment can be a lazy decision to make especially given the amount of work the children had put into the projects.

The theme of contradiction is revisited in the next section focusing on data analysis but is relevant here as these excerpts demonstrate the complexity of the interview process including relational dynamics and show the potential for interpretation of unconscious dynamics within the interview. Rather than view these interpretations as missed opportunities, they clearly demonstrate how the interview transcripts of participants' narratives are directly shaped by such dynamics and represent so much more than just the words on the page. My process of analysis therefore acknowledged the following: recognition that the interviewer and participants do not share the same meaning-frame; vulnerable aspects of the self are defended against; both interviewer and participants may not know why they respond as they do; and that unconscious dynamics might lead to the disguise of some of the participant's feelings and actions. I recognise that the layers of meaning constructed from this process are highly subjective and based on interpretations - both of students' re-telling of their experiences and my interpretations and analysis of the interview transcripts – however, I believe that the productivity of this approach might reveal greater understanding of an individual's inner conflicts and further knowledge of what is often left hidden.

## **2.5) The research interview: transformative and therapeutic possibilities**

Reflecting on the dynamics in the interview space led me to think about the effects of the interactions during the interview and how these might impact on the interviewer and participants either during the interview or afterwards. Could the research interview be beneficial to the participants in some way? Could parallels be drawn with explicitly therapeutic purposes? Clarkson (2013) examined how the counselling interview could be used in research with particular emphasis on the ethics associated with this. Conversely, I thought it would be interesting to explore the extent to which my research interviews could be considered transformative or therapeutic. Although Weiss (1994) clearly outlines that therapy is not the aim of the research interview, Holmes (2013, p.1183) argues that there is some overlap between the two disciplines of psychoanalysis and research as, 'the motivation for entering each situation is similar if viewed in terms of a search for deeper understanding of the relational self.' As Kvale (2003) argued at length, the psychoanalytic interview can be inspiration for the research interview and notes Freud's use of the psychoanalytic interview as both, 'a method of treatment, but it was also the research method upon which psychoanalytic theory is based,' (p.26). As designated spaces with uninterrupted time for the interviewee to talk about their personal experience with an attentive listener, my research interviews had the potential to become a transformative or therapeutic experience. Drawing on examples of a student's difficulties during the placement and of tensions within an individual's identity, I explore how my role as interviewer might promote such opportunities.

Being invited to talk at length about their placement experience provided an opportunity for my participants to examine aspects of their practice and development in new ways. This process can be transformative. Birch and Miller (2000) recognise the potential for promoting resolutions through the research interview and this is exemplified in my research by the response from student nurse Martha when talking about how her competence was not recognised by nurses on the ward:

Martha: I feel that they are explaining it to me in very basic terms whereas...I suppose it's because I haven't really told them that I have done a lot of science before that I don't suppose they recognise that I want to know a bit more about it. But, that's my own fault for not telling them, I suppose.

HGB: Do you think it would change things if you did tell them?

Martha: Yes, maybe. I suppose I should do. Maybe on the next shift I might do. I haven't really thought about that until now when we've just talked about it. [Int.2:81-89/375]

This possibility of behavioural change links to the benefits of the research interview as a transformative space for the participant. The interview questions I asked thus became an important influence in this potential for change. Lapping (2008) recognises that her research offered a reflective space for a particular participant and questioned whether her interpretation of the potential value of this for him changed her own role as researcher. Likewise, I questioned this and felt as though my role had shifted from gathering information for my own purposes to being of help to Martha in some way. My conception of the role of researcher now included being a useful sounding-board and through this, I felt more empowered to inhabit the researcher's role when interviewing non-teacher students; although I was unfamiliar with their professional programmes, I could offer something of value in their development and process of becoming. This illuminates the dynamic, intersubjective and negotiated aspects of the research space.

A differentiating factor between a research interview and a therapy session can be understood by their purpose; the research interview focuses on events and experience related to a research question and the therapy session on the individual's internal, psychic dynamics with a view to bring about change. While some empowerment or self-awareness may be present in both, Hutchinson and Wilson (1994) argue that therapy is the by-product of the research interview rather than its object. Although it was not my intention to help interviewees resolve any problems or explore psychic conflict during the interviews, it could be argued that my interviews had the potential to become a transformative space. The uniqueness of this research space was thus highlighted – it was not an assessed part of the university or practice-based elements of the programme and students could talk confidentially and at length about their experience with someone who was involved in professional education and was interested in their personal development, desires and difficulties.

Despite the constraints of the research interview - for example, the restrictions of my research interest and assigned time (Hiller and DiLuzio, 2004), as well as my lack of experience in leading interviews - a case can be made that the interview space was beneficial for participants. Rossetto (2014) assessed the therapeutic value of research interviews and questioned whether there was any benefit to interviewees who took part in the process of qualitative research. Working with army wives whose husbands had recently been deployed, she found that the process of the interview was beneficial for them in a number of ways. Those who took part in the post-interview feedback recognised that talking

about their experience and emotions to a neutral third party (rather than “wasting friends’ time” for example, p.484) offered some relief to the participants with some using the space to analyse their own responses. Rossetto (ibid) claims that the interview process also helped the participants to identify unresolved issues and actions. She suggests that researchers should recognise the possible therapeutic dimension of research interviews as it should shape their approaches and understanding of the difference they can make in the lives of their interviewees. Although my position was not neutral, I recognised the parallels between the value of Rossetto’s interview spaces and my own.

The potential of the research interview as a therapeutic space clearly has implications including consideration of how (or whether) I as the researcher should proceed if a participant’s revisiting of sensitive or distressing issues or experience arouses emotional responses. As researcher what boundaries should I recognise in the researcher-participant relationship? How did my role differ from that of a therapist and to what extent should I attempt to solve a participant’s problem or offer advice? An example from my interviews where I recognised this boundary highlighted a tension; I wanted to explore Rachel’s comments further but was aware that they might be associated with deeper identity issues. Although it might have been helpful for her to talk about how her experience was raising issues of identity, I may not have been in a position to help support her:

HGB: And if your friends or family saw you in that four weeks [on placement] what do you think that they would think?

Rachel: ...they’d definitely be proud I think, yeah coz I’m, you know only twenty one and you know I’ve dealt with quite a lot of situations which maybe a few Regulars out there wouldn’t be that competent about, you know...taking numerous statements which we haven’t had a lot of training in...yeah I think they’d be proud and just...I think I say to my friends they’d be shocked because even though they know me as friends - and my boyfriend - I’m quite sort of...not confident about myself and quiet and sort of...I don’t know, and then on the beat I’m just very confident and just...I don’t know, I’m not scared of anything it’s very odd, like. I do think they’d be shocked if they saw me in that role but you’ve got to be like that...you can’t be...coz if you show you’re a bit timid then the criminal will, so...

HGB: So where do you think that comes from, that ability to do that?

Rachel: I don’t know. I think that is the true me but I think...I don’t know, I think just coz you know, the pressure of being a girl and just, you know. It’s just sort of...I don’t know that is the true me, you know, from speaking what I was like when I was a kid and stuff and my mother used to say I used to run up to people, ‘Hi I’m Rachel, I’m eight years old, I’ve got a sister, a brother’ and ...it just shows that you know, it is me and that’s why I love the police as well because it brings out my true self and.. so yeah.

I had given Rachel the space to reflect on and talk about issues associated with her identity. My participants did not know any interview questions in advance nor how I would follow-up on what they chose to talk about. Thus, they were required to go back in time and to some extent re-live their experience during the placement and the thoughts and emotions this evoked. Whilst I aimed to do all those things that research books advise interviewers should do – such as listen actively in a non-judgemental and sympathetic way using affirming body language and expression – I was aware of the potential of something much more powerful and useful within the interview than simply generating data for my later analysis. This raised some ethical dilemmas. Although I wanted to explore Rachel's reference to her 'true self' and what might have happened between the age of eight and now that meant that apart from on the beat she did not feel like her true self, I questioned how well-equipped I was to respond to the potentially difficult or emotional responses and what the purpose of me doing so was. Clarkson (2013, p.58) suggests that, 'locating an in-depth research interview within a counselling framework can be an effective strategy for enabling the interviewer to respond to interviewees' distress in a way that can help them come to terms with their distressing experiences.' However, she is careful to note that this is only for those interviewers who are 'sufficiently skilled.' I could see the potential of adopting a counselling framework particularly when focusing on identity development. Although I did not follow up on Rachel's comments during or after the interview, the space to articulate her feelings might have been therapeutic in some way as she reflected on what she had told me concerning who she was and in what ways she had changed. Might the reconnection with an articulation of her 'true self' have in some way empowered her to be more herself when with friends and her boyfriend? Could her internalisation of who she was as a police officer shape who she was when not on duty? Therefore, the interview space has a potential to be therapeutic even if not acknowledged as such during the interview process itself or known about afterwards. This line of enquiry could make interesting future research by following up on the individual's interview experience and whether they were later changed in any way because of it.

The interview space might not be therapeutic for all participants but as Hiller and DiLuzio (2004) suggest, the process of event validation and the confirmation of the interviewee's experience as significant can be important aspects of the interview process. This dynamic potential of the interview space has been interesting to reflect on and informed my interpretation of the transcripts during a process of data analysis. I discuss this further in the following section.

### **3) Data analysis and some emerging ethical issues**

#### **3.1) Psychoanalytically informed creation of knowledge**

My understanding of the student as a defended subject informed my approach to data analysis and led me to adopt a psychoanalytic perspective. This enabled me to interpret anxiety through a range of possible defence mechanisms. Starting with an understanding of the individual within the research process, I avoided generalisations in order to try to understand the student's personal biography and unique concerns. However, within the research aims, patterns across data sets allowed me to explore connections between professions to identify whether any commonalities existed. Three aspects which I interpreted from all students' narratives from their second interviews are presented in my analysis. This dual focus of the individual's unique position to identity development and generalisations across individuals and professions required a flexible and iterative approach to the process of analysis. The emergence and unfurling of the way students talked about their identity re-formation was shaped through my interpretation of unique personal accounts and aligned with the process outlined by Smith *et al.* (2009) as moving from the particular and descriptive to the shared and interpretative. The process necessarily involved close attention to what students had said including specific use of language, repetitions and incongruity. Therefore, my subjectivity was not mitigated against but was used within the process of analysis.

This section gives insight into my approach to data analysis including some related ethical issues, but first outlines the validity and generalisability of my data.

##### **3.1.i) Validity, and generalisability of my data**

Qualitative studies include perceptions, emotions and incomplete memories and are thus subjective and open to interpretation. In my study, participants' interpretations of reported events and the interpretation inherent in the process of data analysis led to the construction of unique meanings. However, as Hollway and Jefferson (2013) note, knowledge generated through such processes can be defended by the robustness of evidence. Claims of validity in my data are understood within the psychoanalytic research frame. Participants are understood as defended subjects whose unconscious might mask or repress aspects of what might otherwise be known. Data comprised of participants' ambiguous and subjective representations of their experience is, nonetheless, their reported experience and is thus valid. My interpretation of their responses is shaped by my own subjectivity, assumptions

and unconscious but as outlined in the next section regarding ethical dilemmas, my awareness of this offers some integrity to the process of meaning-making.

The final interview data included in my research were narratives from a male primary teacher, a female nurse and a female police officer. Within the make-up of the gender within these professions, both the student teacher and the student police officer were in the minority and based on this criterion, were not representative of the wider workforce. The idea that research should produce representative samples which lead to generalisable data can be challenged as there is value in the insights produced through exploring individual experiences. Although placement experiences differed for each of my participants, the affective dynamics influencing professional development was relevant to all from which generalisations could be explored. Although based on a small sample and thus not typical of all students, the generalisability is theoretical. As Hollway and Jefferson (2013, p.147) identify, their individual cases were used to, 'explore, test and refine theoretical ideas about the relations among our core concepts. To the extent that these ideas prove robust, they become generalisable.' Therefore, a measure of the robustness of my analysis can be understood by whether any findings from the data are recognisable to others through credible interpretation.

### ***3.1.ii) Analysis of interview transcripts and interpretation of anxiety***

Silverman (2011) argues for analytic credibility in the research process as this determines the theoretical credibility of the developed concepts. I therefore aim to communicate my approach to data analysis which offers such credibility. More specifically, I want to demonstrate how my process of analysis enabled me to move between in-depth analysis at the level of individual participants' psychical defences and more generalised conceptions of identity development which I name as anticipatory and emerging professional selves. My data comprises transcripts of recordings of students' narratives from two rounds of interviews which took place before and again, towards the end of the first professional placement. The data from three students – one from each profession – is included in the presentation of my analysis although the process of analysis was shaped by engagement with all twelve transcripts in the data set. The data was socially constructed but was not interpreted in any systematic way during the interview process. Therefore, it is the narrative of interpreted experience that is analysed in my research and not the participants themselves. However, this approach to analysis is concerned with understanding how people experience and make sense of their world (Reicher, 2000) and thus the experience

of interviewing the person cannot be entirely separated from a record of what was said in the dynamics of the research interview.

The iterative process of data analysis included a significant amount of time reading and re-reading interview transcripts to familiarise myself with structural and textural descriptions. I wanted to get to know – or get inside – students' reported experiences of their time on placement. This was undertaken 'not as a repetitive mechanical task but as a reflexive process,' a means of 'sparking insight and developing meaning,' (Srivastava and Hopwood, 2009, p.76). Initial engagement with analysis involved me writing out short accounts of incidents in the transcripts to think about these from the perspective of the student. This was an intentional way to avoid conferring particular meaning on what had been said before I had reflected on how the student was reporting their experience of the placement context. I found it helpful to generate lists of questions as I read through the data to use as prompts when reading through the transcripts of other students and to start to explore any connections between the transcripts of students from different professions. For example from the first interview: were they looking forward to specific tasks, or more generally to the professional context?; was the idea the student was talking about based on any experience?; and did they mention anything about personal qualities and the job they were preparing for? From the second interview, examples of questions included: was the task mentioned one that the student had been assigned to or one they had volunteered for?; did the student seem surprised about what was expected of them?; or did they comment on how well they did – and if so, was this based on their own perception or the feedback from others?

My approach to analysis adopted principles developed by Hollway and Jefferson (2013) who take an explicitly psychoanalytic lens to the process of understanding data. Such an approach aims to locate the essence of experience and avoid the fragmented approach of coding and retrieval often used in qualitative data analysis. Noting some overlap between the research interview and psychotherapy when analysing interview data, Brown and Gilligan (1993) outlined their method as one that included attending to recurring words and images, emotional resonances and revisions and absences in the story. Looking out for recurring words was a useful way for me to start noting patterns of language in the transcripts. Once noted, I used a search tool to locate the number of times and contexts for the use of the word. For example, Tim used the word 'buzz' six times in the first interview and nine times in the second interview including:

I think it's about being able to master something or to be able to understand something to the extent where you can pass it onto somebody else. And you do, you get a little buzz from it. [Int.1:41-42/452]

...that kind of give you, gives me the same kind of buzz because again you're kind of helping someone to understand which I guess is the crux of it. [Int.1:65-66/452]

I think the reason I went into it is because it is something I feel passionate about-something I want to get a buzz from and if I'm not getting it then I don't think I'm going to be as good a teacher as I can be. By not being as good a teacher as I can be, I'm not going to be getting the buzz. [Int.1:95-98/452].

The use of the term 'buzz' often linked to Tim's use of 'passion' or 'passionate' which he used 15 times in the first interview. Looking through the uses of these terms, a cluster of words emerged around the use of 'buzz' and 'passion' and included, 'fun,' interesting,' 'enjoyment' and 'excitement' which seemed to indicate a conceptualisation that Tim had of teaching. These patterns of vocabulary reflected the rewards of teaching that Tim might experience which I interpreted as a way in which he was idealising his future-self and the profession he hoped to become a part of. The terminology marked a stark contrast with the second interview that took place towards the end of the placement and in which he did not use the vocabulary of passion at all although did refer to some aspects as fun and enjoyable. I interpreted Tim's idealisation as a psychological defence against an experience that might turn out to be the complete opposite. Was he anxious that teaching would be void of all those things he had associated with feeling a buzz?

Although Tim did not explicitly use terms associated with concern or worry in the first interview, he did use related terms twice and five times (respectively) in the second interview, for example:

I think one of my initial worries was making that transition from TA to teacher [Int.2:125-126/600].

I think probably the reason why I had the worry about not knowing if I was going to get the buzz was because I wasn't quite sure where it was going to come from... [Int.2:475-476/600].

The change in Tim's use of language in the different interviews began to reveal the temporal nature of identity re-formation and how theoretical conceptualisations differed from those following embodied experience during professional placements.

I noticed repeated use of 'just' in Martha's first interview that prompted me to think about what meaning she was attributing to the tasks she mentioned:

I volunteered in a hospice before. It was an adult hospice, and that was just like the tea trolley thing, but again, you could see how much it means to someone else. Just the little things, like all I was doing, which was offering tea, coffee and biscuits. It just seemed to brighten up their day really. [Int.1:62-65/296]

The way in which Martha used the word 'just' seemed to be a contradiction. I interpreted her reference to the tasks which she seemed to present as menial or diminished in some way as an indication of how she was making a difference – something important in her idealised construction of her future-self as a nurse. Acknowledging what she had done in the past seemed to help to stabilise her identity as someone who could already make a difference to the lives of others.

Holly's repeated use of the phrase 'why not?' was embedded in very similarly constructed recounts of incidents at different points in her second interview:

...my tutor was like. 'Right immediate burglary, do you want to go to this?' I was like 'yeah, Why not?' [Int.2:209-210/530].

...and my tutor was like, as a joke, 'Do you want to go to it to get your first arrest?' So I was like, 'Why not?' [Int.2:232-233/530].

....we were told that there was a missing person, my tutor was like, 'Right you know you've got everything signed off, do you want to go to it just for a bit of extra experience?' so I was like, 'Why not?' [Int.2:261-263/530].

It was interesting to note that Holly presented each of these incidents as her tutor giving her a choice. The repeated use of 'why not?' in response to her tutor suggested that there were no reasons why going to these incidents would be a problem. However, together with other responses including her reference to the apparent 'joke' of going to her first arrest (something Holly had identified as a threshold moment into an identity as a police officer) contributed to my interpretation of Holly's defensive reaction of denial. It was part of a wider defensive reaction that enabled her to continue to believe that policing was exciting rather than dangerous.

As well as tracing individual words, I also noted some specific ways participants referred to themselves in the interviews. For example, perhaps to offer some stability in this process of identity re-formation during a time of transition, students made reference to how they conceptualised themselves. For example Mary, a student teacher and Holly a police student:

Mary: I think sometimes you have to find that life balance but I'm one of these people that don't tend to ... like on this course you know it's like... I was always giving a

hundred and ten per cent and I've got to always give a hundred and ten per cent. So it's like if I'm doing something I will throw myself in to it. [Int.1:824-833/992].

Holly: I'm not one of these people who likes to learn and be like babied along the way, kind of like well 'wait, wait, stop, you should be doing this instead', kind of...making mistakes and learning from it... [Int.2:154-155/530].

Putting these examples together helped me to develop a provisional interpretation of the function of these kinds of statements. Stating who they were suggested a desire to anchor some continuity with the past and future during times of change and perhaps defend against anxiety that the process of professional education might change them too much.

I also adopted Hollway and Jefferson's (2013) approach to analysis which emphasises the importance of noticing 'links and contradictions', (p.5) within the data – a theme outlined in the previous section with an example from Tim's narrative about the demands of teaching on his free time. Noticing contradictions included further exploration of words which seemed incongruous in the transcript, such as Martha's use of 'fun' in the second interview:

Martha: ...do you know the cannulas that we have, yes, we are allowed to take those out. Going around doing all those is quite fun. [Int.2:23-24/375].

Although the context of this excerpt from early in the interview was within Martha's rather excited recount of what she had been allowed to do, the use of 'fun' when linked to this procedure seemed a little misplaced. My next question led to a response that suggested Martha had experienced anxiety associated with this procedure:

HGB: Did you feel ...prepared to do all those things that you were asked to do?

Martha: Well, when I was first asked if I wanted to take the cannula out, I hadn't ... I have had it done to me before ... but I've never seen anyone ... I didn't see any of the nurses do it, but she was with me and she talked me through exactly what to do. Basically, it's just taking off a plaster and then just pulling each one straight out. It's easy really, but it's just the thought of being able to do it being actually quite scary. Once you've done one, then it's fine then. It's quite simple. [Int.2:25-31/375].

Given Martha's anticipation of the procedure had been 'scary,' her use of 'fun' signalled some more complex meaning which I explored further. Linked to other responses, a pattern of splitting theory and practice emerged. This was associated with intellectualisation which I interpreted as a defence against anxiety about causing harm to her patients.

I used bottom-up analysis of students' transcripts to explore contextualised meaning in their vocabulary and top-down approaches such as searching for words associated with anxiety and using known concepts of defence mechanisms to interpret possibilities within students'

responses. This was not an enforced matching of concepts with responses but a back and forth, iterative process of meaning making. I did not attempt to find generalisations but noticed differences and commonalities with the process of identity re-formation. I used commonalities, such as those linked to being recognised as a professional, to explore how each student was uniquely and psychically positioned to the concept. Shaped by temporal dimensions, the differentiation between students' theorised identities based on idealised projections and their emerging identities shaped through embodied experience informed my conceptualisations of students' anticipatory and emerging selves. From my interpretation of students' emerging-selves, I connected three common aspects: professional competence; professional responsibility; and professional recognition. The process that ultimately led to my adoption of these terms is outlined in the following section.

### **3.2) Analysis and identification of concepts associated with students' developing selves**

Whereas the previous section outlined how I interpreted anxiety within students' interview transcripts, this section explains how I navigated through the process of data analysis which resulted in my conceptualisation of anticipatory and emerging selves. This time-consuming and rather messy process would eventually lead to the emergence of three aspects common across all students' emerging selves: professional competence, professional responsibility and professional recognition. Using a psychoanalytic framework as a tool to interpret unconscious dynamics, I wanted to find meaning in students' narratives to explore how they described their own development as teachers, nurses or police officers.

Transcripts from the first interview echoed the findings from the questionnaires regarding students' ambivalence associated with the first placement. Capturing students' thoughts and feelings before the first assessed placement enabled me to analyse hypothetical, unknown and hoped-for articulations of students' future selves. I noticed the ways in which students seemed to manage anxiety associated with their unknown future through continuity with their past. In my analysis I considered why each student thought they were suitable for the profession they hoped to join and what seemed to be at stake for them in terms of their success or failure. By using a psychoanalytic framework, I mapped students' motivations and desires linked to interpretation of their anxiety associated with failing and from this, conceptualised an anticipatory-self shaped by idealisations of students' future-selves. This explored a sense of identity associated with the meanings that students placed on becoming

a teacher, nurse or police officer rather than simply what competences they could or could not demonstrate.

Building on the analysis of the first interview, I approached my reading of the second interview transcripts in various ways. This included analysing the narrative as an account of their experience on placement in order to understand what seemed important or significant for each student. The process also included close reading of the students' accounts of their placement in relation to their narrative from the first interview. This enabled me to explore any continuities or inconsistencies between each student's hypothetical self and the self that began to develop during their placement. My aim was to understand the ways in which students' anticipatory-selves might or might not have emerged in practice and how students were able to manage particular difficulties that arose. Reading these pairs of transcripts offered a temporal dimension to my research and emphasised the significance of the placement as a time of transition and uncertainty between a student's hoped-for self and the ways in which they were becoming a teacher, nurse or police officer. It enabled me to analyse how individuals articulated their difficulties and development. I particularly noticed the ways in which they referred to, adapted or ignored their fantasised or idealised-self (which I interpreted from the first transcript) in the narrative from the second interview. Tracing significant aspects of students' anticipatory-selves from the first interview offered some direction for me to analyse the narratives from the second interview. For example, revisiting a point from the previous section, to what extent did Tim experience the 'buzz' he had repeatedly mentioned in his first interview? This was a useful starting point to analyse each student's development and led to the next phase of analysis where I explored any commonalities across students' placement experiences and development.

So as not to limit the findings in my data by pre-set categories, I carried out several cycles of analysis whereby I dived deeply into the interview data from different points to see what treasures I might discover. The following is a list of themes which I identified through this process. They included the ways in which I interpreted how students' difficulties and anxiety might be expressed or managed - each of which had potential for further analysis. Although at this stage the themes were a collection of unconnected findings, each is presented here as they contributed to the final stage of analysis:

- Placement mentors as parental figures. Through this, I explored how the relationships established during placements could mirror familial relationships. I became very interested in the formation of the student-mentor relationship and drew parallels with the

transition of a placement and the transition of children moving into foster care. I identified how a professional mentor could be conceptualised as a form of parental figure whose influence could shape the sense of security, belonging and success of the student whilst on placement. In addition to identifying the nature of relationships as a common concept across students' development, I analysed how the relationships that students formed with their mentors were significant in the ways in which students were then able to engage – or not - with the tasks they were expected to demonstrate.

- Peer relationships with other students focusing on comparison, competition and collaboration. Stemming from my analysis on mentors as parental figures, I conceptualised peer relationships akin to sibling relationships. This was particularly interesting where one of the teaching pair in a classroom established a productive relationship with the teacher and the other did not. Of particular significance was the ways in which different students engaged with the expectations of them during the placement and how meeting the same required standards could be approached and achieved in different ways.
- The significance of being in particular physical settings. I explored the relevance of the specific professional space and how students attributed meaning to this sense of place as a location for their development and becoming. In this cycle of analysis I included an individual's reference to nostalgia, media, entertainment and any previous experience as a way of conceptualising the meaning and lack of neutrality associated with a physical space. This included how individuals talked about how they were physically positioned in this space and what significance this seemed to hold for them.
- Physical appearance. The physicality of students included their dress and uniform – or lack of uniform. In the narratives, I explored how the clothes an individual wore held meaning as a symbol of identity or authority. I was also interested in the ways in which the physical appearance of an individual might have supported or encouraged the process of development as a teacher, nurse or police officer or whether the clothes that they were expected to wear inhibited identity formation in some way.
- Behaviour and perceptions of self. Mapping references in students' narratives about how they perceived themselves included reference to their physical appearance with

cues taken from the reactions from others. The ways in which those in uniform responded to their appearance contrasted with the way in which teachers intentionally constructed an identity through what they chose to wear. My analysis of how individuals perceived themselves included how they positioned themselves to the expectations of their professional behaviour – particularly certain behaviours they might disavow in non-professional contexts such as the use of aggression, a raised voice, taking control or assuming leadership. I was particularly interested in the ways in which they either framed their behaviour as acting in role and split-off these behaviours from their sense of self or the ways in which they assimilated the new behaviours which became a transformative aspect in their development.

- Management of professional and non-work time boundaries. Building on my theoretical perspective that a professional self could not be completely separate from an individual's sense of self, I was interested in how individuals articulated their identity when on placement and when not on placement. This extended beyond reference to the significance of taking off a uniform and clocking off a shift to the ways in which individuals managed feelings, thoughts and the replaying of experience that seeped into times when not on placement. The difficulty (or impossibility) of separating a professional self raised particular questions focused on the ways in which individuals were changed by their experiences whilst on placement.

My approach to data analysis was not a clear linear pathway but involved different starting points. This led me to uncover a range of themes all of which contributed to my understanding of students' transformational experiences during their placement. In the next stage of my analysis, I sought connections between the themes and to synthesise my findings in order to identify what was significant to all students' development. This in turn led to my conceptualisation of an emerging-self characterised by professional competency, responsibility and recognition. By the time I decided to use these terms I knew the data very well, and from my bottom-up analysis, could map the meaning I attributed to them rather than be defined by them.

Within the themes I found, students' anxiety associated with engagement seemed significant. However, the term 'engagement' did not capture what was expected of them nor how they were expected to carry this out. Engaging with others and with the professional

environment did not reflect the significance that students placed on the things that they knew were expected of them – the very activities that would determine their success (or failure) at becoming teachers, nurses or police officers. I considered the term ‘ability’ as one of the characteristics of the emerging-self but this did not reflect students’ narratives; of concern to students was not the fluency or efficiency with which they could carry out professional activities but whether they could begin to carry them out at all. It was as though the list of professional competencies had solidified in each student’s thoughts and feelings differently as a marker of their becoming. These seemed qualitatively different from any previous expectations on them when volunteering or engaging in work experience. I settled on the term ‘professional competence’ with the greatest emphasis on the meaning that each student attributed to the professional requirements which I linked to my interpretation of their anxiety associated with these expectations of them.

My emerging findings highlighted the need to understand the ways that individuals encountered the expectations of being a teacher, nurse or police officer and how they attributed meaning to their new behaviours. The placement demanded that students engaged in hands-on practice and to demonstrate behaviours characteristic of the profession – for example, a police officer putting on handcuffs. Rather than being led by the need for a tick in a box when demonstrated effectively, I explored the ways in which students were psychically positioned to the required competencies. This differentiates between, for example, what a police officer does and what it means for an individual to engage in specific behaviours. My analysis emphasised the process of an individual’s development (rather than a set of predetermined outcomes) and enabled their anxieties and difficulties to be acknowledged as an important part of the process. It also allowed individuals to engage with feelings of success at a deeper level that extended beyond the demonstration of expected skills to be ticked-off by their mentor. However, the language which students used to describe and conceptualise their experience still had traces of the language of technical competencies.

From the themes arising from my analysis, I noticed that a contributing factor which influenced students’ willingness or confidence to engage was, in part, their perception of being in a safe environment. The relationships they had formed were an important aspect of this. Rather than analyse the nature of each quasi-parental mentor figure, the concept of responsibility emerged as important in students’ development linked to the nature of the relationships they formed. This included students’ perceived support offered by mentors and the perceived availability of their time and attention. Linked to the concept of competency,

an emerging idea was not whether the student could yet demonstrate a particular professional activity but the ways in which they took responsibility for this. That is, whether they were able to integrate what they were required to do into their sense of self rather than putting on a display of behaviour for the benefit of their mentor or university tutors. Once they had accepted some personal responsibility, students seemed to engage more confidently with the required competencies.

It was this aspect of taking responsibility that I connected with another theme from my data – that of being recognised. My analysis of interview narratives revealed that as students accepted responsibility, they began to notice how others recognised them as teachers, nurses and police officers. It was not necessarily the case that this acceptance of responsibility led to recognition by others, but that it was at this point that students seemed to notice how they were being recognised in more meaningful ways that extended beyond their physical appearance. In turn, students began to recognise their own development. That is, the order of the terms linked to my conceptualisation of students' emerging-selves – competence, responsibility and recognition - was significant. Through back and forth mapping between students' emerging-selves, I identified that it was only when students began to engage in hands-on practice that they seemed to understand the responsibility both inherent in the role and the responsibility required of them. Once they had understood the necessary shift to focus beyond their own needs to acknowledge the needs of others, they became aware of how they were recognised – by themselves and by others – as teachers, nurses and police officers.

I am aware that the language of 'professional competency' associated with lists of imposed professional standards does sound rather technicist. Given my earlier discussion on the importance of moving away from such technicist language in order to consider the individual at the centre of the dynamic process of development, my naming of emerging concepts common to all students as 'professional competency,' 'professional responsibility' and 'professional recognition' is perhaps therefore surprising. However, it is difficult to completely dismiss the language of competency, responsibility and recognition or to ignore the need for teachers, nurses and police officers to demonstrate profession-specific competencies. These professional programmes are defined by technicist concepts and shaped by technicist policy. Nevertheless, it is the ways in which students associate meaning with, and how they are psychically defended against anxiety associated with these concepts, that I keep as my focus.

### **3.3) Ethical dilemmas arising from the analysis of data**

Informed by guidance from the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011), I developed a research attitude and approach that promoted the rights and wellbeing of my participants, including their confidentiality and anonymity, autonomy with their involvement and the right to withdraw. My reflection on ethics associated with my research highlights a distinction between the process of gaining ethical approval and my ongoing integrity as the researcher throughout each stage of the process (for confirmation of ethics approval for this research see Appendix D). This differentiation outlined by Parker (2019, section 2) refers to the idea that ethics is 'a hurdle that has to be overcome' versus the way that ethical thinking is embedded in day to day practice. I now discuss two particular ethical issues embedded in the process of data analysis with examples from participants' transcripts. One links to the ethics of my position and the other to my right to analyse data.

#### ***3.2.i) Position, power and ownership of the interview space***

One of the ethical issues that arose during the process of analysis was associated with my positionality and who the interview space belonged to. It also highlighted how my positionality was different in interviews with student teachers.

An ethical aspect that I noticed linked to my responses when students were critical about their professional programme because I felt that my position shaped how I responded to this criticism. The examples below from transcripts of the second interviews contrast my response to student police officer Rachel with student teacher Becky.

Rachel: I mean our [placement] tutors were quite critical about the course as well looking at it and um, coz basically we had a week on statements and they told us 'this is a way you do statements' and we went out on the beat and that was completely scrapped and they were like, 'no you do it this way,' and it's like we've just wasted a week learning a different way so I think they [university tutors and placement tutors] need to be a bit more....you know chat, chat to each other about things. [Int.2:135-139/484].

Rachel's response, in a discussion about the practical aspects of development, was immediately followed by me asking whether she thought policing should be a degree course. I made no response regarding the criticism of her course and kept to my clear position as a researcher.

This example stands in stark contrast to an interview with student teacher Becky. During a discussion of how she managed her workload (in response to me asking whether she found it easy to switch off), she began to criticise the paperwork requirements of the course. Although a lengthy example, it demonstrates conflict in a research conversation and therefore useful to include:

B: ...Those dreaded evaluation forms you make us do [laughs] and all those ones...I found that I spent more time doing the paperwork for here [university] than actually planning the lesson...you know, doing stuff for the children in a way... but that's just part of this year isn't it?

HGB: yes... I think good teachers will be doing it anyway...

B: yeah

HGB: but it's - I suppose - capturing that somehow isn't it and...

B: yes

HGB: have you found it a useful process - the evaluating your practice?

B: I did to start with. I'm finding it a bit more a chore now...

HGB: the writing of it or the thinking it through?

B: the writing of it. I'm, I'm ... to start... well, I wouldn't say I'm there coz I'm definitely not there but ...you know, start getting to the stage where it's here [points to head] but I've got to make myself do it. [Int.2:210-235/654].

The focus of the interview moved onto Becky's planning at this point but then returned to the evaluation forms:

B: and also, I think that after the university tutors came [for the assessment monitoring visit], I thought 'who's now going to look at these evaluation forms?' and ...coz will anyone look at them?

HGB: we will be bringing files in next week - in DPP [module linked to placement]

B: Coz I think I was writing a French evaluation and thinking 'will anyone actually look at this?' coz it's not one of the requirements [the assessed teacher standards]...

HGB: but everything you teach should be evaluated...

B: yeah - no and it is...but I think I've got to really just thinking...you know, how

HGB: but I suppose you...

B: I know it's for us obviously but for here...who's going to...

HGB: but I suppose that's it - if it's done well and you've done the quality thinking...

B: Mmmm

HGB: - then absolutely it's for you and ...ultimately if you don't let any of it affect your practice then forget it but it's ...and in a way, you could argue that that's better to go

through the quality thinking to improve practice than actually scribble a few things down or someone who types up a load of stuff but hasn't actually given it any depth of thinking... [Int.2:271-294/654].

It was quite difficult for me to read this back as I felt that I came across as quite combative; it seemed as though I was emphasising the rationale of why, as university tutors, we asked students to complete lesson evaluations. It was also a rather defensive reaction to a direct criticism of the 'dreaded evaluation forms' and the accusation that I was demanding unnecessary paperwork which took the attention away from planning 'for the children.' This demonstrated my lack of neutrality and showed how the research interview had morphed into something else at this point. I had felt a little annoyed in the interview as though I had an idea of what 'a research interview' should be and Becky had crossed the boundaries of the unspoken rules about this. Did I feel annoyed that my research interview was being used for a different purpose? Was my position and role within the interview ambiguous? Was my identity as researcher and programme leader determined by Becky's responses and choice of topic? Was there a power struggle where Becky used the space as an opportunity to complain about what was required of her and I responded by hammering home the purpose and value of the evaluation forms in my role as programme leader? Was she using the opportunity of me in a researcher role to criticise decisions I made as a university tutor? Given my response, was Becky then free to say what she really thought and felt in response to my other questions or did she anticipate that I would give her another mini lecture? Could I have uncovered what was really going on with Becky and her resistance to the evaluation forms if I had responded differently?

This example raised ethical questions for me regarding positionality and power associated with my identity as researcher and programme leader. Any perceived power inherent within my position might have influenced students' responses and showed how meaning associated with the interview space was likely to be different for student teachers. Given the focus of my research, this was not a threat to the process of data generation or analysis but rather provoked me to think about my identity as an interviewer and how my responses might have enabled or prohibited students' responses and sense of freedom within the interview space.

### **3.2.ii) Whose data is it anyway?**

The second ethical provocation links to the ownership of the data within my research and the right I have to interpret unconscious dynamics in students' narratives. Roseneil (2010)

outlines a number of criticisms she had received regarding her adoption of a psychosocial approach, two of which are connected and relevant for comment within my research; the ethical issues of interpreting data – whether interview transcripts should be used to analyse a participant's inner world if this process was not made clear to them; and the problem of over-interpretation of data – whether associations and connections are a leap beyond what is found in the interview transcripts.

Considering the first point, BERA (2018, p.7) guidance states that 'It is important for researchers to take account of the rights and interests of those indirectly affected by their research, and to consider whether action is appropriate – for example, they should consider whether it is necessary to provide information or obtain informed consent.' This raises the question of whether the interpretation of unconscious dynamics in an interview transcript is within the spirit of an ethical approach if the participant has not been made aware that this is part of the data analysis – mainly due to the evolution within the process of analysis following the interviews. In turn, other questions are raised: Who 'owns' the transcript of the research interview? Is such interpretation different from any other interpretation of the data? Does this suggest that the researcher knows more about the participant than the participant knows about themselves? Is the process of analysis separate from the intention of publishing any outcomes in research findings? Does it make a difference if the participant will read these interpretations of their dynamic unconscious? Consideration of the potential impact of the outcomes of the data analysis on the participant might help to shape these decisions.

Lapping (2008) recognises the ethical implications of the meaning attributed to interpretations of research data including participants' expectations about the nature of analysis. The participants' expectations of my research included an understanding that I would be analysing the interview transcripts in detail although I did not explicitly set out the framework I would be using. Two main questions arose during the phase of analysis: What if I interpret something potentially useful but did not tell them? and what if participants are offended by what I have interpreted? Given the time that has passed since the interviews, it is unlikely that any interpretations are now relevant to participants' practice. Even if I did notice or interpret something in a transcript which might be useful for participants to hear, was I ethically obliged to feed this back? For example, Martha's hesitancy to get involved in hands-on practice which I interpreted as resistance associated with causing harm could have been useful for her to know so that she could talk this through with someone. Did or should my interpretations have any credibility for any purpose other than for my research?

Second, if participants did keep my contact details to follow-up on the offer to read my findings and recognise themselves in my research, could my interpretations have any negative influence on their ongoing identity development or how they retrospectively viewed their participation in my research including how they perceived me? The ethical concern was about not causing offence or harm to the participants who willingly took part in my research. Perhaps inclusion of only those interpretations which I would be happy for participants to read would give me ethical reassurance however this is in tension with ethics of revealing meaning and might have compromised my process of analysis. For example, from the first interview I interpreted Tim's idealisation of himself as a teacher as reward-seeking and egocentric which I would feel uncomfortable for him to know, however my analysis could support this; furthermore, it shows that over time, this changed when he was able to take on responsibility – a process during identity re-formation that I subsequently named as significant associated with a student's emerging-self.

Any approach to qualitative data analysis will be subjective and does not claim a truth thus my analysis offers just one version of possible meaning in the transcript. This links to the second of Roseneil's (2010) concerns regarding the over-interpretation of data. Hollway and Jefferson (2013) cite Freud's (1910) use of the term "Wild" psychoanalysis' to indicate overstretched or implausible use of psychoanalytic concepts – a concern of many critics of this approach. Hollway and Jefferson (2013, p. 154) claim that, 'if psychoanalytic concepts are congruent and subordinated to a holistic treatment of data, they can be safeguarded against 'wild analysis.' They also note that such 'wild analysis' can be used to impose findings within any hermeneutical approach. The approach I took, and the language used in my analysis was overtly tentative and acknowledged possibilities of meaning and connections within and between data sets. The following chapters include findings based on such interpretations and provide some insight into the dynamics of identity development and the re-formation of self.

## Chapter 4

### Analysis of interview transcripts: Anticipatory-Selves

#### Introduction

In the following two chapters I present an analysis of the participants' narratives from the interviews which clearly differentiate between idealised and experience-informed perspectives. In this chapter, I explore how students who were in a process of transition constructed possible identities of their teacher, nurse or police self through past and future idealisations of themselves. It emphasises the importance of recognising the student as a defended subject and how their personal narrative, desire and anxieties influenced their learning process. Drawing on interview transcripts before the first placement, a conceptualisation of an anticipatory-self is explored with reference to idealised concepts of the self and how such idealisations enabled individuals to cope with various anxieties. The next chapter contributes a temporal dimension to present a conceptualisation of students' emerging-selves. Within this conceptualisation, I identified how each student was uniquely and psychically positioned in relation to three common concepts within professional development: professional competence; professional responsibility; and professional recognition.

Data presented in the following two chapters is in the form of words and taken from the transcripts of interviews which took place before and towards the end of the professional placement respectively. Although I analysed the transcripts from all participants which had ultimately led to my conceptualisation of an anticipatory and emerging self, I selected the transcripts of three participants – one from each profession - for discussion in these two chapters. These three examples give insight into how my conceptualisation emerged through examples of: patterns in an individual's language; moments of tension or breakthrough; and agreements and contradictions within or between interviews.

The use of quotation marks and indented excerpts indicate word-for-word what was said by the participants. Use of ellipses indicates omission of words or short sections of narrative deemed less relevant to include. An example transcript has been included in Appendix E. Numbers in square brackets following the data denote the first [Int.1] or second [Int.2] interview followed by the line number or numbers in the transcript.

My analysis includes a commentary of my interpretation of the data but, to promote fluency, does not refer to other sources. Connections to existing debates in the literature are made in Chapter 6 and conclusions from my research are drawn.

## **1) Anticipatory-selves: how students constructed ideas of their future self at the start of the professional education programme**

The comments of the three students included in this chapter are taken from the first interview at the start of the programme before they had undertaken a professional placement. The following cases of student teacher Tim, student nurse Martha and student police officer, Holly were selected for analysis because their comments offered rich opportunities to explore aspects of the construction the self. The personal feelings of reward that Tim experienced in his managerial work whilst training others in a bar led him to consider teaching and prior to starting the PGCE programme, he had worked for a year as a teaching assistant in a primary school. Martha had volunteered in a nursing role in Australia which led her to pursue this as a career having completed a BA in Biology. She had previously considered medicine and seemed unsure whether she had made the right decision to give up the possibility of being a doctor. As a successful police officer, Holly's Dad was a significant influence in her choosing policing as a career. She identified with both her Dad and the profession and these influences shaped her idealisation of what it meant to be a police officer.

During their first interview, students both reflected on past experiences and talked about the first professional placement and about their future careers. Drawing on past experience and personal characteristics, they created various continuities that they used to construct idealisations of their future-teacher, nurse or police selves.

### **1.1) Tim – student teacher: anticipation of future teacher-self as exciting, fun and interesting**

As Tim anticipated his future teacher-self, he repeatedly referred to wanting to be seen as exciting, fun and passionate. His desire to feel a 'buzz' when on placement revealed a focus on himself and his own affective state. This inward-looking focus together with possible barriers to the development of his idealised self seemed to limit his imagination in constructing a future teacher-self at this stage.

I started the interview by asking Tim why he had chosen to pursue a career in primary teaching:

When I moved back to [home town] I started working in a different place and got a managing position behind the bar training people and ... it was a way of trying to figure out ...how to train people who don't really feel passion about what they are doing - they are just doing it for the money - ... a fun way of picking up the things that you really need them to do. Um... and I think the idea of teaching just spawned from that. [Int.1:19-23/452]

...it was never kind of 'I want to be a primary school teacher how do I go about that?' it was just like I'll have this and I'll have this and I'll continue to do this so it was a very natural progression and I think I see that natural progression carrying on... [Int.1:30-32/452]

Comments relating to the cognitive challenge of trying to figure things out, as well as the feelings of passion and fun were repeated throughout the interview. This repetition of naming something that seemed important to Tim could be interpreted as a reassurance that things will not change. His comments about continuity and 'natural progression' could indicate a desire for stability within his sense of self.

I asked Tim what he enjoyed about working in the cocktail bar.

I think it's about being able to master something or to be able to understand something to the extent where you can pass it onto somebody else. And you do, you get a little buzz from it. ...Even in the simplest professional way when you're telling somebody who is a bar tender to do it and then you're working on a Friday night and you hear that person explaining that to a customer ... It is, it's that kind of buzz from I don't know, I guess, passing on what you know and what you feel passionate about to someone who can equally feel passionate about it. [Int.1:41-56/452]

Again, the cognitive aspects - of mastering and understanding - are mentioned along with repeated reference to feeling the buzz and feeling passionate about something. This suggested that whilst others might benefit from knowledge that is passed on, a main motivation to teach was the enjoyment that Tim would experience from it. It also suggested a holistic experience where head and heart were both important to him as he anticipated becoming a teacher. This reference to past experience could be interpreted as a construction of continuity that helps to defend against the anxiety of going into the unknown and potentially very challenging experience of professional development.

When I asked Tim how he felt about the forthcoming placement in a local primary school, he said he was nervous. This revealed something of his affective state as he thought about the placement. I asked him what he was referring to:

Um...not getting that, not getting that buzz in a way. Because obviously it's a - the idea of standing up in a class of children in itself doesn't really scare me but it's the, I guess how well I'm going to be able to do it... am I going to feel this passionate about it? am

I going to feel like I'm mastering these things or feeling passionate about maths or science to be able to kind of make children kind of take stock and go 'OK I can take this on board and do something fun with this.' [Int.1:69-73/452]

At this transition point where Tim was constructing continuity with the past, his account also suggested ways in which he was starting to construct an image of a future-self. At this point, he was uncertain and had not yet successfully experienced being a teacher. The way to discover how well he could do it was by starting the placement which involved risking failure and possibly revealing that he was not yet as good a teacher as he hoped to be. It is interesting to note that he linked his ability to teach with his own feelings of passion as though, if he feels passionate, he would be able to teach well and that he could do something fun. This could be interpreted as a desire to be seen as a fun, passionate teacher – even in subjects that Tim might feel anxious about teaching. Naming certain subjects as the reason for why Tim would not realise his future self could be interpreted as a defence against the anxiety of failing.

This perhaps defensive naming of areas of the curriculum was repeated when I asked Tim to think about his time working as a teaching assistant and whether at that time, he thought he would be able to do the job of a teacher:

I think there are some instances where I wasn't too confident in areas of the curriculum maybe...um dance. I watched a few dance, PE sessions...I was a bit nervous about them. I mean you kind of expect that - that's a slightly unexpected thing but things like ...um...elements of maths where it's all kind of dictatorial where there's lots of kinds of...I'm not too sure I can successfully do those things or excitedly - present them in an exciting way almost.

HGB: because you think they can't be presented in an exciting way or you just need to find a way to present them in an exciting way?

...yes, because I don't think I've quite got the knowledge enough to say well it's not the most exciting thing but here's an exciting way I can do it. And I think that - the gap between those two for me is what makes me nervous. Coz I'd like to have the security of going OK so it's dull but if I do it this way, it's really interesting and it's just getting rid of those areas where I'm not quite sure about things just yet. [Int.1:78-90/452]

Tim named the dictatorial mathematics curriculum, unexciting topics to teach and dull teaching content as possible barriers to his idealised teacher-self where he could do something fun with the lesson and present his lessons in exciting and interesting ways. These anxieties, coupled with his lack of knowledge, led to an affective state where he had felt nervous, uncertain and unsure whether he would be successful as a teacher. Locating

the anxiety in areas of the curriculum, rather than relating them to his own personal inadequacies, enabled Tim to minimise the anxieties enough to continue.

Tim's comments link his feelings directly to the perceived success of his future teacher-self. This was repeated when Tim talked about motivations in choosing to follow teaching as a career:

...I think the reason I went into it is because it is something I feel passionate about-something I want to get a buzz from and if I'm not getting it then I don't think I'm going to be as good a teacher as I can be. By not being as good a teacher as I can be, I'm not going to be getting the buzz. [Int.1:95-98 /452]

Tim's construction of a teacher-self was one which included him feeling a buzz. This was a cyclical relationship where this feeling would indicate to him that he was a good teacher which in turn would feed the feeling of a buzz and so on. His comments about being a teacher also reflected his desire to be engaged in what he is doing:

One thing I'm probably afraid of is not being able to engage with things. And finding it difficult to find ways to engage with it...I think if I feel a lesson is boring, the kids are going to feel that it's dross as well and I think my short attention span is going to benefit me to some extent working in a primary school. Um you know, um yeah I think that is my biggest fear is not having fun myself because I think if I'm not having fun and the kids aren't. ... Everyone can have fun even if it is division. [Int.1:34-445 /452]

Tim's comments about his future success highlighted how his future teacher-self was quite vulnerable if the success of his lessons was so dependent on his feelings and perceptions of what the children might feel. The idea that he and the children would feel the same thing about a boring lesson could be understood as Tim not yet having differentiated himself from the class; there were no clear boundaries between him and the children and there was no clear identity for him as 'the teacher.' He polarised 'boring' and 'dross' lessons from 'fun' as though there was no middle ground. He also referred to 'everyone' having fun, further revealing his idealised classroom. A framework of self-efficacy might suggest that Tim's ability to imagine a future 'buzz' and having fun was a helpful way of coping with the anxieties of learning and being successful on placement. An interpretation from a psychoanalytical perspective draws attention to the vulnerability of Tim's future self if it was so dependent on his feelings. Such positive imagery of a future self might be seen, not as a device for managing a present anxiety, but as something more significant and embedded in Tim's identity.

Reflecting back on his experience of working as a Teaching Assistant in a primary school – an identity that Tim had already developed – I asked him to identify what he liked about it:

...it's definitely the enjoyment that I get from it. I don't know that it is strictly limited to the explaining of it or whether it is the whole being immersed in it. My, I think my favourite things at school are the cross-curricular topic things...you're just being totally surrounded by all these things that the children are learning and you just can't help but just kind of you know, enjoy it. You latch onto it and be passionate about it. [Int.1: 161-171/452]

...I want to be part of it and you know - involved - with the children doing most of the work. [Int.1:176-177/452]

The 'being immersed,' 'totally surrounded,' wanting to be a part of it and involved suggest that Tim felt enveloped within the school environment which could be interpreted as a desire to belong. He also repeated that being with children was rewarding which might act as a useful reminder to him that he enjoyed this – especially as the role of a teacher is quite isolated from other adults for much of the day. Another way of interpreting his words here, at the start of his professional programme, is that the way Tim talked about his construction as a teacher as being in some way self-serving - rather than focussing on what he can offer to others, he centred on the rewarding feelings he got from the experience with 'the children,' (rather than him) doing most of the work. This identification with past pleasure seemed to be something that Tim desired to replicate in the future as part of his teacher-self. However, the focus on himself at this stage might indicate that Tim was stuck in his own lived experiences and responses and was not yet able to move beyond this.

Past experiences might contribute to this sense of being stuck. When I asked Tim how he felt about going into the placement school, he referred to a past incident being locked in his memory that he did not want to happen again. He reflected on his experience as a teaching assistant at a different primary school:

I mean I do have some memories of a teacher having to leave the room and me being in the class and seen noise levels have risen or it's gone a bit mental and I've tried to, to control it and failed miserably and I think that's probably one of the reasons again, experientially why I'm feeling nervous because I've got that locked in my memory and kind of like 'I don't want that happening again' but then, you know, it could be that this school obviously is much better behaviour, much more respectful of adults which were kind of two things that school I worked in particularly weren't. So you know, it could be a total other side...but then again it's purely experiential because I can really only base how I'm going to act on how I've acted before...um... and how the children can react is that uncertain variable at the minute. [Int.1:273-283/452]

This remembered incident demonstrated how the past was impacting on Tim's present affective state; he commented that he 'is feeling nervous' because he had an out of control situation 'locked' in his memory. Whilst Tim cannot avoid going back into a classroom situation, he can defend against the anxiety of this happening again. To imagine a future teacher-self who is able to control a class, Tim idealised his first placement school as one that had much better behaviour and where he would be respected by the children. His comments also revealed some uncertainty about the children in his placement school who he had not yet met. What was more certain - or perhaps safe - for Tim, was to act as he had acted before. Whilst this might offer some stability to his sense of self, it also revealed that Tim's construction of his future teacher-self at that point was not one based on new or imagined identities but one that he was already familiar with. A psychoanalytical perspective might interpret Tim's comments as a way of defending against the anxiety of being changed by the programme - that he was reassuring himself that he could continue to act how he had in the past. He might also have been affirming that he should be valued for how he had been in the past and that he should be recognised and respected for who he was.

This idea of being of value put Tim as an individual at the heart of the learning process. I asked him whether he thought that teachers can be *trained*:

I think you can definitely give somebody the information... you can definitely train them to know what to do but I think that the taking of that training and taking it... I mean it is, giving knowledge and ideas um and it's teaching to a certain extent. That's how I see it. Um and I think the process of then transmitting that into a person who's doing the job is very much down to who's doing it and who's doing the...who's becoming the teacher. [Int.1:214-218/452]

Tim's final comment revealed the importance he put on the centrality of self in the process of becoming a teacher and how the development of his teacher-self would be unique to him.

### **Tim's anticipatory teacher-self**

Repeated references throughout the interview to a construction of self that was fun, exciting, passionate, engaged and interesting was drawn from past idealisations and experience. He anticipated his teacher-self as one that reflected these attributes and that this would be evident in his lessons – as though at this stage, his lessons would be in some way an extension of himself. However, Tim's desire for his teacher-self was threatened by barriers

such as the nature of certain subjects, dull aspects of the curriculum and past negative experiences. At this time of transition, Tim's focus was on managing the emotions and anxiety in his present self. His positive comments about his forthcoming placement and the repeated naming of how he would like his lessons to be fun reflected some self-efficacy. A psychoanalytic interpretation of Tim's comments might be to suggest that his idealised construction of a future-self defended against the anxiety of starting the professional placement and the possibility of being a failure as a teacher.

## **1.2) Martha – student nurse: dilemma of career choice and personal reward**

In her first interview, Martha's construction of a future nurse-self seemed tentative as she wrestled with her decision to train to be a nurse rather than as a doctor; it was as though this transition point at the start of the programme destabilised some of the certainty she had about nursing and what that represented for her identity. Martha reflected on past experience to identify constructions of herself and the working environment that were consistent with her idealisation of being a nurse. This included personal feelings of reward even if her caring actions were not recognised by others.

I started the interview by asking Martha why she had chosen nursing as a career:

It really started from sixth form at school when we had to start thinking about universities and I was deciding between medicine or science, and for various reasons, I decided to go against medicine and went for biology. [Int.1:10-13/296]

In the first and second year of that degree, I was still umm-ing and arh-ing whether I had made the right decision. I had some medic friends and was seeing what they were doing, and thinking 'oh, maybe I should have done that'. ... I studied in Sydney in my third year. Whilst I was there, I volunteered at Sydney's Children's Hospital and I could see what the nurses were doing there, and that's when the idea got into my head that I probably wouldn't go for medicine now ... It was more the practical side. I wanted to be with patients rather than just being in and out as a doctor. It might be more day to day care. [Int.1:15-24/296]

Although Martha did not state what the 'various reasons' were in her decision making process, it was interesting to note that she used the term 'against medicine' as though in some way she had some resistance to this profession. Martha's doubt about making 'the right decision' during her undergraduate studies seemed to stem from a comparison with her medic friends and suggested a sense of regret or that, by inference, had she made a 'wrong' decision. Even with experience of volunteering in a nursing role in a hospital, her

language was still tentative that she 'probably' would not go for medicine – as though she could have still imagined a future self as a doctor. She then split being a nurse who cares for patients on a day to day basis from being a doctor who is just 'in and out.' This construction of a nurse self was linked with her desire to be with patients and was an idealisation of a future-self that would be in a position to care for them. It also suggested an idealisation of choice: both that Martha was empowered to make the decision of nursing over medicine, and also the choices available to nurses that doctors do not have on their busy ward rounds.

Given the media coverage about the low standards in nursing at the time of the interview, I asked Martha what she thought the public perception of nursing as a profession was:

I think it's changing. That was one of the things that was slightly putting me off nursing at the start when the idea first came to my head because I knew that I probably could have done medicine and that nursing was something that you fall back on. Maybe if you wanted to be in the caring role, but didn't have the grades or other reasons, that you would go into nursing - that it's more of a doing thing. Whereas as a doctor, you need to have the knowledge as well, don't you? But with nursing now, it has changed completely because you have to get this degree and so they are realising that you have to know what you are doing rather than just doing it to understand why you are giving the care. And also, there is a lot more opportunities in nursing, I think, nowadays because there are roles like the nursing consultant that you could get up to the wards and where they can diagnose patients as well. [Int.1:91-102/296]

Martha's response revealed that the decision of choosing medicine or nursing was still problematic for her – as though she was being held back from fully embracing a future as a nurse due to ongoing thoughts that she could be something that she seemed to imply would be better. Although she had the grades to do medicine, she had chosen nursing and was wrestling with a perception that this was just something to 'fall back on'. Her positive comments about the changes to nursing and the knowledge required, along with fantasies of a range of opportunities and possible recognition of 'nursing consultant,' could be interpreted as devices to defend against any anxiety from instability within her sense of self as she prepared to take on a professional role.

In addition to her own belief or fantasy that she could have been a doctor, Martha commented on what her friends thought – as though they doubted her decision:

I still have friends who maybe think that I could have been a doctor and have chosen to be a nurse and they question that sometimes which is hard for me because I have

to explain again and again the reasons why. A lot of it is quite personal when you choose to be, I think. [Int.1:110-113/296]

With nursing, there is so many different areas that you can go into that it gives you so much choice later on, whether you are in hospital or community. It could take you abroad. You could be a school nurse or anything really. [Int.1:81-84/296]

Martha's comments suggested ongoing justification to her friends, to herself (and perhaps to me), that she had made the right decision and that her future-self had a range of opportunities. Whatever she would choose 'to be' - and that she could 'be anything' - revealed an idealisation to imagine a positive construction of a future nurse-self that was closely linked to an idea of having options and not locked in to just being a nurse. This choice may be an idealisation of the possibilities open to nurse but also might relate to the complex issues around Martha's own choice of nursing over that of medicine.

Martha's comments suggested that her imagined nurse-self was linked to her nursing children. I asked her why she'd chosen to train for this age phase:

I've always liked being around children. I just find them fun to be around and very rewarding. ... I think whatever profession I would have wanted to be with children, so if I had been a doctor, I would have probably have wanted to be a paediatrician. [Int.1:27-31/296]

Martha's reference to being a doctor was framed as a past possibility – 'if I had been' – however by mentioning this again, it seemed as though there was still an ongoing tension about the identity of her future-self. What seemed more certain here is Martha's use of 'always' liking being around children and the fixed state of a constructed self that said, 'I find them fun to be around'. This established some continuity from the past to her current transition into the professional programme and for a possible future. Theorisations about such a construction suggested a need to develop an identity or an idealised nurse-self; from a psychoanalytic perspective, her construction of a continuous identity that liked being around children, could be interpreted as an unconscious defence that would help Martha manage anxiety about how she would cope with the programme – especially as this included nursing sick children who might not fun to be with.

Martha's idealisation of a fun, positive hospital environment even when children are very sick created a context for her future nurse-self as one in which she would cope. From her comments, it was possible to identify some more specific features of her constructed identity. She talked about her time volunteering in a hospital:

The way that children are, they just see the fun side of everything, whereas if I was an adult nurse, you just think that adults are ... They are more aware of everything and so they are more likely to pick up on things that you might be doing wrong or just be more awkward in the hospital situation. Children - even like the children that I saw in the children's hospital in Sydney - even though they might be very, very ill and have been in hospital for a very long time, and the parents are sick of them being there, they still see the good side of everything. I think that impacts on the staff who work there. The nurses were all so cheerful even in such challenging situations. [Int.1:37-45/296]

Again, Martha mentioned children being 'fun' which seemed to shape her construction of her nurse-self. Her use of language 'if I was an adult nurse' is interesting to note. Although she was referring to nursing adults, a psychoanalytic interpretation of her comments might suggest that she had chosen to be a children's nurse so that she could have fun like a child and not have to face the difficult things that adults know – for example, that some sick children do not get better. This splitting of being a child and being an adult was repeated in her comparison between her experience of nursing children to a perception of nursing adults; she compared children seeing 'the fun side of everything' and later, despite them being very ill, seeing 'the good side of everything' with adults who are 'more aware of everything.'

The repeat of the word 'everything' reflected generalisations that could be interpreted as Martha's fantasy of nursing and being a nurse. Her comments suggested that she used past experience to construct a present-self that then built a future, idealised-self based on continuity with the past. These statements also seemed to defend against the difficult feelings of children being 'very ill' and being in hospital for 'a very long time' – both factors that oppose possible fantasies of being a good nurse who restores children back to health and sees them return home. Martha also compared the children's parents who are sick of them being there with the nurses 'all' being so 'cheerful,' even in challenging situations. Martha's idealisation of her future nurse-self was shaped by a presumably very selective interpretation of her past experience and helped to defend against the anxiety of being a nurse who cannot be cheerful in the face of challenge and where some sick children in her care might die. Such continuity with a selective, idealised past at this point of transition helped Martha to construct a more stable sense of self. This suggestion of what is a rather idealised version of a nurse identity seemed to defend against the difficulties of what Martha might feel when working with very sick children.

Another feature of Martha's idealised nurse-self was the fulfilment and reward that she got from caring. Martha explicitly mentioned 'reward' as summing up her enjoyment and

expressed feeling good about helping others. It was the giving out and helping others and seeing how this made a difference to them – by seeing ‘how much it means to someone else,’ or seeming to ‘brighten up their day’ - that Martha identified as rewarding. Martha’s comments could be understood as her drawing on past experience to develop an image of the satisfaction that she might get from being a nurse; although she had not yet developed a nurse-self, she used the continuity of feeling personal reward to construct a future identity. I asked her what it was about the profession that had attracted her to it:

...I suppose it started when my grandma got older and needed more help from the family. When I was at home, that would be me a lot of the time. I used to enjoy going around and just talking to her, but also helping her out with things. It made me feel good that I could help her when she couldn’t do it for herself. I volunteered in a hospice before. It was an adult hospice, and that was just like the tea trolley thing, but again, you could see how much it means to someone else. Just the little things, like all I was doing, which was offering tea, coffee and biscuits. It just seemed to brighten up their day really. It’s the reward that you get from giving something out, to see how much it means to them, I think. [Int.1:58-66/296]

It is interesting that despite Martha commenting that they had some positive and meaningful impact, she seemed to play down what she did in these situations – that she was ‘just’ talking to her grandma, ‘just’ like the tea trolley thing and ‘just’ the little things. Her comments could be interpreted as naming things that might not be seen by others as very important but that were important to her. Accepting a future nurse-self that might be seen as ‘just’ doing the little things – particularly if she was still imagining what she would be doing if she had pursued medicine – might have allowed her to recognise the value of enjoyment and personal reward as a construction of her future nurse-self.

This recognition of what Martha found rewarding when she cared for others seemed to be linked to her self-representation of being someone who was trusted:

If a friend would come to me to ask for advice, it means a lot to me because I know that they trust me, and I think you do get a lot from that. It’s one of the main reasons that I enjoy what I’m doing. ...I think that’s why it took me so long to get to the decision to do nursing because I wanted to be sure that it was what I wanted to do. [Int.1:69-76/296]

This construction of a nurse-self as one who cares for others because they are trusted (rather than because they demonstrate efficient technical skills, for example) is what Martha said led to her feeling of enjoyment. This again suggested that it was the unseen aspects of nursing that brought Martha greatest fulfilment. Perhaps because she could not draw on

past experiences of receiving praise for nursing competence, she constructed a future nurse-self that was affirmed by personal enjoyment rather than recognition from others.

Further to constructions of her future self, Martha's comments revealed an idealisation of the context that she would be working in as a nurse. Drawing on past experience when working (i) in a hospital in Sydney and (ii) a recent visit to her placement setting, she identified aspects of working as part of a team and about relationships with colleagues:

(i) You could see how the staff nurses on one ward would be always helping each other out and being there for one another because you do need that on the ward otherwise it can be quite a lonely job, I think, and especially some procedures or care would need at least two members of staff, and so you always have to be looking out to see if anyone else needs help and be there for them. I think it's one of the professions where it's essential that you have two working... or a good working relationship with colleagues.  
[Int.1:199-205/296]

(ii) I couldn't say it for every ward, but I think that just the way that the profession is with long hours, twelve and a half hour shifts either in the day or twelve and a half hours shifts at night, then you all know what the other person is going through, and you have to help someone else out for you to get that back as well. So, they are always making each other cups of tea and coffee and making sure on the adolescent ward that everyone tries to have their break together and that promotes the team bonding.  
[Int.1:220-226/296]

Martha's comments revealed that she had constructed an idea of nursing as a collaborative, bonded team where colleagues help each other out and have good working relationships. She identified with the other nurses to the extent that she saw individual experiences of a night shift as something shared between them: 'then you all know what the other person is going through.' This could be a projected hope that Martha would be understood by her colleagues. The repeated use of always – always helping each other out, always looking out for each other and always making cups of tea – created an idealised environment that defended against loneliness and the anxiety of not having anyone to ask for help. It could also be interpreted as a splitting of the fantasy of being a nurse and the challenge of a busy ward where the primary task is to look after sick children (not colleagues) and where the workload might limit the time for a break.

### **Martha's anticipatory nurse-self**

At this point of transition, Martha was still wrestling with her decision to pursue nursing rather than medicine which suggested instability in her sense of self. Despite this, she drew on

past experiences to construct a positive future nurse-self that recognised the importance of enjoyment and personal reward gained from caring for others, even if unseen or considered insignificant. This became a continuity that might have offered some stability as Martha thought about her future-self. The idealisation of a potential working environment revealed a desire to be on a team where she would be cared for by colleagues which might further serve to reassure her that a career in nursing was the right decision.

### **1.3) Holly – student police officer: growing up and the influence of her Dad**

Holly's construction of her future police-self was shaped by her perception of policing and the extent to which she thought it was her 'kind of profession.' The influence of her Dad as a successful police officer seemed to have an influence on her construction of self in three ways: (i) it offered some continuity and familiarity; (ii) there was pressure on her future police-self to make him proud; and (iii) how she positioned herself being a child and an adult. This last factor linked to her idealisation of what a degree in police studies could add to her status as a police officer and how, through this programme, she had already changed in some way to fit into a construction of what it meant to her to be a police officer.

I started the interview by asking Holly whether she had always wanted to work for the police:

Probably about the last four, five years I did work experience at the vets. I used to want to be a vet and I hated that work experience so the next year I was 'right, oh I'll do work experience in the police instead.' It's just more my kind of profession I guess. [Int.1:15-18/493]

It is not clear what Holly 'hated' about the work experience at the vets which after four or five years led to what seemed an abrupt switch to undertaking work experience in the police. She identified with the police as her 'kind of profession' – that despite no experience, she was identifying with and owning it in some way. She commented that working with animals was an ongoing desire:

Well, Dad focussed my section of the work placement round, like, police dog training, so that's something that I want to get in to. I think still the animal side of things, yeah, definitely, but... Combine the two. [Int.1:21-22&27/493]

Although no longer wanting to train as a vet, Holly still identified as someone who liked animals despite being uncertain how to maintain this desire with her new idea of becoming a police officer – 'I think... yeah, definitely ...' - It was as though hanging onto the four or

five year plan of working with animals provided a continuity that stabilised her sense of self at this time of transition.

Reference to the police being her 'kind of profession' suggested that the nature of the person who was becoming a police officer was significant. I asked Holly whether she thought that anybody could train to be a police officer:

I don't think so. I think...anyone could be within the force themselves 'cos...like there are different sectors and stuff like that - but front line police I think there's a certain person you need to be. You can't take things too personally. If you take things too personally then anything anyone ever says to you is just going to completely crush you. But I think you need to be quite...like...confident and quite...like...you need to be...you need to have...not your opinions as such but...your ways... [Int.1:89-94/493]

I think who you are as a person... like... that's sort of drawn me to the profession but then the training's going to like...sort of enhance what I'm going to need to learn and what I need to be doing. Definitely. [Int.1:97-99/493]

Holly's identification of a police officer needing to be 'a certain person' revealed her own construction of self as someone who would be suitable for this 'front line' profession. Naming characteristics - such as not taking things too personally and being confident - further revealed Holly's construction of what a police officer is. These comments could be interpreted as a defence against the anxiety of her future police-self being in a situation where someone could 'completely crush' her. Holly's comments suggested that she believed she was someone who could be successful as a police officer and connected who she was as a person with being drawn to the profession. She established a continuity between who she was a person fitting with the profession and that the programme would 'enhance' what she needed to learn. It is also worth noting Holly's repeated use of the word 'definitely' which could be interpreted as self-reassurance about the decision to pursue policing perhaps reflecting that she was not as certain as her comments suggested.

I asked Holly what she thought it would be like to go on placement and what it was about the profession that she was drawn to:

It's a bit shocking sometimes, like some of the things that go on, you're just like ... You sort of think they might happen but you don't like expect it. It's still a shock when it actually happens so I think that's one of the worries about the profession. I think it's unpredictable and I think it can be dangerous but it's what you get yourself in to. [Int.1:44-47/493]

....you don't know what to expect, but yeah, it makes every day different, a bit more excitement. [Int.1:51-52/493]

I've never been one of these people who wants to do... I don't know like, an office job or anything like that. Like, I work in a coffee shop at the moment. I love it, but it's not a career, like...'cos every day is pretty much the same so I think in a way... yeah, danger is pretty similar to the excitement 'cos it's unpredictable and like, every day is completely different to the day before... [Int.1:55-59/493]

Holly's comments split different jobs between office jobs and her job in a coffee shop where 'every day is pretty much the same' with policing where the work is unpredictable, unexpected, shocking, exciting and dangerous. These characteristics revealed something of Holly's idealised life as a police officer and one that she identified with. By inference, not being 'one of these people' who wants an office job, she had constructed a future-self that fit with her perceptions of being a police officer. The unpredictability of policing seemed attractive to Holly as she linked both danger and excitement with being unpredictable. Reference to her having 'never been' one of these people suggested something established and unchangeable that fit with Holly's imagined police-self. Having such a fixed idea of her identity might have helped to defend against anxiety of unknown change in her own identity as she progressed through the programme.

Whilst Holly had constructed policing as unpredictable, she had some familiarity with the profession as her Dad was a police officer. I asked her what influence this had had on her:

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You grow up in that environment, you like get used to it and you see the side of things people who don't have family in the police don't see, so you have that insight already. [Int.1:289-291/493]

Like with my Dad I've seen some pretty horrific incidents, like...involving him when he's been off duty and stuff like that and it's like...you know it was horrible at the time but looking back on it, it sort of...I think it sort of...it's OK now going in to the police 'cos I don't think personally for me anything can be as bad as that. [Int.1:67-71/493]

Holly's reference to growing up with policing suggested that it was a developmental part of her that she could identify with because she was part of a family that was 'in the police.' She talked about seeing and having insight into 'horrific' and 'horrible' things that acknowledged policing as a profession that exposes officers to the possibility of some very difficult things. Holly's comments about getting used to this, and that she thought she had seen the worst things possible, could be interpreted as a defence against the anxiety of an unknown future

without her Dad there and where she would be in a position of responsibility. The past experiences became a point of continuity for Holly as she constructed an idealised future-self that would be able to cope with everything that she was confronted with.

Whilst Holly was familiar with policing, the relationship between her, her Dad and policing as a profession was complex. I asked her what she thought the reward would be for her as a police officer:

I think...I know this sounds really cheesy but definitely making my Dad proud. I think he's...since I...like, took an interest in wanting to join the police force. I've always been interested in it, but like joining...he's really supported me and I think it will definitely pay off for him to see that I've actually succeeded in it...um...and I think just feeling like you've had that impact on the community and you're actually doing something to help... It will definitely, definitely pay off. [Int.1:246-252/493]

Although she framed her response as being 'really cheesy,' it was clear that it was important to her that her Dad benefited in some way from her becoming a successful police officer. Earlier in the interview, Holly talked about wanting to be a vet but here she said that she had 'always been interested' in the police force. Holly's comments suggested that she saw the police force and her Dad as being one. She has grown up with both her Dad being a dad and with him being in the police force where he had been involved in incidents even when he was off duty. She had seen such incidents when she had been with him as a child. Since Holly expressed an interest in joining the police, her Dad arranged her placement and 'really supported' her in the decision. Although Holly talked about the affirmation from her Dad in her career choice, Holly's decision could be interpreted as a desire to connect with her Dad and to be like him in some way. This might further explain Holly's earlier comment about policing being her 'kind of profession' – that it was hers because it was her Dad's kind of profession and that her Dad was hers. This close identification with 'her Dad the police officer' suggested that Holly closely connected her Dad with the profession and that by joining the profession, she would be closer to, or become like, her Dad. Holly mentioned having an 'impact on the community and doing something to help' which are recognised narratives of what the police do – but it was the 'pay off' that her Dad would get that seemed to be the main desire when she talked about the reward that she would get. This could be interpreted as a desire to be together with her Dad – that her reward was expressed as being her Dad's reward.

I asked Holly whether wanting to make her Dad proud felt like a responsibility:

A bit of pressure. Yeah, definitely...a lot of pressure. Like he's been so successful, like awards and stuff like that and the respect he's got round town, like he's so well-known which is why I'm really glad I'm not doing my placement in [home city] because people would be like, 'Oh you know poor [Holly's Dad's name] daughter...like...she'll know how to do this.' But that's not true, I'm a different person like...I'm going to maybe approach things differently, like I've a different personality to my Dad so it's going to be dealt with differently. [Int.1:272-277/493]

Whilst desiring to make her Dad proud, Holly recognised the pressure on her to achieve this. Her comments suggested that she thought that her Dad's colleagues (who - from the tone of her comments - she had probably already met) would see her as being like her Dad – that Holly would know what to do because she was her Dad's daughter. This might be interpreted as a desire to be recognised as the daughter of her successful, award-winning Dad; however, this desire had brought a sense of pressure. To defend against anxiety that she might not be successful or that she would not know what to do, she then separated herself from her Dad as though she did not want her potential failures to reflect on him. This is perhaps the reason that she claimed to be glad that she was doing her placement in a different city and why she stated that she was a 'different person' and had a 'different personality' and that things would be 'dealt with differently.' Holly's comments could also be interpreted as wanting to be seen as herself and not to be totally defined by her Dad.

Recognition of Holly's future police-self was further revealed in comments about her participation in the new police studies degree programme that included time in lectures rather than previous models of learning on the job. Her comments revealed that she did not yet feel ready to be a police officer:

It was in February this year that I heard that I heard about this course and I was like, well...you know best of both worlds...like I can still be a student and I can...it gives you a bit of like growing space as well, 'cos I think I'm still quite young to go straight in to it. [Int.1:108-111/493]

I don't think many people are aware of it - that are in the force at the moment - like the officers I've talked to, they're like, 'I didn't know there was a degree.' But...I mean...I think, they're going to respect us a bit more because we haven't just come straight out of school which a lot of PCSO's have done for example. So we've had the chance to grow up and like, develop as a person while having the training at the same time. [Int.1:120-124/493]

I think one of the things which stopped me from applying for the police straight from school was life experience. I think that's crucial. I think life experience is definitely key...you need to...like...kind of grow up a little bit really...um, 'cos you have to be responsible in everything. [Int.1:330-334/493]

Holly's comments revealed some tension between an idealisation of being respected by police officers already in the force and a feeling of being too young and needing to grow up before taking on responsibilities. Anxiety that she was not yet ready and did not yet feel grown up enough to be a police officer could be interpreted in Holly's comments here where the professional education programme became a social defence that allowed her to 'still be a student' and to 'develop as a person.'

The reference to development and needing to grow up suggested that Holly was prepared - or expected - to change in order to become a police officer. This close identification of self with the identity of a police officer was expressed by Holly in terms of 'qualities'. I asked her whether she thought that anybody could be trained to be a police officer:

I think especially with the police training it brings out people's bad qualities, so that could show like...in [residential training centre] for example people have certain qualities that aren't...sort of respected...it could make a bit of a difference. [Int.1:346-349/493]

I think, um...like especially some...'cos I used to have a bit of a problem with being short tempered, which I can control better now than I used to and I think that was definitely one thing that would have held me back. 'cos if you're short tempered and fiery then any little issue you're going to take personally. You're going to...like, you're going to get pretty angry about and then the case isn't going to be dealt with like in a fair like, respectable manner so...I think definitely...sort of grown up a bit from that. [Int.1:351-356/493]

Holly's comments revealed a desire that her personality, character and qualities be linked to her idealisation of a successful police officer - one who is fair and respectable. She also repeated an aspect of policing that she mentioned earlier in the interview about not taking things personally and linked this with a change in her own character. She recognised that a past problem of being short-tempered would not fit with her construction of a police officer. This reflected an identification of self with a future police-self that was deeper than knowledge or a set of behaviours. Her comment about growing up suggests that this aspect of her character was now changed or could be controlled better and that she believed that she had the qualities to be a police officer.

### **Holly's anticipatory police-self**

Throughout the interview, Holly's comments revealed an importance that she put on growing up. Growing up with a police Dad connected her to the police - even when off duty, he got

involved in incidents which Holly had seen. Familiarity with policing through her Dad's experience offered some continuity for Holly as she was supported to apply for the police studies programme. Holly's comments suggested that the support she received from her Dad served as a reward for her and her desire to make him proud was an idealisation of her future police-self. Holly also referred to growing up as a process that she needed to experience in order to be ready to take on the responsibilities of being a police officer. She named life experience, being older and changes in character; these seemed to serve as a transition from her being a child who saw her Dad as a police officer and being an adult ready to become a police officer. Despite her recognition of the need to change and grow up, there was a close connection between who she was as a person and her idealisation of her future-self as a police officer.

## **2) Conclusion: theorising an Anticipatory-self**

The first interview provided the opportunity for prospective reflection before the first professional placement began and highlighted the value of understanding how the participants talked about their experience at this stage of their development. This understanding extended beyond their past experience and qualifications gained to the student's personal narrative and understanding of their inner world. It included how they constructed a sense of self, how stable this was and how it might impact the process of becoming a teacher, nurse or police officer. The complex nature of this process contrasts with the standardising assumptions inherent in many programmes that students demonstrate a linear progression of skills and competencies in order to meet a predetermined professional identity.

Although students might expect to change during their professional programme, the process of returning to learning can become disorienting and their identities might become unstable or fragile as they begin to take on new constructs of what it means to be a teacher, nurse or police officer. Students might draw on idealisations of their future-selves to offer continuity during times of change and associated anxiety.

The analysis of students' comments from the first interview reveal how past experiences are often idealised – for example, Tim's interesting and exciting lessons, Martha's bonded nurse team who look out and care for each other and Holly's comments that she has already seen the worst incidents that she could ever see. These idealisations seemed to serve as a

protective measure to defend against anxiety associated with the possibility that they might not cope with the demands of the placement. Further idealisation was interpreted from students' use of 'fun'; all students named having fun as though idealising a sense of enjoyment within their professional role and thus a sense of fun could continue to be associated with their future-self.

For all students, continuity with their existing self and the need for change in order to develop a successful future-self was balanced differently. Anxiety as associated with having to change - and perhaps any anxiety about how the programme might change them beyond how they would like to change - was defended against with constructions of continuity. Tim's reference to continuity with previous work in the bar and as a teaching assistant indicated that he felt he did not need to change. Recognition for a need to change was linked to avoidance of failing in a teacher role, for example his need to develop his subject knowledge for specific areas of the curriculum and the development of classroom-based skills to avoid being in situations that he did not know how to handle. These changes were associated with professional knowledge and skills rather than with who he was as a person. Tim had built up an idealisation of having autonomy and freedom to express his individuality that reflected a belief that he would be in control of the way that he might have to change.

Martha drew on previous caring roles and her enjoyment of working with children to offer some continuity at this time; her previous success in such roles seemed to indicate that she did not need to change. Her idealisation of choice within the nursing profession and the opportunities this might lead to in her career seemed to offer a stable future-self. This, in some ways, seemed more stable than her current identity which was still wrestling with a possible future doctor-self. Martha's idealisation of nursing seemed to be an attempt to offer herself some assurance that she had made the right decision about her career, particularly her decision to work with children who she idealised as being fun and seeing the good side of everything.

Holly used her Dad's past experience to establish continuity with her own future experience as a way of suggesting that she would not need to change - she had seen all the horrors of policing and knew the demands of the job. Naming confidence and drawing on her knowledge of what the role required offered reassurance that she was suitable for front line policing which, unlike working in an office, was her 'kind of profession.' However, Holly did recognise a need for change through more life experience in order to grow up. She welcomed the opportunity to 'develop as a person' within the programme. This balance of

continuity and change indicated that who she was as a person would enable her to be successful however further life experience would enhance her success in this role. This suggested that, to some extent, she idealised having choice in the amount of change that might take place through her development.

These idealisations highlight the importance of the affective dimension of professional education and support an argument for greater emphasis on students' sense of self and self-efficacy during professional development programmes. From a psychoanalytic perspective, such idealisations could be interpreted as defending against anxiety of the unknown process of challenge and change as individuals become teachers, nurses and police officers. The opportunity to talk about desires and constructs of possible future-selves revealed present-selves that were seeking a sense of stability at a time of transition. In order to establish stability, individuals constructed continuities from idealisations of the past to potential future-selves. This demonstrates the value of psychoanalytically informed knowledge.

## Chapter 5

### Analysis of interview transcripts: Emerging-Selves

#### 1) How students' teacher, nurse and police selves emerged during the first professional placement.

##### Introduction

Analysis of students' narratives in the previous chapter led to a conceptualisation of an anticipatory-self at the start of professional education programmes in teaching, nursing and policing. Through prospective reflection, students constructed anticipatory-selves shaped by past experience but also by possibilities and imaginings. I argued that such constructions of their future-selves included fantasies and idealisations that served to defend against anxiety at a time of transition and unknown demands. Tim's comment in the second interview emphasised the ambiguity and unknown nature of this anticipatory stage:

...this is not a reflection on university at all - but when I was doing the university time... you're kind of in limbo, you're kind of 'look I'm a student teacher that's not teaching' so you're kind of in this unknown stage. [Int.2:164-166/600]

This suggests that at this stage, Tim was stuck in uncertainty and speculation as he had not yet had the opportunity to develop the behaviours associated with his identity as a teacher. This reinforces the significance of professional placements and in particular, the first placement where re-formed identities can begin to emerge.

This chapter offers a temporal dimension to my study and traces the development of Tim, Martha and Holly as their teacher, nurse and police officer selves emerged during their first professional placement. Through analysis of the students' interview narratives, I identified a number of aspects linked to an emerging-self at this stage of professional development which were common across all students' experiences. My conceptualisation of a student's emerging-self was developed through three questions:

##### 1.1) How do students relate to and reflect on the development of professional competency?

All students had certain tasks that they were required to carry out (set by the relevant professional body for teaching, nursing and policing) which were assessed throughout the placement. Although I earlier argued that a checklist of such tasks can lead to a reductive

understanding of professional identity, reference to such requirements offered a way to analyse the meaning that students made from them; the explicit reference to this kind of checklist in all three accounts emphasised how set expectations of them seemed to affect their perceptions of their own development. Students' different conscious and unconscious relations to these professional competencies indicated how their engagement with profession-specific activities enabled or inhibited the construction of meaningful identities that demanded a more internalised understanding of their teacher, nurse or police officer selves. This internalisation identified the necessary shift from replicating the actions of others to an engagement with the process of becoming.

### **1.2) How do students identify and assume professional responsibility?**

Beyond the checklist of competencies which required the development of a set of actions or behaviours, the professional role required a sense of responsibility. Students' narratives suggested how they began to understand the responsibility inherent within their professional role and how they integrated or resisted this within their emerging-selves. Students' constructions of what it meant to be responsible required a move away from an egocentric focus on personal development and personal reward to an understanding of the wider purpose and meaning of their professional role which included taking on responsibility for others. Although different in nature across the three professions, the placements offered opportunities for each student to develop in areas such as meeting the needs of others, working with greater independence and getting involved in meaningful activities inherent in their professional role that extended beyond theoretical knowledge. The way that each student managed anxiety associated with taking on responsibility shaped the extent to which this aspect of their emerging-self developed.

### **1.3) What significance did students place in professional recognition?**

Professional practice placed students in a new role that was highly visible to others. This visibility was determined by students' physical appearance, by their physical position within the working environment and by their language and behaviour. Whereas pupils, patients, parents and the public might recognise a student teacher, nurse or police officer in quite straightforward ways (such as their uniform or position), students' own recognition of their emerging-self was more complex. The exposure and vulnerability associated with such

visibility led to tensions within students' re-formation of self as they wanted to be both seen and unseen. Whilst students' anticipatory-selves desired to be recognised as developing professionals, these roles were associated with particular expectations that inexperienced students may not yet feel equipped to carry out. Recognition associated with collegiate relationships was also problematic in two particular ways. The first was that whilst wanting to be recognised as a fellow-professional, students also required support in their novice role. The second was that although students desired to be recognised as a teacher, nurse or police officer, they also wanted to remain visible and to be understood as an individual rather than by their role.

I argue that although these questions: how do students relate to and reflect on the development of professional competency?; how do students identify and assume professional responsibility?; and what significance did students place in professional recognition? suggest some commonality across students' experience from which a framework for an emerging-self might be established, individual narratives were distinct in the way they related to each question. Further to this focus on each of these three questions, I analysed the inter-relationship between professional competence, professional responsibility and professional recognition within each student's emerging-self with a particular emphasis on the interpretation of the management of anxiety. I analysed students' psychological defences which I interpreted in their narratives through the specific issues that related to key concerns in each of the professional fields. The final section of my analysis for each student is framed by the following questions relating to their psychological defences.

#### **1.4) Psychological defences**

**Which psychological defences were identified through interpretation of students' narratives linked to the inter-relationship between the three areas of their emerging-selves - competency, responsibility and recognition? To what extent were particular issues related to specific concerns within their professional fields?**

This chapter's focus on emerging-selves indicates the complex nature of the development of self during professional education programmes. This conceptualisation of an emerging-self is distinctly different from that of students' anticipatory-selves; whereas constructions of anticipatory-selves were theoretical, the conceptualised emerging-self, that could not be

known before the placement began, was developed only through the contextualised experience of being in a professional role.

This time of transition, from being a student to being a 'professional,' could be conceptualised in parallel to theories of emerging adulthood which stress the psychological and subjective experience of individuals, 'characterizing the age period as one of identity explorations, feeling "in-between," instability, self-focus, and possibilities,' (Tanner and Arnett, 2016, p.34). The feeling of being in-between had particular resonance for Tim, Martha and Holly during their first placement where their identities as professionals in their chosen fields were beginning to emerge. However, unlike the potential freedom and associated uncertainty that young adults have when constructing their future identity, professional education is more explicitly defined by legal and professional regulations within a particular field. Whilst these agreed frameworks and outcomes that define what it means to be a professional might seem limiting, they could offer some structure and stability for a student's emerging-self at a time of transition. However, despite such frameworks, the individual student's development of self during a professional programme can also be defined and perhaps confused – consciously or unconsciously – by many influences including past experience, expectations of self, the perceived expectations of others and their own idealised-self.

Adoption of a psychoanalytic perspective in my analytical frame explicitly acknowledged the individual's inner world and allowed for the interpretation of the management of anxiety associated with an unstable sense of self during a time of transition. In Appendix A, I outline a range of mechanisms that the unconscious uses to defend against anxiety. During my analysis, I identified examples of these defence mechanisms including the ongoing idealisation of a future-self. I suggest that this was a way of maintaining a self-coherence that offered some continuity, consistency and stability during a time of identity re-formation and change. Students' anticipatory-selves that desired a re-formation of their identity in order to succeed professionally was in tension with a desire to be unchanged. That is, they did not want to undergo a process of professional development that would turn them into just another teacher, nurse or police officer - as defined by the professional frameworks - but that they could hold onto their individuality in their professional role. Students' complex responses, provoked through immersion in their respective professional environments, indicated how each individual was positioned in relation to competency, responsibility and recognition and how the inter-relationship between these linked to the integration of their developing selves. These different complex responses, which I identified through

interpretation of a range of defence mechanisms, linked to students' management of anxiety associated with their development. Each of these could be connected to the antithesis of the profession's primary task. These shadow aspects of each individual's chosen profession could be seen through Tim's relation to anxiety about not knowing, Martha's relation to anxiety associated with causing harm, and Holly's relation to anxiety of uncontrolled danger.

The following analysis of the narratives from Tim, Martha and Holly's second interview each develop a conceptualisation of an emerging-self through the questions focused on (i) professional competence, (ii) professional responsibility and (iii) professional recognition. These sections are succeeded by an analysis of the inter-relationship between the three aspects together with an interpretation of how anxiety associated with students' developing identities was managed in order to integrate and internalise their emerging-self.

## **2) Emerging-selves: students' re-formation of self following professional experience**

### **2.1) Tim's emerging teacher-self**

The emergence of Tim's teacher-self demanded a shift in identity that required him to demonstrate new professional competences - particularly in relation to the development of knowledge - and take on greater responsibility in order to be recognised as the teacher. Although resistance to the change required for successful development could be interpreted in Tim's narrative in various ways, management of anxiety associated within the process of re-formation allowed him to construct a meaningful and integrated teacher-self.

#### ***2.1.i) How do students relate to and reflect on the development of professional competency?***

Familiar with carrying out practical tasks in his role as a teaching assistant (TA), Tim initially understood the role of the teacher as a demonstration of certain behaviours rather than a more meaningful construction that required effort. His fixed position to certain curriculum subjects, that was challenged through a lesson that went badly, enabled him to start to engage with the hard work required to meet the children's learning needs – and thus demonstrate success linked to specific professional competencies.

At the start of the placement, Tim's relationship to the required professional competencies was fixed on observation and mimicry:

...the teacher I work with is really good...he's very easy to pick up on things. The behaviour management techniques - all the kind of tricks... - so by the end of that week, I'd found a way to not only do those things but to employ them successfully. So it was just like 'bam bam bam bam bam - you're teaching.' [Int.2:24-32/600]

Tim's construction of a successful teacher-self based on the employment of the teacher's 'tricks' [Int.2:30/600] showed that at this stage, he had not engaged in a meaningful way with the demands and expectations on him. Looking to the teacher to model teacher behaviours suggested a resistance to engage in Tim's emerging teacher-self. In the second week when he had started teaching, Tim continued to look to the teacher to rescue him:

Second week was maths and some of my lessons completely bombed. And again, he kind of gave me ways to pick up from that which was useful. [Int.2:24-38/600]

Rather than engage with a subject that in the first interview Tim had identified as problematic, he readily accepted the useful advice from his tutor. Repeated use of picking up the ideas and behaviours of his tutor emphasised a desire for an easy way to construct a successful teacher-self.

Tim's resistance to embracing the role of teacher could be seen in narrative elements that implied a forced engagement with the professional competencies:

In the second week when I had to start teaching... [Int.2:16/600]

... I just thought, 'if I've got to do it, I've got to do it.' And I think that that week...where I kind of went 'right, this is what the TA does, this is what the teacher does.' [Int.2:10-23/600]

This vocabulary of compulsion suggested an external obligation to take on the role of the teacher that Tim was in some way resisting. Reference to a specific time frame placed particular significance on the point at which Tim had to begin to engage with the professional competencies required of him. Further resistance to the professional competencies was evident in Tim's position to curriculum subjects:

...I think my comfort zone is literacy. I've got more of an understanding and more of an application in literacy. Um...maths is not my strong suit. I was given data handling and just naffed up my objectives in one of my lessons. It was probably one of my lessons that went really badly. [Int.2:40-42 /600]

I had no idea of kind of get them doing what they were doing. So I had to quickly confer with my teacher...one of the good points of feedback was being able to recover the lesson...but I think that was more to do with his guidance and his kind of like 'if you do this...' and I just kind of jumped in and did it. [Int.2:45-49/600]

This positioning of literacy as 'my comfort zone' [Int.2:40/600] and maths as 'not my strong suit' [Int.2:41/600] suggested that Tim's relationship to subject knowledge was fixed and could be interpreted as resistance to engaging with the demands on him. Tim's narrative about the recovery of the lesson identified a teacher-self that was being constructed through his tutor's guidance rather than his own professional or personal autonomy.

Whilst Tim's resistance to engaging with mathematics allowed some stability and continuity of self - this was a curriculum subject that he identified as problematic in both the first and second interviews - his relation to mathematics and his own subject knowledge prevented the development of a more meaningfully constructed teacher-self that was not based on copying or following the guidance of his tutor:

I did things differently during that week...the lesson...coz I did the maths lesson the day after and we went back and I ...made all my resources, focused on the data I had so my pie charts were more specific so that ...we could get more precise estimations. I spent three hours making worksheets so they were precise and exact but then when the lesson came round... the first lesson was great, they picked it up really quickly and the second lesson we kind of just finished it all off and just worked through the rest of the worksheets... [Int.2:51-58/600]

Tim's shift in understanding, that teaching successful lessons was dependent on effort and planning rather than some inherent ability, enabled him to begin to construct a more meaningful teacher-self. The detail Tim gave when reflecting on the mathematics lessons including the reference to spending 'three hours making worksheets' [Int.2:55-56/600] and later in the narrative to 'an hour and a half annotating my lesson plan and kind of criticising all the things I'd done wrong and finding ways to go forward...' [Int.2:204-205/600], indicated his acceptance that development of professional competencies had to be focused on the more demanding work of meeting the children's needs. In his reflection, Tim acknowledges that the mathematics lesson that 'was a complete disaster' [Int.2:204/600] was 'more about my not preparing myself enough for the lesson' [Int.2:145-146/600]. This was a significant realisation that effort and change would have to be involved in the development of a successful teacher-self.

Whilst a checklist of professional competencies does not construct a successful teacher, they were significant in that they outlined the required skills and tasks that Tim would have to demonstrate in order to begin to develop a meaningful sense of self as a teacher. The management of anxiety associated with these tasks enabled Tim to accept how engagement with the requirements of him could lead to the formation of a more integrated teacher-self.

### **2.1.ii) How do students identify and assume professional responsibility?**

The construction of Tim's teacher-self included a developing understanding of, and an increased willingness to take on, the responsibilities associated with being a teacher. Tim's shift in the way he was positioned to the professional competencies (as presented in the previous section) linked to his understanding of his professional responsibilities whereby he understood the importance of the work that he would have to put in - independent of the class teacher - in order to meet the children's learning needs. The construction of his teacher-self also included a realisation of the responsibility that extended beyond class-based sessions and that emphasised to Tim the distinct roles of teaching assistant and teacher.

Tim's hesitancy in taking responsibility for the lessons that he had been given to plan and teach was not linked just to anxiety associated with the subject area - elsewhere in his narrative he had referred to literacy being his 'comfort zone' [Int.2:40/600] - but because he had not expected to take on full responsibility:

In the second week when I had to start teaching, I was given literacy as my first thing so I taught all of literacy for the week...um which kind of freaked me out at first as I thought I'd be doing half lessons or doing team teach but no, 'here's literacy go off and do that.' [Int.2:16-18/600]

Teaching parts of a lesson, or teaching alongside someone else who would have shared the responsibility, suggested Tim's emerging teacher-self was initially tentative and uncertain regarding his ability and he was resistant to taking on this role by himself. However, being given the planning and teaching of the week's lessons placed Tim in a position that forced him to take on some responsibility for this task. His conceptualisation of responsibility at this stage was linked more to his own needs and whether he could effectively plan for the week's lessons.

The process of learning to teach that put Tim into an exposed position both physically in the classroom and emotionally – he had been 'freaked' out [Int2:17/600] - had started a process of engagement; by the end of the placement he had moved to a position of seeing the needs of others:

... as a teacher that's your aim - to make sure that everybody gets their...their individualised kind of learning but it's quite difficult. I think at the minute I'm not capable of seeing every individual, I kind of see groups. That's what I see - this group is working

at 5b or this group is trying to get to a level 4 ... I hope it improves and I hope I get to see this child, this child, this child and they are all moving to this area but at the minute, yeah, it's kind of just like I'm trying to get that individualised focus. [Int.2:133-138/600]

Despite Tim still being a learner himself and aware of his inability, his repeated use of vocabulary linked to a desire to see the individual children and their needs more clearly. This suggested that he had started to internalise the responsibility he had for the children's learning. His narrative also indicated that he was now able to reflect on his own development and the progress required for him to become a successful teacher. This included construction of a future-self that would be able to demonstrate improved practice.

The shift in position from his previous role as a TA to becoming a teacher emphasised the new responsibilities that Tim would have to take on:

So obviously, the planning, teaching cycle and then kind of being there and doing it and then as a result, reflecting on it. That's something I've never done before coz as a TA as soon as it's break time or lunch time, you're in the staff room having a cup of tea or on break duty. [Int.2:65-69/600]

Tim's narrative suggested that his teacher-self was beginning to accept the responsibilities inherent in the role of the teacher including those that were time-consuming and those that would deny him the previous freedom of his break time. The contrast with his TA-self indicated certain losses (the cup of tea and all that was associated with this) involved in his development as a teacher and further emphasised Tim's construction of a new professional identity that was distinct from – and could not coexist with - his TA identity.

The focus on responsibility helped Tim to construct a teacher-self that further distinguished between the more classroom-bound activities undertaken in his role as TA:

...I had um, everything but one lesson, all the transitions, you know, did everything, sat with them through assembly ... you know, I did all those things. But it's you know, not having the teacher there but him being around...you know, it's just yeah, you can't help but feel you're in that position, you're responsible for these kids. [Int.2:112-118/600]

Tim's narrative here indicated two aspects linked to his professional responsibility that demonstrated the developing construction of his teacher-self. Unlike his previous identity as a TA, he was aware that he was responsible for the children in his class outside of lesson time; reference to him doing 'everything' may have indicated that this was overwhelming and emphasised a teacher's lack of a break from being with the class. Tim's narrative also indicated the importance of him being the teacher in his classroom. The tutor who had been

in the room and had rescued Tim's lesson at the start of the placement was not in the room by the end of the placement; this had enabled Tim to establish an independent position within the classroom reflecting how he had integrated the responsibility inherent in the role of a teacher.

Although he had not yet fully established a successful teacher-self - and was still focused to some extent on his own needs - Tim's comments reveal a changing construction of his teacher-self that demonstrated a more complex understanding of being the teacher linked to the responsibility he had for the children in his class. The relational dimension of this responsibility that had been developed through the process of teaching and spending time with the children reflected a more meaningful conceptualisation of responsibility than the responsibility he had felt when given a series of lessons to plan.

### ***2.1.iii) What significance did students place in professional recognition?***

Tim's recognition of his emerging teacher-self was identified in relation to his new professional role as a teacher as distinct from his previous identity as a teaching assistant. The transition to being recognised as the teacher was constructed through the symbolism of his physical position in the classroom and by positive feedback from those assessing his progress. This demonstrated how Tim's internal recognition of his teacher-self was shaped by an embodiment of the position of the teacher and affirmed by the feedback from other teachers who were involved in his development.

Reference to physical appearance was an important focus in Tim's narrative that fulfilled a desire to be seen as an individual and enabled him to define a clear teacher-identity.

Tim's recognition of his transition from TA to teacher that was symbolised by his physical positioning within the classroom showed that, although sitting at the back of the room during the first week of placement was a safe and familiar position, it did not yet enable Tim to start to construct a teacher-identity:

I think that the first week when we were doing lots of observations ... I felt like I'd just stepped back into my old job. It was kind of, you know, sitting at the back of the class scanning for low-level behaviour that kind of stuff and making sure people are listening... [Int.2:10-15/600]

Tim's association of his physical position with his old TA identity and responsibilities seemed to make his change of position more meaningful. The transition to the front of the

classroom that placed him in the more visible and recognised role of the teacher symbolised an internalisation of his developing teacher-identity. This was Tim's first response when asked what he had learned during the placement:

...definitely the change in situation... being put at the front of the class and not only having to direct the learning but construct it first. [Int.2:65-66/600]

Tim contrasted a 'back of the class' role, that had been concerned with ensuring the children were listening to the teacher, with his new role as the teacher recognised through his responsibility to construct and direct the children's learning. This indicated Tim's continued internal recognition of his emerging-self established through external behaviours. Whilst earlier reference to wanting to team teach had suggested a tentative teacher-self, the forced engagement of being at the front with the associated responsibility had been a significant way that Tim's teacher-self had been enabled to develop.

In turn, this had led to increased confidence in his emerging role:

So by the end of it...feeling much more confident about being in a school and being able to do that role because I think one of my initial worries was making that transition from TA to teacher and um, yeah it's been not a smooth process but it's been um one I can kind of go 'that's TA, that's teacher.' Separate and kind of crack on with teaching. [Int.2:122-128/600]

References throughout his narrative suggested that although not straightforward, Tim's transition from the role of TA to the role of the teacher was enabled through the intentional separation of position, behaviour and responsibilities.

Another way that Tim intentionally defined his teacher-identity was through his physical appearance:

I kind of go into school with a different kind of persona on - my hair all kind of slicked back and shirt and tie and all that kind of jazz...um and tend not to see any tattoos...or bracelets or anything. So they are always kind of asking me questions 'do you always wear your hair like that?' 'Do you have different ear-rings?' ... and that's kind of nice as they're starting to see you as a person rather than just this person that comes in and tells them stuff. [Int.2:325-330/600]

Tim's new persona seemed to allow him to helpfully define a teacher-self that was different to his TA-self. He also separated aspects of his physical identity which were not shown in school highlighting the complexity of how he wanted to be seen and not seen. He desired to be seen as himself as an individual rather than just any teacher but yet this being seen included

the removal or covering up of certain features that were part of his identity. Whilst the change to his hair and clothes might suggest a desire for an external change to symbolise a more internal transformation of his teacher-self, Tim's change of appearance could be interpreted as a way of resisting change to the more significant parts of himself such as his humour and language – that the programme would not change him beyond recognition.

In addition to recognition by the children, recognition of Tim's emerging teacher-identity by his tutor and university tutor (UT) offered affirmation and reinforcement:

...both the Teacher Tutor and UT came in and did some observations and...the feedback I had from the UT was excellent, he was very impressed. I had some really good feedback from my Teacher Tutor within the week... So it's just like every box is getting ticked and it's kind of you at the front of the class doing it so that's definitely a buzz. [Int.2:106-110/600]

This recognition seemed important to Tim in two ways. The reference to 'every box is getting ticked' [Int.2:109/600] that linked to the required professional competencies and that the feedback had come from the UT and tutor who were responsible for Tim's progress offered an official recognition of his teacher-identity. This seemed to reinforce the teacher-identity that Tim had begun to construct and internalise. The second way that this seemed important was that it had been him at the front of the class – a position that symbolised something significant to him – and that his success in this position had resulted in a particular feeling that the construction of his anticipatory-self had repeatedly desired.

#### **2.1.iv) *Psychical defences***

**Which psychical defences were identified through interpretation of students' narratives linked to the inter-relationship between the three areas of their emerging-selves - competency, responsibility and recognition? To what extent were particular issues related to specific concerns within their professional field?**

Tim's teacher-self emerged during the professional placement through experiences linked to competence, responsibility and recognition. Exploration of his psychical relations to these experiences was interpreted through the mechanisms Tim used to defend against anxiety associated with the process of change and identity re-formation. These were identified as idealisation, resistance, isolation, compartmentalisation and rationalisation. Tim's initial

resistance to change was identified through: his engagement with professional competencies such as planning, teaching and resourcing lessons; the demands on his time; the loss associated with his past TA-self; having to take on the role of the teacher on his own; and the hard work required of him. Anxiety associated with his insecure mathematical subject knowledge was managed through isolation of this area of the curriculum that he rationalised as a subject that many found 'dictatorial' [Int.1:81/452]. In order to construct an acceptable teacher-self that could be recognised - both internally by Tim and externally by others – change was required and was enabled through his adoption of professional responsibility that put the needs of others above his own needs. Although Tim's narrative maintained some stability of self through continuity with the past, his emerging teacher-self analysed through the inter-relationship of competence, responsibility and recognition was distinctive from his idealised anticipatory-self.

Tim's anticipatory-self was constructed from a self-identification as a fun and exciting person which he hoped would be reflected in his identity as a teacher. His narrative positioned his lessons as extensions of himself and consequently, were idealised as fun and exciting. It seemed as if, in order to minimise anxiety associated with teaching boring lessons, he doubted he would feel passionate about teaching mathematics [Int.1:72/452], named the subject as 'dictatorial' [Int.1:81/452] and thus prevented the need to engage in a more meaningful way. Throughout the narrative from his first interview, frequent references to experiencing a 'buzz' centred on Tim's desire for personal reward and a positive affective state through positive feedback and lessons going well. This had suggested a vulnerable construction of a future teacher-self that was focused on his own needs.

Through the placement, Tim's teacher-self emerged from engagement with aspects of his anticipatory-self that had been associated with anxiety. Tim's psychological defence of resistance initially prevented meaningful integration of a teacher-self as ongoing identification with an existing TA-identity led to hesitancy in moving to the position of the teacher – both physically at the front of the room and psychologically. This resistance defended against anxiety associated with the loss of aspects of Tim's TA role linked to freedom and to the nature of the relationship with the children he worked with:

...being put at the front of the class and not only having to direct the learning but construct it first. ..That's something I've never done before coz as a TA as soon as it's break time or lunch time, you're in the staff room having a cup of tea or on break duty. [Int.2:65-69/600]

[as a teacher] you don't get as much kind of one on one kind of interaction with kids.  
[Int.2:130/600]

In order to fully embrace a teacher-position, Tim made a stark contrast between his existing, known and successful TA-self with his future, unknown and uncertain teacher-self. This was forced through his teacher tutor giving him a week of lessons to plan and teach:

I just thought if I've got to do it, I've got to do it. And I think that that week where I kind of went right, this is what the TA does, this is what the teacher does. [Int.2:22-23/600]

Resistance to the hard work involved in planning lessons was enabled through Tim's initial attempt to construct a successful teacher-self through copying his teacher tutor. Whether Tim would be seen as a fun and exciting teacher was unknown at the start of the placement, and through copying someone else, anxiety associated with this aspect of his identity was managed. This compartmentalisation of Tim's mimicry of his teacher from his own version of a being a teacher was a psychic defence to manage anxiety. This enabled Tim to protect a sense of self whilst trying out various teacher behaviours as an add-on rather than integrating them into his own identity. This protected him from the impact of any failures, for example his mathematics lesson: 'Second week was maths and some of my lessons completely bombed.' [Int.2:33-34]; 'maths is not my strong suit'. [Int.2:41/600]; 'my maths lesson which was a complete disaster' [Int.2:203-204/600]. Isolation of this curriculum subject through maintaining a fixed position to mathematics offered continuity with his anticipatory-self. His use of language seemed to fix Tim's idea that it was mathematics that was in some way difficult; this psychic defence of rationalisation that attributed the problem to the subject rather than to his lack of preparation meant that he did not yet have to accept that he would have to change through working at his own knowledge and understanding. By problematising the subject, Tim had been able to maintain an idealised teacher self that could be successful.

If, as speculated in the previous chapter, Tim saw his lessons as an extension of himself in some way, mathematics had continued to threaten his idealised teacher-self. Rationalisation about the nature of this subject enabled Tim to continue to attribute failure of the lesson to something other than himself and thus maintain a more stable sense of self.

Despite mechanisms that helped to manage his anxiety, the lack of success in teaching mathematics prevented Tim's emerging-self from experiencing the buzz and personal reward that his anticipatory-self had idealised. Reference to a 'buzz' [Int.2:99/600] in his narrative identified where Tim had started to construct a more integrated teacher-self

through teaching literacy which was more his 'comfort zone' [Int.2:40/600] and being in a position that symbolised a teacher role:

being my first full lesson and seeing really good work which was produced and just being relaxed in the classroom that gave me an initial buzz. [Int.2:97-99/600]

it's just like every box is getting ticked and it's kind of you at the front of the class doing it so that's definitely a buzz.[Int.2:109-110/600]

The experience of his teacher-self feeling a buzz was particularly important as Tim had associated this feeling with his previous TA role – a role that he had had to give up in order to construct a teacher-self:

I think probably the reason why I had the worry about not knowing if I was going to get the buzz was because I wasn't quite sure where it was going to come from...because as a TA before I sometimes got it from giving a child a good bit of guidance or having a laugh with them or having a good lesson.[Int.2:475-478/600]

Tim's narrative suggested that the personal reward linked to a buzz was also associated with him having fun and further emphasised why Tim might have resisted the hard work involved in teaching successful mathematics lessons and hesitancy to take up a role that would involve behaviour management and sanctions.

The ongoing idealisation of feeling the buzz associated with success provoked Tim to face the demands placed on him – even for mathematics: 'My subject knowledge in maths was obviously the big thing in week 3. But again reflecting on that it's more about my not preparing myself enough for the lesson' [Int.2:144-146/600]. This led to a more successful lesson and demonstrated the necessity of engaging with aspects of the teacher-role associated with anxiety as only through this did he start to integrate a meaningful and successful teacher-self.

Despite going to school with 'a different kind of persona,' [Int.2:325/600] linked to physical appearance, Tim's continued idealisation of personal recognition demonstrated the complex nature of his reference to persona and that although looking different, desired recognition of his personality and individuality:

I call the lads 'chaps' and call everybody 'folks' and they all...again they all look like I'm weird. But yeah, that's still the teacher persona as much as it's my kind of persona... [Int.2:345-346/600]

Tim's anticipatory-self that had been anxious not to be changed too much by the teacher education programme placed value in freedom to express his 'personal touch' [Int.2:155/600] and the feelings associated with this:

...it's that kind of personal touch that I was worried about to do. Coz I think when you add, I felt last week, when I was adding that personal touch, I felt most comfortable and most confident...because you know, like I say, it's you putting yourself into teaching and that's where the buzz comes from. [Int.2:153-156/600]

By the end of the placement, Tim had moved to a position in which he could feel comfortable and confident – perhaps feeling comfortable to add his personal touch had led to feeling confident – where his narrative indicated the integrating of his emerging teacher-self. This 'putting yourself into teaching' [Int.2:156/600] indicated an investment in becoming a teacher:

I'm here to be a teacher; I'm invested in it as much as, if not more than, anybody else...but it's a work in progress. [Int.2:251-252/600]

Tim's emerging-self maintained continuity with his anticipatory-self through an ongoing idealisation that he would be a successful teacher but acknowledged a future-self that would still require work.

Although Tim's initial psychic defences of resistance, isolation, rationalisation and compartmentalisation enabled him to begin to inhabit a teacher-role within the classroom, the ongoing idealisation of a successful teacher-self and the desire for personal fulfilment and positive feelings - conceptualised in his use of a 'buzz' - forced him to engage with these defended areas that had been preventing his development. This management of anxiety prompted Tim to shift his focus from his own needs in order to take on responsibility for others which then enabled him to more successfully engage with the required professional competencies. This enabled the development of an emerging teacher-self that he could integrate into his identity and which could then be recognised by himself and others. Within this recognition as a teacher, Tim found ways to express himself through his use of language and humour in order to maintain an idealisation that he would not get lost - submerged by a generic teacher identity - or that he would be changed too much by the process of professional development. Although Tim purposefully adapted his physical appearance – perhaps to indicate some change was taking place or to stay in control of his changing self – he began to integrate and internally recognise an acceptable teacher-self.

## **2.2) Martha's emerging nurse-self**

Martha's resistance to carrying out the required professional skills and tasks indicated anxiety associated with the possibility of causing harm – the antithesis of her idealisation of a herself as a nurse – that was managed by repeated references to boundaries and what she was 'allowed' to do in her role as a student nurse – specific vocabulary she used four times within the narrative of this second interview [Int.2:21, 22, 24 & 57/375]. A further three references to what was allowed referred to activities in a voluntary setting, not getting too emotionally close to the patients and not talking about her experiences on the ward with friends and family [Int.2:153, 200 & 359/375]. Such references to permission put responsibility for her actions (both on the ward and at home) onto external figures and suggested an emerging-self that was not ready to be recognised as a nurse. Although the possibility of causing harm was heavily defended, Martha was able to engage in some tasks that enabled her to begin to recognise herself behaving like a nurse.

### ***2.2.i) How do students relate to and reflect on the development of professional competency?***

Whilst Martha's narrative demonstrated her explicit knowledge of the required skills and competencies expected of her on placement, there was indication of a certain resistance to her integrating the role of a nurse into her emerging-self. From the start of her first shift when she was expected to work on her own, Martha's feelings of abandonment can be aligned with previous idealisations of being part of a team of nurses who worked closely together and helped each other out. This unexpected isolation when undertaking basic tasks linked to Martha's anxiety about causing harm and suggested that she was not yet ready to engage with what was expected of her.

Martha's narrative that emphasised an excitement about finally being on the ward also indicated a hesitancy to engage with the required expectations of her. She had not expected to work on her own during her first shift on the ward and her surprise suggested a resistance to taking on a set of competencies that she closely linked to her construction of what it meant to be a nurse:

I've been surprised at how much they will let us do really. [Int.2:8-11/375]

This surprise suggested a sense of abandonment by her mentor - Martha had nobody with her to guide her or to check her work. To manage anxiety associated with being alone,

Martha constructed boundaries through reference to a 'list of competencies' [Int.2:58-59/375] and 'guidelines' [Int.2:61/375] within which she felt safe to act:

...it's basically just knowing what you are allowed to do as a first year student, and not wanting to over-step the mark really. We've got a list of competencies that we have to get through ... Things like behaving in a professional manner and ... oh, I don't know ... things that you can help out with, like answering the phone, and so, they do give us guidelines as to what we can do on the ward which is useful in knowing your boundaries. [Int.2:57-62/375]

Reference to what she was 'allowed to do' [Int.2:21&57/375] as a student nurse and 'technically' [Int.2:22/375] what she was allowed to do (but had not done yet) gave her permission to carry out certain practical tasks whilst also giving her permission not to engage with anything unknown or more complex and potentially harmful. The examples of competencies Martha listed which included taking a patient down to theatre and carrying out the pre-op check list offered a safe construction of being a nurse at this stage of her development – that of certain tasks and behaviours rather than a more complex integration of a nurse identity. Limiting her own role at this stage enabled her to reduce any possibility of causing harm.

This self-limitation was reinforced through Martha's identification of being a learner and indicated ambivalence towards the procedures she would be expected to carry out. Martha constructed a role within which she explicitly stated she could cause no harm:

...you don't really do anything that's going to or could possibly cause any harm whatsoever. It's just blood pressures and temperatures, and things, and so they [the parents of patients] are quite happy for you to do that and to learn. [Int.2:131-134/375]

Use of 'just' within Martha's narrative here seemed to help her to manage anxiety associated with the possibility of her causing harm – particularly in front of patients' parents. Further reflection on her description of the more complex task of removing a cannula which she referred to as 'fun' [Int.2:24/375] indicated that Martha had initially felt some anxiety about this 'scary' [Int.2:30/375] procedure:

...when I was first asked if I wanted to take the cannula out, I hadn't ... I have had it done to me before ... but I've never seen anyone ... I didn't see any of the nurses do it but she was with me and she talked me through exactly what to do. Basically, it's just taking off a plaster and then just pulling each one straight out. It's easy really, but it's just the thought of being able to do it being actually quite scary. Once you've done one, then it's fine then. It's quite simple. [Int.2:26-31/375]

Martha's childish vocabulary of 'fun' and 'scary' could be interpreted as further emphasising her resistance to taking on the responsibility inherent in the role of a nurse. It suggested that Martha was stuck in a stage of wanting to observe and watch and that being expected to carry out certain tasks before she was ready may have felt quite threatening, even though her narrative reported that the tasks turned out to be 'fine' and 'simple' [Int.2:31/375]. Recognising Martha's position at this stage adds further understanding to her initial feelings of abandonment and the associated anxiety of having to carry out new tasks independently. Any anxiety about being left on her own seemed contained by having her needs met by another nurse accompanying her and talking her through 'exactly what to do' [Int.2:28/375] as though there was further reassurance that others were involved in and co-responsible for this procedure. Martha's emerging nurse-self which seemed anxious about removing the cannula and the help that she needed to carry out what she refers to as a 'quite simple' [Int.2:31/375] task had revealed her psychological position in relation to the expected competencies.

Martha's clear awareness of the professional competencies inherent in the role of a nurse and her anxiety associated with carrying out these tasks indicated the significance that placement practices play in the development of an emerging-self. Through minimising potential harm and working closely with colleagues, Martha began to demonstrate behaviours associated with being a nurse.

### ***2.2.ii) How do students identify and assume professional responsibility?***

Although Martha's narrative indicated a desire to learn and to show initiative, it suggested that her emerging-self was not yet able to integrate the role of a nurse. This lack of integration within Martha's nurse-self could also be identified through her relationship to theoretical knowledge which may have helped to manage anxiety about the responsibility expected of nurses. This offered a safe position for her to talk about nurses' responsibilities without having to be directly involved. The extracts in this section indicated how Martha managed anxiety about taking on responsibility in three ways: by linking her observations on the ward to her theoretical reading on the course; by putting off using her initiative during the placement; and by minimising the value of activities that she undertook because other nurses were too busy.

Martha's reference to recent academic work that demonstrated her understanding of nursing extended beyond a set of competencies to a more holistic approach and highlighted her theoretical conceptualisation of nursing:

...we've just done an essay for one of the modules about person-centred care, and it's all about how nursing used to be very task orientated where one nurse would go around and do all the blood pressures and another nurse would go around and change all the dressings. Whereas now, you focus on one patient and you see them as a person, and you have to think about the whole person rather than their acute medical need. [Int.2:166-171/375]

Given that Martha's initial responsibilities had been very task oriented, her narrative here indicated a wider understanding of nursing. However, this was an academic essay – and therefore relatively safe; this understanding was not yet based in Martha's experience and therefore had not yet become part of her emerging nurse-self.

Although she had started to take on some tasks independently and wanted to be involved with some more complex cases, Martha placed herself in the position of an observer. This suggested a position as an observer of others' practice as though looking in from the outside rather than being involved or invested in the important role of observation in the process of learning. Martha's emphasis on the whole team approach to patients' care both reinforced her idealisation of being part of such a team and that the responsibility for patients was shared.

There was tension between Martha's desire to learn and working out how to take on appropriate levels of responsibility:

You're wanting to learn, but then you don't want to be asking too many questions of your mentor because she still has her work to do. It's finding a line between learning but using your initiative as well which is a bit challenging... [Int.2:67-69/375]

This suggested a conflict between Martha's existing identity as learner – identifying with safe, theoretical knowledge – and as a student nurse who was expected to use her initiative. The challenge she refers to might be associated with anxiety about having to carry tasks out independently:

...your mentor can't be following you all day checking up on you and making sure you're doing the right thing... A patient needs something straight away and you have to just do it for them without running after your mentor all the time. [Int.2:251-254/375]

To manage the unpredictability of what might be demanded of her when working on her own, Martha engaged in tasks that other nurses were too busy for and placed value in these:

I think they are just happy to have someone who can spend a bit more time with them to talk to them because the nurses have about four patients each and are quite time consuming really, so they don't really get the chance to sit down and talk to parents. I quite like it when I'm able to do that, especially with those that need a bit more reassurance. [Int.2:111-119/375]

Martha's use of 'just' suggested some acknowledgement that she was not taking on the tasks that might have required greater responsibility. Martha's reference to a previous voluntary experience where 'You could sit with the patients and talk to them, which I really liked doing' [Int.2: 153-154/375] offered some continuity of self and placed value in time taken talking to patients and parents. It also gave Martha some feeling of reward. However, she acknowledged that this was not something that nurses do or perhaps do not have time to do suggesting that even if valuable, Martha was avoiding taking on the more responsible aspects of nursing.

Continued linking of her theoretical understanding to her observations on the ward offered some predictability for Martha at a time of uncertainty:

So, I could really see how the work I had done for the essay ... it was really good to see the patients' thing coming in and being exactly what the literature was saying about it. [Int.2:226-228/375]

The idea of a 'textbook case' emphasised the reassurance that Martha seemed to gain from what she had read but also emphasised how she was constructing a theorised nurse-self rather than integrating this identity through hands-on experience.

Although demonstrating knowledge and acknowledging what was important, Martha's focus was fixed on observations of the importance of others on the ward with references to being 'amazed at what some doctors can do' [Int.2:296/375] and to the patient with cerebral palsy who was 'quite dependant on the nurses' [Int.2:196/375]. She linked her theoretical knowledge to what she saw on the ward:

There are also different models like the family-centred framework which is more for children...The nurses I've seen on the ward do make sure that the parents are alright and check up on them as well saying 'have you managed to eat?' or 'are you sleeping OK?' making sure they are alright and comforting if they are a bit concerned. So, I've seen how important that can be as well in helping the child. [Int.2:179-186/375]

Martha's narrative that highlighted her position as an observer indicated a tension between wanting to be a nurse but distancing herself from getting involved; rather than reflecting on her own developing nurse-self, she referred to what she had seen others doing. This observation extended to the wider health care team which she had previously idealised as a team that worked well together:

You get professionals from all over. You get Social Workers ringing, you get Health Visitors asking about patients...It's good. It's just like one huge health care team. Sometimes it falls apart, but most of the time it works. [Int.2:158-161/375]

Although Martha had previously acknowledged that she would have to carry out certain tasks without 'running after your mentor all the time,' [Int.2:254/375] this ongoing idealisation of being part of 'one huge health care team' [Int.2:160-161/375] seemed to act as a defence against anxiety associated with the thought that Martha's future nurse-self would have to take on greater independent responsibility. Her positive statement about the team offered some reassurance things would be alright even if the team – or perhaps herself – fell apart.

The awareness of the expectations of Martha's future nurse-self which were evident in her narrative, and the lack of integration into the team, suggested that she was hesitant to integrate responsibility into her identity this stage. She distanced herself from responsibility through engagement with other activities and through an identification of nursing constructed from theoretical ideas and observation of others.

### ***2.2.iii) What significance did students place in professional recognition?***

Whilst she celebrated objects such as the fob watch which symbolised her being a 'proper nurse,' [Int.2:98/375]. Martha's identity as a student nurse – clearly recognisable by her brightly coloured top – was one she felt more comfortable to inhabit. This highlighted the conflict between Martha's desire to be recognised by doctors as part of the healthcare team but anxiety about being judged by the parents' 'beady eyes' [Int.2:131/375]. This emphasised the tension between Martha's desire for independence and individuality within her identity as a nurse and for support. Whilst on placement, she had finally started the process of becoming a nurse but yet resisted fully integrating this into her identity or nurse-self; she embraced the symbolic affirmation of the fob watch but used the symbolism of her 'student nurse' uniform to avoid aspects of the recognised role of a nurse. This seemed to allay any anxiety that she might be recognised as a nurse with responsibilities and with the

potential to cause harm. However, Martha did express a desire to be recognised for her previous academic qualifications which she believed would change the way the nurses on the ward would relate to her; this re-emphasised the importance that she was placing on theoretical knowledge.

Martha's physical appearance now enabled her emerging nurse-self to be recognised not just by herself but by others – the nurses on her ward, other health professionals and the parents of the children on the ward. Her uniform and other tangible objects symbolised a particular aspect of her emerging identity:

Still exciting every time I put it [her uniform] on... and when I first got my swipe card as well, so that you could get anywhere in the hospital with that. It was good. And I got a fob watch as well - that made me feel like a proper nurse. [Int.2:94-98/375]

I finally got into the uniform, with a fob watch which is the mark of a nurse isn't it? [Int.2:104/375]

The self-recognition as a 'proper nurse' was superficially linked to part of her uniform but symbolised a desire to integrate the identity of being a nurse into her emerging-self together with the associated emotional responses and fulfilment of hopes. Interaction with the doctors who came onto the ward highlighted Martha's desire to be recognised:

When you're there on a day shift, you can answer the phone and even sometimes answer the questions that they are asking of you. The doctors start to get to recognise your face. If my mentor is busy then they might ask me about how a patient is doing. It really does make you feel as though you are part of the whole hospital atmosphere. [Int.2:138-142/375]

Rather than being identified as just someone in a uniform, the emphasis on other professionals recognising her 'face' [Int.2:140/375] and being asked questions about patients enabled Martha's emerging nurse-self to feel part of the team. This relatively low-level interaction seemed to be associated with her idealisation of being part of the 'whole hospital atmosphere' [Int.2:142/375].

Martha's idealisation of being part of the team which she had labelled as 'good' [Int.2:160] conflicted with a feeling of her getting in the way and suggested ambiguity in how her emerging nurse-self was recognised by herself and by others:

The things I've found hard ... you've got doctors coming in and out from tonnes of different departments, and it's very busy in the day with people coming and going, then I suppose it's really hard to not feel that you are getting in the way. [Int.2:62-68/375]

Martha's uncertainty of not knowing where to stand physically suggested a concern that her actions – and even her presence - was getting in the way of patients being cared for by the professionals.

Martha's positioning of herself outside of this team of professionals was evident in the way that she associated her harmlessness with her status as a student nurse:

It is bright turquoise, so people who have been in the hospital will see bright turquoise and know it's a student. ...It's those that have never been in hospital before that are maybe a bit more wary...[Int.2:111-115/375]

The ambiguity surrounding how Martha wanted to be recognised and how she recognised herself – by the fob watch as a 'proper nurse' [Int.2:98/375] or the bright turquoise uniform as a student - was associated with anxiety of being seen as someone who might cause harm:

...the parents are there 24-7 pretty much; ...when you do anything with the child, they are going to be watching you with beady eyes. But, as a first year, you don't really do anything that's going to... or could possibly cause any harm whatsoever. [Int.2:129-132/375]

Identification with the status of student nurse enabled Martha's emerging-self to inhabit a safe, unthreatening position where she was recognised as harmless. This enabled her to contain any anxiety about carrying out procedures on patients in front of their critical, protective, ever-present parents. Whilst this might have provided a temporary position of safety (her future nurse-self would be in a position where there would be the possibility of causing harm), it further distanced Martha's integration of being a nurse within her emerging-self.

This still-learner status conflicted with her idealisation of being a recognised part of the team and although she had not yet engaged much in the more complex tasks of nursing, she desired to be recognised for her past experience and qualifications:

... the other problem that I have is, because I have had some experience of working with children with complex needs, that I feel like I know more than they think I do, because I've not come straight from school, I'm more confident, I suppose, in being able to do things from the off. [Int.2:74-77/375]

Martha's linking of her theoretical knowledge with confidence and ability was not supported by the rest of her narrative. This suggested that positive disintegration of a theorised

understanding of a nurse might enable Martha to engage more readily with hands-on tasks. The desire for recognition of her understanding is associated with a desire to *know* more:

A lot of it comes from already having this biology degree, so that when they are explaining maybe a condition that someone has, I feel that they are explaining it to me in very basic terms whereas ... I suppose it's because I haven't really told them that I have done a lot of science before that I don't suppose they recognise that I want to know a bit more about it. But, that's my own fault for not telling them, I suppose. [Int.2:81-85/375]

Martha's difficulty in taking on responsibility for the required professional competencies meant that there was limited opportunity to be recognised as a nurse by others. The way she developed a meaningful internal recognition of her emerging-self that she wanted others to acknowledge was through repeated emphasis on her theoretical knowledge and for the tasks that busy nurses did not have time for. The significance of the recognised fob watch and the bright turquoise uniform symbolised Martha's recognition as herself a 'proper nurse' [Int.2:98/375] whilst containing anxiety about causing possible harm within her identity as a student.

#### **2.2.iv) *Psychical defences***

**Which psychical defences were identified through interpretation of students' narratives linked to the inter-relationship between the three areas of their emerging-selves - competency, responsibility and recognition? To what extent were particular issues related to specific concerns within their professional field?**

Martha's narrative of her experience on placement indicated anxiety linked to professional competencies, taking on responsibility and being recognised. I interpreted various psychic defence mechanisms in Martha's narrative including ongoing idealisation, avoidance, affiliation, intellectualisation and compensation and used to manage anxiety associated with potentially causing harm – something that directly threatened her idealisation as being a caring nurse who could make things better. Martha found various ways to avoid taking on the responsibilities inherent in the role of a nurse and subsequently limited the ways in which she was recognised by others and by herself that led to a limited integration of a nurse-self. This avoidance of causing harm was enabled through labelling as 'allowed' only those activities she felt safe to undertake – and thus gave her permission to only carry out activities such as taking blood pressure that she referred to as harmless.

Martha's narrative, which suggested ambivalence towards the needs of others, highlighted the conflict between an idealised desire to care and anxiety associated with carrying this out. Her generalised comment that 'you just have to want to care for people' [Int.2:254-255/375] indicated her motivation but did not readily engage with the specific skills (such as taking out a cannula) required in the process of care. Rationalising particular value on tasks such as talking with patients' parents - which nurses were apparently too busy to do - enabled Martha to manage anxiety associated with potentially harmful tasks. This rationalisation offered some continuity with her anticipatory nurse-self who had found significance in the relatively harmless things that she believed had made a difference to the lives of others and were personally rewarding.

Avoidance of undertaking potentially harmful activities was further enabled through the psychological defence of intellectualisation. Martha's identity, constructed through her position to theoretical knowledge, was used to distance herself from practice. Whilst Martha's desire to be recognised for her previous qualifications suggested an emphasis on cognitive knowledge rather than hands-on practice, this enabled her to build some continuity between past and present identities. Martha's intellectualisation of a nurse's role would need to be deconstructed before she could more meaningfully construct a nurse-self that would have to include the possibility of causing harm. At this stage, continuity with her anticipatory self - that she was successful academically and safe practically - allowed her to start to engage with some aspects of being a nurse.

The avoidance of undertaking certain tasks was linked to Martha's sense of abandonment which had unravelled her idealisation of working closely together with others and being part of a team. Although there was some continuity with her idealisation of being part of a team: 'It's good on this ward because we all try and sit down with our breaks and lunch together' [Int.2:327-328/375], her narrative indicated surprise at being left on her own on the first shift and having to undertake a number of tasks independently and where later, 'you just barrage your mentor with questions' [Int.2:12/375].

Anxiety associated with the unexpectedness of being left on her own - whilst in a very visible position with no mentor checking up on - her had not prevented Martha from undertaking various tasks but had seemed to fix her position as someone who could do no harm. Martha had not caused harm even when things had gone wrong and used humour in her narrative

to talk about this incident that had seemed to cause some anxiety – particularly as it had been in front of patients' parents and their 'beady eyes' [Int.2:131/375]:

...the first time that I did the blood pressure on someone, I got the cuff the wrong way around and they just laughed it off when I said 'sorry, this is my first day', and they really didn't mind. They thought it was funny. [Int.2:121-123/375]

Martha's narrative suggested that support in carrying out more complex procedures - those that could cause harm and thus associated with anxiety – was absolutely necessary especially as she had not even seen any of the nurses do it [Int.2:27/375]. Evidence for this psychic defence of affiliation was seen in Martha's detailed description of how her mentor had talked her through 'exactly what to do' [Int.2:28/375], modelled and supported her as she undertook her first cannula removal. This indicated the need to have someone with her. Working alongside her mentor prompted a shift:

Once you've done one, then it's fine then. It's quite simple. And then, the more advanced things, you just ask if you can watch and they are all happy to have you in the room at the time. [Int.2:29-32/375]

The relief resulting from successfully completing this procedure enabled Martha to shift to a position where she was psychically ready to engage with more advanced things – although at this stage, just to 'watch'.

Although Martha's narrative suggested she was more comfortable being recognised in the role of a student nurse and was hesitant to engage in practical tasks, she maintained continuity with her anticipatory self:

I was feeling that I was doing what I wanted to do, and it has really felt like that. It has been better than I hoped it would be, and I'm just really pleased that I have got there in the end. [Int.2:105-107/375]

Martha's comments indicated ongoing idealisation of doing what she wanted to do despite the anxiety she had experienced during the placement. Her comment that the experience had 'been better than I hoped it would be' may have related to Martha's change in expectations of pursuing nursing, rather than medicine, but may too suggest that she was denying the difficulties she had encountered when forced into a situation that required hands-on involvement.

Martha's resistance to taking on the responsibility inherent in the role of a nurse led to limited engagement with the required professional competencies. Although Martha was

aware of these expectations and successfully demonstrated some skills and tasks recognised as nursing behaviours, her nurse-self seemed to be constructed externally. This was evident by what she said she was allowed to do and through following the behaviours and instructions of those she worked alongside. Ongoing resistance to engagement in tasks that might cause harm led to a recognition of a Martha's nurse-self that internalised safe aspects of her role such as theoretical knowledge and talking to parents. Martha's psychical relations to the experiences during the professional placement - as questioned through the inter-relationship of competence, responsibility and recognition - indicated a tentative emerging-self that was stabilised through continuity with her idealised anticipatory-self.

### **2.3) Holly's emerging police-self**

Holly's emerging-self was characterised by a desire to be recognised as a successful police-officer who carried out tasks correctly and was distinct from just another officer in uniform. This development marked a shift from previous references to policing through her Dad's experience to the formation of an independent police officer who was not 'babied' [Int.2:154/529] by her mentor. Management of anxiety associated with getting things wrong and with the potential danger inherent in police duties enabled Holly to integrate a meaningful police-self.

#### ***2.3.i) How do students relate to and reflect on the development of professional competency?***

Holly reference to lists of skills and checklists, which suggested an urgency to get involved in real life experiences, was not just to get these ticked-off but reflected a desire to engage with hands-on experience. The way that Holly linked excitement with danger indicated her awareness of how close she was to potential harm. Despite this potential harm and the initial anxiety that she felt about certain procedures, Holly's narrative indicated that defining moments such as her first arrest and other successful tasks developed a confident police-self that she readily integrated into her identity.

Although Holly's articulation of the expectations of her acknowledged there were a lot of tasks to complete, she did not indicate any hesitancy in integrating these behaviours into her emerging police-self:

We had...a checklist...it was like...arrests, a detention and booking in to custody...um, managing exhibits...it can include seizing drugs or just any kind of evidence, any paperwork that needs to be booked in...managing conflict, dealing with victims and witnesses, domestics. There's quite a lot and like using the radio and all the computer systems and stuff like that. Yeah so that was...there was quite a lot to get through. [Int.2:246-251/529]

This articulation of tasks did not differentiate those basic activities - such as booking in paperwork or using the radio from those that elsewhere Holly's narrative identified as causing some concern, such as managing conflict. This suggested an acceptance of a police-self that would have to engage with all expectations. This listing of competencies seemed to normalise the behaviour of police officers and perhaps enabled her to accept the difficult aspects of the role more easily.

Holly's four weeks of the practical placement, which she claimed was 'the best thing ever' [Int.2:11/529], demonstrated how eager she was to develop her police-self:

...you finally got in to it and like...the handcuffs and everything and it was just...it was so exciting. It was like, it's actually real. We did various bits and pieces there so like radio use and everything and that was really good fun. [Int.2:13-16/529]

Holly's reference to the demonstration of tasks being 'actually real' indicated the significance that she placed on behaviours associated with being a police officer. This practical programme at the police training college was not carried out in real life contexts with the public. Time to try out various tasks with others on her course perhaps explained Holly's association with it being 'exciting' and 'fun.' Her narrative also suggested quite fragmented activities - 'bits and pieces'- which indicated a relationship to the competencies as a list of separate items to demonstrate rather than having to put them altogether in a real-life setting. Although there was a consistent sense of excitement in Holly's narrative, there was also evidence of ambivalence towards the reality of 'finally' trying out her police-self which was evident in her narrative though references to both fun and to worry:

We went to the [shopping centre] to do our practicals which was so much fun. It was kind of like real-life situations and then there'd like de-brief you at the end ... that was really helpful and it kind of...didn't make me as worried. [Int.2:17-20/529]

We've done stop and searches but then it was linking it all up, which was the bit I was a bit worried about...' [Int.2:27-28/529]

Holly acknowledged that this practical experience in a shopping centre was only 'kind of real-life situations' and served as a stage of development where role-play exercises were carried out within a real-life context. Holly's narrative suggested that, whilst there had been continued elements of fun, she had been worried about carrying out these procedures – perhaps because it had been in a public setting or because in a real-life situation she would be required to link various competencies together in an appropriate way. It is interesting to note how reference to being 'worried' was mentioned at the end once it had been resolved.

Holly referred to the checklist to define the behaviours of a police-officer as an identity which she was ready to embrace:

...it was beginning of my second week...and we'd gone, been called to an immediate burglary and that was the first blue light...and my tutor was like 'right immediate burglary, do you want to go to this?' I was like 'yeah, why not?' ...she was like 'right, blue lights sirens, everything' and...it was like such a buzz from it. [Int.2:206-210/529]

Holly's narrative of her first arrest is a defining moment for her emerging police-self:

... I think it was the adrenalin and kind of like first arrest, like 'oh my gosh I need to get this'...and I think I'm glad I did it because it improved my confidence for the rest of the [placement] as like 'right, I've got my first arrests in,' like it's the biggest thing I've ever had to deal with...[Int.2:239-242/529]

Reference to her 'first blue light' [Int.2:208/529] and 'first arrest' [Int.2:241/529] with the associated 'buzz' and adrenaline suggested that Holly did not simply view her actions as various competencies to be ticked off but were something she placed great importance in and became a significant development for her police-self. Acting under the authority given to her, Holly had started to become a police-officer which gave her further confidence to inhabit this role.

This confidence that emerged through the successful undertaking of tasks seemed particularly important to Holly when an element of danger was involved indicating that this was part of her construction of being a police-officer. Holly's narrative linked a sense of unpredictability with this potential danger – that those she interacted with acted without warning as they 'just kicked off' [Int.2:138,140&233]. This volatility had been a dimension of the incident that Holly and another student were involved with:

...we managed to handcuff her in the end. Once we got her under control and stuff it was kind of like, 'Wow, we managed to deal with that' and like, 'we managed to stay

calm.'...It was really good and it was like exciting coz...the element of danger coz she could of [sic]...like hit out at us at any time or whatever...[Int.2: 140-146/529]

This indicated an element of surprise and reflected how challenging the situation had been to get under control. It revealed how closely Holly paired excitement and danger in her construction of policing; perhaps success was more meaningful when there was a greater sense of danger and the 'whatever' [Int.2:146/529] unknown.

Although she referenced the checklist of skills, Holly's emerging police-self was not defined or limited by the list of competences.

...we were told that there was a missing person, my tutor was like, 'right you know you've got everything signed off, do you want to go to it just for a bit of extra experience?' so I was like, 'why not?' [Int.2:260-262/529]

Despite successfully completing the requirements of her placement, Holly's desire for hands-on experience and lack of limitation by the checklist was clear. Holly's repeated use of 'why not?' [Int.2:209,232&262/529] suggested an openness to policing activities that extended beyond the competencies expected of a student at this stage – as though there was no reason why she should not get involved. Willing engagement with competencies allowed Holly to construct a confident emerging police-self.

### ***2.3.ii) How do students identify and assume professional responsibility?***

Holly's narrative located her position to responsibility in a number of ways: her responsibility to the public; to her role as a police-officer symbolised by her uniform; to other police officers; and to the law. Holly had developed a complex understanding of her present and future responsibilities and whilst she was aware that she had been protected from more serious cases and situations, the less threatening environment that she experienced during the placement enabled her to integrate an identity of as a police officer into her emerging-self.

Holly's linking of responsibility to the public demonstrated the importance she placed on seeing the whole person rather than just observable behaviour. Spending time with a group of people who had brain injuries had been transformative:

...two or three of them said to me that they'd...nearly been arrested because police had thought they were drunk because they either couldn't walk properly because of the side of their brain that's been damaged or they couldn't speak properly... it kind of gives you a different outlook on life and the career and stuff coz you kind of have ...to

take a step back and think is there more to this than I'm actually thinking. [Int.2:493-499/529]

The experience with this group of adults provoked Holly to challenge her simplistic understanding of 'life and the career' [Int.2:498/529] and how her professional responsibility needed to extend to wider issues than efficient demonstration of certain procedures.

Holly's appreciation of the responsibility associated with the vulnerability of others enabled her to understand her Dad's past response:

I can understand why he [her Dad] was so stressed now... People have like mental health issues and wanted to commit suicide and stuff like that. [Int.2:376-379/529]

Although not gained through direct experience, Holly's awareness of wider and more difficult issues enabled her to develop a more complex understanding of the responsibilities that might be expected of her future-self and the impact that such responsibility might demand of her.

Holly's exposure to some more serious cases heard via the police radio whilst on shifts reinforced her awareness of her limited responsibility whilst on placement:

A lot of respect for them. So much respect for the things that we like, heard over the radio and stuff and the jobs that people are having to go to, it's just...it's ridiculous. Quite scary. [Int.2:371-372/529]

This distancing of what jobs other police officers attended to which Holly labelled as 'ridiculous' and 'scary' suggested that despite her 'why not?' [Int.2:209, 232 & 262/529] approach to carrying out additional tasks, her student status did have some boundaries. Although she respected others, her emerging police-self was not yet ready to (or perhaps relieved that she did not yet have to) engage with this level of responsibility.

Holly's narrative also linked a sense of responsibility that she had to the police force symbolised through the putting on of her uniform:

...there's like that responsibility as well - once you have the uniform on that's it, you have to step up to those responsibilities and like, especially with like the handcuffs and capture and everything it's...they're not just, you know, everyday objects it's like... there's a lot of responsibility. [Int.2:101-104/529]

Holly's linking of her uniform to a higher responsibility that she would have to 'step up' to – as though she was crossing a threshold - suggested an inherent sense of duty in the clothes

she wore. The uniform that included items specific to a police-officer symbolised something distinctive that was not 'everyday' and perhaps empowered her to behave in new ways. Holly's response could be interpreted as wanting to take on this responsibility and indicated an integration of this aspect of policing into her emerging-self.

The final link to professional responsibility evident in Holly's narrative was to the law – both knowing it and applying it in practice:

They wanted me to arrest him for shop lifting. The...criteria for shop lifting is different to that from theft...and I was like 'it doesn't actually go with that, and was like I'm going to arrest for theft instead' and my tutor was like 'you're completely right to do so' and she got me to explain why and stuff like that and that's when the law knowledge came in. [Int.2:275-280/529]

Holly's chosen route into policing that included university-based modules enabled her to develop an academic understanding. Repeated reference to the module on law being 'brilliant' [Int.2:273 & 288/529] seemed particularly important to Holly as rather than remaining as theoretical knowledge, she used it to directly shape her decisions and actions when on placement. Her responsibility to uphold what was correct enabled the development of a successful police-self that was recognised and praised by her tutor.

Within the parameters of her first placement, Holly had begun to integrate a sense of responsibility within her emerging-self. This was indicated by her understanding of the needs of those she was interacting with that extended beyond demonstration of particular competencies. It was also indicated by her relations to the police uniform and to the law as though these aspects of policing had inherent responsibility that she was ready to accept. Holly's integration of responsibility in her emerging-self seemed to be enabled by the ways she limited the severity of the situations she was expected to take responsibility for – despite knowing that greater responsibility would be expected of her future police-self.

### ***2.3.iii) What significance did students place in professional recognition?***

Holly's ambivalence regarding her uniform emphasised a tension between being simultaneously highly visible yet invisible. Reference to 'sticking out' [Int.2:37/529] was limited to the time when she was first in uniform which had caused Holly some anxiety perhaps as she was only just starting to engage with being a police officer. Holly's awareness of generalised - often negative - responses by the public to a police uniform

amplified her desire to be recognised as an individual. This extended to her desire for recognition by her tutor which suggested that Holly's construction of an emerging police-self was focused more on being recognised for policing skills and behaviour than by her physical exterior.

The first time Holly wore her uniform in public provoked a range of responses - from others and from herself - associated with being seen:

It was quite scary, like I saw a few people I knew on one of the practicals, ... just random friends from school. And they're like, 'Oh my gosh!'...and you're kind of like proud... Blimey, just sticking out that much...it's a bit daunting but...yeah it was good. [Int.2:35-38/529]

Yeah. I think it was a little bit daunting coz like it all became so real then and like you do stick out a lot and everyone looks at you... [Int.2:99-100/529]

Feeling scared and daunted but proud and good about her new identity can be understood with reference back to the excitement and the responsibility Holly associated with her uniform and the implications this had for her police-identity. Holly's narrative here refers again to a sense of reality that had only previously been 'like real life' [Int.2:18/529]; whereas previous vocabulary had been linked to excitement [Int.2:14 & 105/529] and fun [Int.2:16, 18 & 109/529] Holly now associated some anxiety with the process of becoming a police-officer once 'it all became so real' [Int.2:99/529].

Although a necessity to enable her police-self to begin to emerge, Holly's experience of feeling the reality of the situation as daunting amplified her perception that she was highly visible. Alongside the possibility of not yet feeling ready to step into her new professional role, Holly had some anxiety about being seen by others which was associated with what she thought they would think of seeing her uniform:

I think people just see us as people in uniform and if one person's horrible, we're all horrible... coz we're all in the same uniform and we're all in the same job ...[Int.2:519-521/529]

This anonymised feeling of not being known and not being recognised other than by her uniform highlighted Holly's complex feelings about how she thought the public perceived her and also how she viewed them. Interestingly, she labelled both directions of feeling as 'horrible' despite these references being located at different points in her narrative:

I thought he was going to be absolutely horrible and hate the police and stuff ...I arrested him and asked for his name and he was like, 'No I'm not giving you my name,'

and I introduced myself and I was like, 'Can I just have your name?' and he was like, 'Fine' and gave me all his details. You know - introduce yourself, have a chat with them, that kind of thing. ...at the end he said to me, 'Yeah not all officers are bad' and he was like 'You're alright, thank you for dealing with me the way you did...' I was quite shocked by that, like I didn't really expect that from someone I've just arrested...[Int.2:59-72/529]

Holly's narrative shows how both she and the person she arrested had fixed ideas of the other. Her 'shocked' response suggested that her anticipation of how others viewed her would take some effort to change whereas the situation had been relatively straightforward to turnaround. Through her personal and personable interaction with the member of public – rather than exerting her authority and power symbolised by her uniform – she was rewarded with hearing 'not all officers are bad' – something that seemed very important to how her construction of her police-self was recognised.

Different reactions to being recognised during the placement indicated the complexity of how Holly's perceptions of her uniformed-self was met by others' responses to her uniform. These perceptions were a potential barrier that would need to be broken down in order for her to be seen as an individual but also served as a shield when the public was responding not to her but to a recognised uniform:

...the woman who was swearing at me, she was absolutely vile, and like the language was just appalling, like...I haven't been sworn at like that before and you kind of have to...kind of take it on the chin...but if someone does say something that does upset me you kind of just have to think ...it doesn't really matter, like they don't know me, they don't, they can't mean it - that kind of thing...You can't take things to heart at all or otherwise you'd just have a meltdown. [Int.2:431-439/529]

Holly's response to this reaction to her physical appearance which used the uniform as a buffer indicated a resilience within her emerging police-self. This suggested that Holly had symbolised protective power from her uniform that could contain anxiety associated with total disintegration - having 'a meltdown' [Int.2:439/529]. Separating herself from how she had been recognised by others solely by her uniform seemed to enable Holly to construct a police-self that was not shaped by the abuse of others.

Through Holly's self-recognition that her uniform was a shell that was not central to her construction of a successful police-officer, greater emphasis was placed on her desire to be recognised for her ability and skills:

She [Holly's tutor] kind of took a step back and let us deal with it, and she didn't step in at any point. She was like, 'You know, if it does go horribly wrong and she starts

beating you two up and winning then I will step in.' But she was like apart from that you know, I'm just going to stay out of it, and I mean, that was definitely good coz...I'm not one of these people who likes to learn and be like babied along the way, kind of like 'Well wait, wait, stop, you should be doing this instead,' kind of...making mistakes and learning from it...She kind of knew how I wanted to learn...[Int.2:150-157/529]

The nature of police education programmes that required a tutor to be present during placement shifts limited the opportunity for Holly to develop an independent police-self however this incident where her mentor had taken a 'step back' and did not have to 'step in' shifted the responsibility onto Holly and another student allowed her to be recognised as a police officer. Continuity with a self who did not like being 'babied' [Int.2:154/529] seemed particularly important to Holly who wanted to take on greater professional responsibility. This could be interpreted as a desire to be recognised as a co-professional by her Dad rather than just as his (baby) daughter who had been only an observer of his involvement in policing. This freedom to learn from her mistakes also reflected the importance Holly placed on being understood by her tutor who had recognised how Holly's emerging identity could be supported.

Recognition of Holly's uniform by others, which had made her both proud and daunted, enabled her to accept her uniformed police-self. The tension between Holly feeling as though she was 'sticking out' [Int.2:37/529] and her desire to be recognised as an individual rather than just someone in uniform indicated complex relations to her uniform. The symbolism and meaning that Holly associated with her uniform both empowered her through its inherent authority and protected her emotionally. This seemed to enable her to integrate her uniformed-self into her emerging police-self.

### **2.3.iv) *Psychical defences***

**Which psychical defences were identified through interpretation of students' narratives linked to the inter-relationship between the three areas of their emerging-selves - competency, responsibility and recognition? To what extent were particular issues related to specific concerns within their professional field?**

The professional placement provided an opportunity for Holly to apply the skills and tasks she had practised to real life contexts. This transition to carrying out the required competencies in situations where it 'all became so real' [Int.2:99/529] indicated the responsibility that Holly attributed to her emerging police-self. Holly's management of anxiety

through the psychic defence mechanisms of idealisation, denial, rationalisation and intellectualisation enabled her to take on responsibility for profession-specific tasks, for the needs of others and for her own professional development within the limited professional role of a student. Holly's acceptance of the responsibility symbolised by her uniformed-self allowed her to construct an identity as a police-officer that was recognised externally by others and internally by her.

Prior to the placement, Holly's knowledge and experiencing of policing evident in the first interview had been largely based on her Dad's experience as a police officer. Frequent references through the narrative of her first interview indicated an idealisation of her Dad and making him proud through becoming a successful police officer herself. Her knowledge about the profession and her position to it being 'my kind of profession' [Int.1:17/493] that had offered some stability to Holly's anticipatory-self had suggested both the lack of need for change and a readiness to be a police officer. Reference in her first narrative to some 'pretty horrific incidents' [Int.1:67/493] had enabled her to defend against anxiety associated with the unknown placement, 'it's OK now going into the police coz I don't think personally for me anything can be as bad as that' [Int.1:69-71/493]. Further emphasising this readiness to become a police officer was Holly's comment that suggested an identification or merging with her Dad, that his experience had in some way shaped her - 'you grow up in that environment, you get used to it' [Int.1:289/493].

Holly managed anxiety about getting things wrong - and thus letting her Dad down - through her ongoing idealisation and internalisation of a successful emerging police-officer. This desire to do things well was emphasised in Holly's narrative by the reference to positive feedback and getting things correct which established some continuity with a previous idealisation of making her Dad proud. Holly's knowledge of the law and her success in undertaking certain procedures - including gaining 'extra' [Int.2:261-262/529] experience to what was required of a student - led to praise and affirmation from her mentor:

...my tutor was like, 'Right you know you've got everything signed off do you want to go to it just for a bit of extra experience?' [Int.2:260-262/529]

...my tutor was like 'You're completely right to do so' and she got me to explain why and stuff like that and that's when the law knowledge came in. [Int.2:278-280/529]

Holly's reference to her mentor who had been in a parenting role – an experienced police officer who was always present but allowed Holly increased independence - could be

interpreted as an internalisation of her Dad and what she would have wanted him to recognise and say to her.

Management of anxiety associated with failing to make her Dad proud led to a form of denial that anything that was not right was her fault. The following (condensed) example from Holly's narrative highlighted a confusion that compromised her competence in using her pocket notebook:

... 'we've been taught this way but you're telling us how to do it this way' and it was just so much confusion and then... obviously taking so much thinking about... And then you go on to placement and you end up doing it the wrong way coz you're like second guessing yourself and my tutor was like, 'Have you been taught to do it that way?' and I was like 'To be honest we've been taught so many different ways I actually don't know what's right and wrong.' [Int.2:314-319/529]

The lack of clarity associated with Holly's anxiety about what was right and wrong was attributed to the confusion created by different people teaching different things and suggested that she assumed that there was only one correct way to be. Holly's readiness to attribute anything less than perfect to someone else was emphasised through her reference to her mentor as 'a bit of a perfectionist, so she knew at the end what she wanted to de-brief on and how she wanted me to improve and stuff like that...' [Int.2:157-158/529].

Continuity with an idealisation of success was challenged the first time Holly wore uniform in public. The reality of the situation that led her to feel very visible in an area where her Dad was known took place at the start of the placement when had not yet integrated a successful police-self. Holly's ambivalence about being seen and not seen linked to her idealisation about being recognised as a successful police officer, rather than just identified by her uniform. She had been taken aback but had internalised the comment from the man she arrested – 'he was like, yeah not all officers are bad and he was like you're alright, thank you for dealing with me the way you did.' [Int.2:70-71/529].

Holly's comment about her perception of the job and whether it had changed through experience offered continuity with her anticipatory-self and stabilised her position through reference to past experience of her Dad's role:

...I think it's always been pretty much the same coz obviously growing up in that environment I've kind of known how it's worked and the kind of things to expect and I think it has pretty much stayed the same. [Int.2:367-369/529]

This claim that everything had stayed the same had anchored her sense of self when I had directly asked about change. However, elsewhere in Holly's narrative, she indicated significant change that had developed a more complex understanding of how the placement had changed her. It had given her 'a different outlook on life and the career and stuff coz you kind of have to take a step back and think is there more to this than I'm actually thinking.' [Int.2:498-499/529].

By ongoing rationalisation of potential danger through the linking of danger with excitement rather than fear, Holly had defended her emerging-self against the anxiety associated with the potential seriousness of unknown incidents. Hands-on experience during the placement had contextualised danger. For example, where Holly had been aware that the lady she had arrested who had 'kicked off' [Int.2:140/529] had the potential to cause further harm, '...I kind of like the element of danger 'cos she could of [sic]...like hit out at us at any time' [Int.2:145-146/529]. Although maintaining continuity with her anticipatory-self who had idealised a position where she had already seen the worst of incidents, Holly's emerging-self had developed awareness that she had been protected from the more serious aspects of policing throughout the placement. The 'respect' [Int.2:371/529] that Holly had for those who had to go to 'scary' [Int.2:372/529] jobs indicated some anxiety associated with the expectations on her future-self. Her reference to being able to 'still remember things, definitely, some of the things that like you hear over the radio you still remember them...' was normalised by her labelling of it being: 'just everyday life really and the police. You got to get used to it.' [Int.2:390-392/529].

Holly's psychical defences of intellectualisation and normalisation that she would just have to just 'get used to' aspects of being a police officer that might evoke anxiety, offered a way to stabilise her emerging-self at a stage of ongoing uncertainty. However, Holly's reference to elements of her uniform such as handcuffs that she referred to as not being 'everyday objects' [Int.2:103/529] exposed a reality that aspects of her police-self were not 'just everyday life' [Int.2:391-392/529]. Further tension was evident later in Holly's narrative when she normalised the expectations on her:

I think you can't really get used to it but you just...yeah I guess you just have to learn to cope. And move on. [Int.2:398-399/529]

Holly's excitement – particularly of significant moments such as her first arrest – and positive feedback throughout the placement had enabled continuity with her anticipatory-self that she would be a police officer who would make her Dad proud. Psychic defence mechanisms

of idealisation, denial, rationalisation and intellectualisation enabled Holly to start to integrate a police-self through management of anxiety associated with the possibility of getting things wrong, not coping, not being noticed and being overwhelmed by the possible danger inherent in her role. Although Holly's narrative of her emerging-self maintained continuity with her anticipatory-self in many ways, the experience of the placement had brought about some significant development and change in her identity.

### **3) Conclusion: similarities and differences in students' emerging-selves**

Analysis of students' narratives from interviews following their first placement was mapped across three aspects common to all professions and which constitute my conceptualisation of an emerging-self: professional competencies, professional responsibility and professional recognition. This analysis indicates that collectively, students' narratives build a complex understanding of each of these three aspects of emerging-selves and individually, reveal how they are uniquely positioned in relation to these. The distinctive ways that students' emerging-selves were formed through the experience and demands of the placement, with particular focus on competence, responsibility and recognition could be linked to different psychical relations interpreted through contrasting defences against anxiety. Reinforcement or deconstruction of these defences during the placement restricted or enabled the integration of students' teacher, nurse and police selves.

This highly personal developmental process of students' emerging-selves during the contextualised experience of a placement was identified as a distinct stage of development from pre-placement constructions of their anticipatory-selves. Although students had some previous experience in professional contexts, Tim's comment suggested that being in a specific role within that context had significant meaning, 'I've learned I think more about teaching in the last four weeks than I think I have as a whole year as a TA.' [Int.2:5-6/600]. The first placement symbolised a threshold through which students' teacher, nurse and police selves could begin to emerge.

Contrasting each student's experience on placement offered a more in-depth understanding of profession-specific competence, responsibility and recognition. Furthermore, this contrasting explored how students' psychical relations and management of anxiety associated with their experience of these three aspects enabled the development and integration of their emerging-selves. The inter-relationship of these aspects identified that

through engagement with professional competencies, students could begin to identify and take on the responsibility inherent in their professional role through which their integrated emerging-selves could be recognised by others and by themselves.

The first of the three questions posed in the introduction of this chapter are answered through a synthesis of students' experience.

### **3.1) How do students relate to and reflect on the development of professional competency?**

Checklists of professional tasks were a key reference point for all students' emerging-selves particularly the successful demonstration of profession-specific defining moments - Tim's first lesson, Martha's first cannula removal and Holly's first arrest – that symbolised significant professional behaviours important to the students' construction of their emerging-selves. Students' psychical relations to the list of competencies shaped the different ways they responded to these expectations, particularly when trying these out in real-life contexts.

Both Martha and Holly could practise specific skills before the placement began – for example, taking blood pressures and temperatures or putting on handcuffs, using the radio and carrying out a stop and search – whereas Tim had to start developing his teaching skills within the real-life context of the classroom. As he could not try out teacher-specific skills with the class before the placement had begun, this initially led to Tim mimicking the teacher he was working with '...he's very easy to pick up on things. The behaviour management techniques - all the kind of tricks...' [Int.2:29-30/600]. Specific competencies that could not be copied - such as preparing for, and teaching, a mathematics lesson for a particular class - led Tim to manage anxiety associated with possible failure through compartmentalisation; he could be a good teacher even if he was not good at teaching mathematics. Further management of anxiety was through the rationalisation that mathematics was not his 'strong suit' [Int.2:41/600] subject. Stabilising a teacher-self that could be successful - despite the 'lesson which was a complete disaster' [Int.2:204/600] - allowed for the gradual deconstruction of these defences and enabled Tim to engage more meaningfully with the requirements of the placement.

Martha associated those competencies that she had previously practised with safety and harmlessness, '...you don't really do anything that's going to or could possibly cause any harm whatsoever. It's just blood pressures and temperatures, and things...' [Int.2:131/375].

However, Martha's avoidance of new tasks through self-imposed boundaries indicated resistance to engaging with profession-related competencies that might cause harm – particularly as she had been expected to work on her own. As the placement progressed, successful completion of particular tasks enabled through the support and modelling of her mentor, Martha experienced a sense of reward and relief that allowed her nurse-self to begin to emerge. However, the possibility of causing harm was heavily defended and throughout the placement, Martha found ways to avoid engaging with the competencies in a way that she could integrate into her emerging-self.

Although Holly had been excited to try out a range of police-specific skills in practical situations and scenarios that were 'like real life' [Int.2:18/529], the reality of being on placement had been 'scary' [Int.2:35/529], and she had been worried about whether she could apply the individual competencies in meaningful way, 'We've done stop and searches but then it was linking it all up, which the bit I was a bit worried about...' [Int.2:27-28/529]. Management of the anxiety evident in Holly's narrative was through ongoing idealisation of a successful police-self that would make her Dad proud. A successful self was also enabled through denial that anything she got wrong was due to her misunderstanding – such as the way to record incidents in her pocket notebook that had been wrong due to the confusion resulting from being taught different things by different people. The nature of Holly's defences to her anxiety enabled her to engage with the professional competences through which she began to integrate an emerging police-self.

Analysis of students' accounts linked to professional competence indicated that only through engaging with the competences could their profession-specific emerging-selves begin to develop in a meaningful way. Anxiety associated with carrying out these competencies in real-life contexts was managed differently by each student: Tim's resistance through compartmentalisation and rationalisation; Martha's avoidance and affiliation; and Holly's denial. All defences enabled students to stabilise an ongoing idealised-self as a successful professional. However, the nature of the defence, and whether the student could start to deconstruct those defences that inhibited professional behaviours, determined whether they could begin to integrate their teacher, nurse or police selves.

### **3.2) How do students identify and assume professional responsibility?**

Analysis of students' narratives indicated that the identification and assumption of professional responsibility was an internal process linked to their personal involvement in the placement and to their capacity to understand or meet the needs of others. Although all students had taken on some responsibility for the behaviours of being a teacher, nurse or police officer through engagement with the professional competencies, the integration of the responsibility inherent in the professional role was influenced by their individual psychical relations to these competencies and the extent to which any associated anxiety was defended.

Tim's desire to experience personal reward from being a teacher focused his attention on his own needs and what he could get from the experience of the placement. The deconstruction of defences that managed anxiety associated with teaching mathematics allowed Tim to shift to a position where he was able to consider the children's learning needs. Tim's initial resistance to hard work could be interpreted as a defence against the loss of his own childhood and the loss of his previous identity as a TA when he had enjoyed the freedom of break times [Int.2:68-69/600] and having a laugh with the children [Int.2:477/600]. Whilst psychically stuck in this previous identity - symbolised through being more comfortable at the back than the front of the classroom - Tim was not able to take on the responsibility of being the teacher. Despite the 'complete disaster' [Int.2:204/600] of the mathematics lesson, Tim's subsequent hard work to meet the children's needs led to success and allowed him to manage any anxiety associated with the loss of a previous role; he could begin to see that he could be successful as a teacher. Rather than slowly deconstruct his previous identity, he made a stark shift into the position of being the teacher, '...that's TA, that's teacher. Separate and kind of crack on with teaching' [Int.2:127-128/600]. This indicated a readiness to begin to take on the required responsibilities. Ongoing idealisation of being a successful teacher who experienced personal reward through the feeling of a buzz, and the management of anxiety associated with loss enabled Tim to integrate responsibility within his emerging-self.

Martha's resistance to carrying out professional competencies that had been associated with anxiety of causing harm had focused on her own needs rather than taking responsibility for the needs of others. Whilst she acknowledged that she needed to show initiative, 'It's finding a line between learning but using your initiative as well which is a bit challenging [Int.2:68-69/375]...'because your mentor can't be following you all day checking up on you and making sure you're doing the right thing' [Int.2:251-252/375], Martha avoided many tasks. She limited the way she assumed responsibility by seeking non-threatening tasks –

such as talking to the patients' parents – that enabled her to maintain the idealisation of a nurse-self that could cause no harm. The lack of responsibility Martha assumed was linked to her lack of personal involvement in the role of an observer; rather than carrying out particular tasks, she adopted a position whereby she engaged with the placement experience through the safety of theoretical knowledge where she saw 'exactly what the literature was saying' [Int.2: 228/375]. Martha's intellectualisation of her experience on placement maintained her psychical defences against having to engage with more hands-on involvement.

Although aspects of carrying out professional competencies had been 'scary,' the nature of Holly's defences against associated anxiety enabled her to successfully demonstrate a range of linked skills in real life contexts. This engagement enabled her to internalise the responsibility that she identified with the role of a police officer. Holly's narrative indicated that she had capacity to listen to, and understand the needs of, others and acknowledged that there was 'more to this than I'm actually thinking' [Int.2:499/529] suggesting that her constructions of responsibility extended beyond carrying out particular tasks. Holly constructed her meaning of responsibility associated with her uniform and knowledge of the law as though there was a fixed, agreed sense of duty that she was expected to assume and 'step up to' [Int.2:102/529]. Within the limited expectations of the placement, Holly contained any anxiety associated with the more serious incidents that she heard about over the radio and began to internalise a sense of responsibility within her emerging police-self.

The presence and support of the students' mentors could be linked to the way in which each student was enabled to begin to take on responsibility for their profession-specific role. Tim, who had initially mimicked his teacher and 'had to quickly confer' [Int.2:46/600] with him part way through a lesson in order to 'recover' it [Int.2:47/600] moved to a position where 'not having the teacher there but him being around' [Int.2:114-115/600] was associated with Tim beginning to integrate a sense of responsibility - 'you can't help but feel you're in that position, you're responsible for these kids.' [Int.2:117-118/600]. The teacher gradually withdrawing his presence from the classroom was a response to Tim taking - or had caused Tim to take - on responsibility as a teacher. Due to the nature of Holly's role, she always had her mentor present as back up. Although her narrative had suggested some anxiety associated with carrying out policing skills in real-life contexts, Holly's internalisation that she always had her 'tutor as a kind of back up if you needed' [Int.2:148/529] had seemed to enable her to assume responsibility inherent in the activities she carried out. Martha's sense of abandonment on the first day, that could be attributed to her previous and ongoing

idealisation of being part of a whole healthcare team working together, seemed to have become an obstacle to her taking on responsibility. Reference to Martha having to 'just barrage your mentor with questions' [Int.2:12/375] indicated a punitive or aggressive reaction to her being left to work by herself. Martha's defences that managed anxiety associated with causing harm had led her to affiliate with other nurses from whom she needed to be told 'exactly what to do' [Int.2:28/375]. The difficulties Martha had in engaging with the required professional competencies restricted the integration of responsibility. It is interesting to note that only Tim [Int.2:266/600] and Holly [Int.2:101-104] referred to 'responsibility' within their narratives.

### **3.3) What significance did students place in professional recognition?**

By managing anxiety in order to engage with the required competencies, students began to identify and - to various degrees - assume responsibility inherent in being a professional. This in turn enabled them to be recognised externally by others and through their own self-recognition. Students placed significance in their professional recognition in two ways - their physical appearance and their physical position. Both of these physical aspects symbolised students' psychical relations to meanings of responsibility.

Tim's previous TA-identity was associated with being at the back of the classroom - a position that he naturally assumed in the first week which felt like he had 'just stepped back into my old job' [Int.2:13/600]. Tim's language about the move to 'being put at the front of the class' [Int.2:65/600] indicated some resistance to being recognised in a teacher-role. Through management of anxiety associated with the position of teacher at the front of the class - particularly as he thought he would be able to 'team teach' [Int.2:18/600] - and recovery from a lesson that was a 'complete disaster' [Int.2:204/600], Tim had been able to gradually take on responsibility and move to a position where he was recognised as the teacher. Tim's construction of a particular persona (such as the slicking back of his hair) could be interpreted as an outward sign of an inward change - or perhaps as a boundary to stay in control of the extent he would be changed by his experience on placement. This persona enabled the children to recognise him as both the teacher and as a person [Int.2:329-330/600] and served to reinforce his idealisation of keeping his individuality whilst being a teacher. By the end of the placement, Tim associated being in the position of the teacher (which, importantly for him, had been recognised by his university tutor) with

previously idealised feelings of reward, 'it's kind of you at the front of the class doing it so that's definitely a buzz' [Int.2:109-110/600].

In her first interview before the placement began, Martha had idealised working as part of a team. Her narrative in the second interview indicated that she enjoyed being on a ward both with the team, 'we all try and sit down with our breaks and lunch together' [Int.2:328/375] and with different professionals coming 'in and out' [Int.2:147/375]. However, Martha had yet to take on responsibility that enabled her to become a recognised member of team and her narrative suggested that she had not yet integrated the responsibility inherent in the role of a - potentially harmful - nurse into her nurse-self. Martha's ambiguous identity as a 'proper nurse' with a fob watch in a clearly marked 'bright turquoise' student nurse uniform led to an ambiguous recognition of her place on the ward, 'I suppose it's really hard to not feel that you are getting in the way' [Int.2:66/375]. This suggestion that she was in some way getting in the way of, rather than enabling, the care of the patients may have led to the defence of compensation through recognition of her previous academic qualifications which she believed would change the way the nurses on the ward would relate to her. This re-emphasised the importance that she was placing on theoretical knowledge rather than on practice.

Through an ongoing desire to make her Dad proud, and continuity with an identity that she was 'not one of these people who likes to...be babied along the way' [Int.2:154/529], Holly had stepped up the responsibility that she associated with her uniform. The vocabulary of having to 'step up' [Int.2:102/529] to responsibility suggested how Holly was beginning to integrate this position of responsibility into her emerging-self that enabled her to be recognised as a police officer. Any anxiety associated with this stepping up and being recognised may have been managed by the presence of her mentor. When involved in an incident with a fellow student, Holly's vocabulary differentiated between her assumption of responsibility through the way she talked about her mentor who had taken a 'step back' [Int.2:150/529] and only if things got out of hand would she 'step in' [Int.2:152/529]. This suggested that both Holly and her mentor recognised a developing capable police-self. Holly's awareness of generalised - often negative - responses by the public to a police uniform amplified her desire to be recognised as an individual. This extended to her desire for recognition by her tutor which suggested that Holly's construction of an emerging police-self was focused more on being recognised for policing skills and behaviour than by her physical exterior.

Students' physicality within their placement settings indicated how their psychological relations to professional recognition had been linked to the way they had assumed professional responsibility. Through the experience of the placement, Holly had stepped up into a recognised, uniformed position from the outset and found ways to be seen as an individual inside a generic uniform. Tim gradually moved into a more visible role and was recognised as the teacher in the room through occupation of the teacher's position at the front of the room and through his physical persona. Recognition by others enabled Holly and Tim to internalise recognition of their own emerging-selves. However, Martha's anxiety associated with causing harm which had restricted the way in which she assumed professional responsibility led to a more ambiguous recognition by others and limited the way she integrated her emerging nurse-self.

### **3.4) Psychological defences**

**Which psychological defences were identified through interpretation of students' narratives linked to the inter-relationship between the three areas of their emerging-selves - competency, responsibility and recognition? To what extent were particular issues related to specific concerns within their professional field?**

Adopting a psychoanalytic dimension to analysis that offered an opportunity to interpret how any anxiety associated with the complex work of self re-formation was managed and defended against, indicated how students maintained some stability and continuity of their sense of self at a time of transition and change. This layer of interpretation within the analysis which suggested students employed specific defence mechanisms to manage anxiety associated with professional competence, responsibility and recognition offered an understanding of how their emerging-selves developed. Emphasising the affective and unconscious dynamics at the core of self re-formation allowed me to interpret how students could begin to internalise and integrate meaningful emerging-selves.

Within each student's account, there was tension between an ongoing desire to realise their idealised-selves and the management of anxiety associated with their emerging-selves. The extent to which students' experiences of the placement reinforced or deconstructed their defences against anxiety shaped the development of students' emerging-selves. The inter-relationship of the three aspects of the emerging-self enabled an understanding of the

development of self; through engagement with the required professional competencies, students were able to begin to identify and internalise a sense of responsibility which determined how they were recognised by others and by themselves as an emerging teacher, nurse or police officer.

Students' constructions of their anticipatory-selves that had been based on theoretical and imagined ideas and possibilities of their professional self included idealisations and fantasies. These seemed to defend against anxiety associated with their then unknown future-selves. The professional placement provoked students to move from this idealised, theoretical position to one of involvement and participation where their emerging-selves could develop through practice. Students' psychical defences could be interpreted through their individual position to theoretical knowledge.

Interpretation of Tim's defences against anxiety was focused on his resistance to teaching mathematics and to his fixed position to subject knowledge. Through rationalisation of the status of the subject and compartmentalisation that maintained an idealisation of being a good teacher even if he could not teach mathematics well, he managed anxiety about not knowing. Through the lesson that went badly and that threatened his idealised self, and by investing time to prepare, defences to this area of knowledge began to be deconstructed. By containing anxiety and through an ongoing idealisation of his teacher-self, Tim's psychical position to knowledge changed indicating a flexibility and resilience of self. This enabled him to identify profession-specific competencies that highlighted necessary change in his future-self, 'I hope it improves and I hope I get to see this child, this child, this child' [Int.2:136-137/600].

Martha's avoidance of hands-on activities that seemed to be associated with anxiety about causing harm restricted the development and integration of her nurse-self. Her narrative that suggested resistance to practical tasks linked to anxiety associated with causing harm was interpreted through the defences of avoidance, affiliation, intellectualisation and compensation. Martha emphasised the value of theoretical knowledge which she applied to her observations on the ward and enabled her to distance herself from having to get involved. Martha's narrative of her experience of the placement suggested that anxiety linked to harm was too heavily defended to work through at this stage. First, she needed to positively disintegrate a safe theorised identity to enable her to contain anxiety associated with being in a role that might cause harm. Although she talked about her next placement,

Martha did not talk in detail about the possible responsibilities or development of her future-self.

Holly's linking of theory with practice indicated how she used profession-specific knowledge, developed through a university-based module, to empower the development of her police-self when on placement. This knowledge, which informed her decision-making and actions, had enabled her to take on responsibility and begin to integrate a police-self. Holly's narrative which had linked excitement with potential danger was a way of defending against the unknown – the possibility that things might just 'kick off' [Int.2:138,140 & 233]. The nature of this defence, and her denial that the things she got wrong were her fault, had enabled her to begin to integrate an emerging police-self which maintained an idealised-self that would make her Dad proud. Perhaps due to the limitations of the placement where her mentor was always present, Holly had not yet had to manage anxiety associated with potential danger. References to 'ridiculous' and 'scary' [Int.2:372/529] incidents that she had heard over the radio indicated that her defences might be challenged by the development of her future-self who would be required to engage in such incidents and eventually, to work on her own.

Students' psychical relations to the inter-relationship of professional competencies, responsibility and recognition were linked to the shadow aspects of their specific professions. Tim's anxiety, associated with subject knowledge and not knowing, Martha's anxiety of causing harm, and Holly's anxiety about unknown possible dangers, indicated how the most defended aspects of their emerging-selves were connected to their idealisations of being a successful future teacher, nurse or police officer.

From the analysis of students' narratives in response to the questions posed in the introduction, three clear findings can be established. The first identifies a distinct stage in the developmental process that was enabled by the professional placement. This stage of the students' emerging-selves is different from anticipatory-selves that had been based on theoretical idealisations. Second, the emerging-self can be characterised by three aspects of: professional competencies; professional responsibility; and professional recognition. The inter-relationship of these aspects indicated that through engagement with the required profession-specific competences, students began to identify and take on responsibilities inherent in their professional roles. Through the integration of responsibility in the construction of their emerging-selves, students began to establish recognition as a teacher, nurse or police officer both internally (self-recognition) and externally by others. This conceptualisation of professional development through the inter-relationship of competence,

responsibility and recognition identifies aspects of becoming a professional that could be focused on, and supported more explicitly, during professional development programmes. Thirdly, the interpretation of students' unconscious defences used to manage anxiety associated with the placement's demands offered a valuable way to understand how an individual's affective and inner world is central to the re-formation and integration of self through professional education programmes.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusion

#### Introduction

This research grew out of my concern about the nature of teacher education in England characterised by increasing emphasis placed on the measurement of student competence against a list of outcomes. Government policy and neoliberal ideology which escalated technicist-rationalist approaches to professional 'training' had a standardising effect on student cohorts. Such models of teacher education tend to emphasise certainty and linear development. Students who could potentially become a valuable part of the profession might make slow progress or develop in tentative or doubtful ways as they negotiate the process of becoming a teacher. My subsequent research questions arose out of my interest in the individual's experience and how they made sense of the complex process of becoming a teacher.

My empirical contribution to knowledge includes the role of the specific transition from university-based learning to the first professional placement across three distinct professions during pre-service professional education. Focusing on this very early transition in a student's professional development enabled me to analyse the ways in which individuals constructed a sense of self for their developing role. The decision to include student nurses and student police officers in my research widened my focus and allowed me to understand what had become the familiar territory of teacher education in new ways. The choice of professions included in my research was stimulated by Freud's reference to 'the impossible professions' which he named as education, healing and governing (Freud 1925, p.273). He identified these professions as society's attempt to protect itself from the threat of suffering from the self, from the external world and in relation to others. The professions' impossibility lies in their inability to defend against anxiety and their inability to prevent forgetting, death and bad mutual treatment. Recognising the disruptive nature of anxiety inherent in these professions and the ways this might be defended against led me to adopt a psychoanalytic perspective. This was a productive approach which enabled me to interpret the possible ways the participants in my study managed anxiety associated with the re-formation of self.

The thesis constitutes an argument for the importance of acknowledging the influence of individuals' affective and unconscious dynamics in professional education programmes

which could enable more supportive management of anxiety and more meaningful development of a student's sense of self.

In this chapter I outline the ways in which my research aims have been met and how my analysis has led to original conceptual and empirical contributions to knowledge. This includes an outline of the ways I productively applied a psychoanalytic approach to my research. This ultimately led to theorisations of two distinct stages in the re-formation of self during the very early stages of development for a particular professional role: anticipatory and emerging selves. These theorisations, embedded in a psychoanalytic perspective, developed from my analysis of how individuals are psychically positioned to the demands on them during development as professionals for one of three distinct professional fields. Through analysis of individuals' reported experiences, I interpreted the ways they defended against anxiety and identified how this enabled or prevented engagement in practice.

I then reflect on the significance of my research to the field of professional development for teachers, nurses and police officers with specific reference to current models. This highlights the potential impact of my research which I emphasise through a number of recommendations to the field of professional education and more widely. In the final section I recognise the limitations of my study, the implications of these and how my work has illuminated a number of areas for further research.

## **1) The productivity of a psychoanalytic approach**

As I described in the methodology chapter, the nature and number of responses to the question on the pre-placement questionnaire asking what students were least looking forward to about the first professional placement had surprised me. I had not expected the force of language associated with emotion, concern, anxiety and fear. My analysis of students' responses led to the following categories.

- Doing something wrong, failing or not succeeding
- Uncertainty associated with doing the job well or effectively
- General concerns
- Profession specific concerns
- Being observed and assessed
- Social – interpersonal aspects

These categories reflected the way in which anxiety was associated with: general and profession specific concerns; with their own ability and with their interactions with others;

and with both the unknown and specific examples of knowing. Although each student had responded positively to the question about what they were most looking forward to, the expressed anxiety was unexplored on the teacher education programme I taught on. This emphasised the need for a conceptual framework that could give account for the ways in which anxiety might disrupt students' conceptualisations of self as they engaged in professional development.

The specific productivity of a psychoanalytic framework to analyse the students' reported narratives enabled me to interpret how each student responded to the perceived demands on them during the early stages of their professional development at the level of anxiety and unconscious defences. The iterative process of data analysis included my interpretation of students' specific use of language – including that associated with anxiety - and contradictions in what students said. This framework enabled me to explore dynamics beyond what could be explained by theories of emotion. In particular, I noted what Freud referred to as moral and neurotic anxiety where the cause of anxiety is unknown – either feelings of guilt caused by not meeting the superego's expectations or feeling overwhelmed by sudden demands of the id.

My work contributes to the growing body of literature connecting psychoanalytic concepts with learning and education. Building on application of psychoanalytic theory to learning and teacher education by, amongst others, Britzman (1986, 2009) and Brown (2006, 2020), my research adds evidence to the ways in which interpretations of unconscious dynamics can enhance understanding of the suffering experienced by professionals. This extends beyond the recognition and acknowledgement of the number of ways students managed anxiety. My original theoretical contribution to knowledge in the field of professional education is my theorisation of two distinct stages of early professional development that incorporates a psychoanalytic understanding of psychic defences. Two specific ways in which psychoanalytic concepts contributed to my theorisation of anticipatory and emerging selves were the role of idealisation, and the way in which defence mechanisms enabled or prevented students from engaging with the expectations of them during their professional practice. The nature of these two stages of early professional development – formed before and during the first professional placement - is discussed below and synthesised with literature and concepts from psychoanalytic theory.

## **2) Theorisation of Anticipatory-Selves**

The anticipatory-self is theorised as an individual's imagined construction of themselves in the professional role they are preparing for and includes formation of an idealised-self. Students drew from their past and referred to personal characteristics to form an idea of themselves in their future role. This reflected the way that students connected their future-self with their existing-self rather than conceptualising it as a separate, compartmentalised 'professional identity.' Their anticipatory-self was constructed from an extension of their existing-self with expression of particular behaviours for the professional role. This addresses literature which refers to 'professional identity,' 'teacher identity' or 'workplace identity,' (Clarke *et al.*, 2017; Mockler, 2011; Kelly, 2006) which conceptualise the process of becoming a professional as in some ways separate from the individual's sense of self. My theorisation of the anticipatory-self aligns with the language of self, for example 'teacher-self' (Zembylas, 2003) and with approaches that focus on deeper understandings of selfhood, for example Brown *et al.* (2020).

My interpretation of students' narratives noted how their theorised construction of a future-self drew from past experiences to defend against anxiety associated with the first placement. Expressed anxiety included Tim's naming of particular curriculum subjects he would have to teach and Holly's identification of unpredictable and potentially dangerous incidents that might shock her. These expressions were conscious concerns based on previous experience and some understanding of the context they would be entering. I interpreted students' unconscious idealisations as defences against this anxiety associated with the shadow aspect of the professions. That is, defence against the possibility that students could not fulfil the primary task of each profession. This revealed the antithesis of the profession – a teacher not knowing, a nurse unable to prevent the death of a child and a police officer unable to command control - and named specific threats to the coherence of their Anticipated-Self.

Students' anticipatory-selves were constructed, in part, from their idealisation of past experiences. Idealisation as a defence mechanism is effective because it does not have to be realistic; the ego-ideal or the ideal-self is an individual's version of what they ought to be. It emphasises positive aspects to the extent of rejecting the negative possibilities. Students' construction of a future-self formed a teacher, nurse or police officer who could contain the anxiety associated with the unknown demands of the first placement. This future-self was psychically resilient and could successfully meet the superego's internalised expectations. The function of students' idealisations was to stabilise and maintain a coherent sense of self at a time of transition marked as volatile and disorienting (Henry, 2016). Conscious and

unconscious anxiety associated with the - potentially terrifying - unknown, imaginary landscape of the first professional placement was defended against by the construction of an idealised future self. I conceptualised students' linking of past, present and future selves as a way of providing some continuity for self at a time of transition. This continuity formed a bridge or walkway into the 'floating world' (Turner, 1969) and 'imaginary geography' (Shields, 1992) of the professional placement.

Retrospective reflection on practice is frequently embedded into professional education programmes to identify specific incidents to reflect on in order to make sense of what happened. The purpose of this is often to identify future targets. My research shows the value and productivity of prospective reflection, or what Conway (2001) refers to as 'anticipatory reflection.' This was enabled by the timing of the first interview prior to the start of the placement. Urzúa and Vásquez (2008) identify the importance of the future dimension during students' constructions of the self and the essential role that future-oriented discourse can play. My contribution includes the application of psychoanalytic interpretations of students' idealised constructions of their future-selves which revealed how they might be defending against anxiety. The anticipatory-self is thus constructed from conscious and unconscious idealisations of themselves as a teacher, nurse or police officer.

### **3) Theorisation of Emerging-Selves**

Whereas the anticipatory-self was based on future-looking imagined constructions of self, the emerging-self is theorised as the construction of self in a professional role in the very early stages of professional engagement with practice. The emerging-self is constructed from analysis of students' reported experience of their first embodied practice and includes my interpretation of students' unconscious defences against anxiety when confronted with the demands of hands-on practice. Unlike any previous work experience, this is the first construction of the self as a professional student the other side of the transitional threshold of theory into practice. I identified three distinct factors in students' constructions of their emerging-selves: professional competencies, professional responsibility and professional recognition. Students' different conscious and unconscious relations to each of these factors were a unique balance of the way that anxiety was managed.

The previously articulated anticipatory-self had not disappeared by the time students embarked on practice. Literature on professional education (Meyer and Land, 2003; Neve

*et al.*, 2017) tends to focus on the ways in which students develop their knowledge and change their thinking during placements. My research focused on the ways in which students' embodied experience on placement linked to affective and unconscious dynamics. The idealised aspects of students' possible-selves continued to influence conscious and unconscious re-formation of students' selves as they undertook the placement. I noticed how the anticipatory-self was useful in two ways. One was to offer ongoing stability to the students' current sense of self as they were faced with the demands of practice. This reinforced the possibility that they would be successful and enabled them to believe that they could cope with the demands placed on them – even if that was not yet reflected in their current practice. The other way the anticipatory-self was useful was how it might illuminate psychic conflict in the emerging-self that might be causing anxiety. Tracing my interpretations of a student's anticipatory-self through to how they talked about their experience on the placement revealed some contradictions between the two. The resulting anxiety, and the way this was defended against, became the focus of my understanding of how each individual was positioned to the expectations on them.

The nature of the placement demanded engagement and it was impossible for students to completely avoid participation. It required students to move beyond theoretical knowledge to demonstration of professional competences. From a psychoanalytic perspective, the main aim for the ego is self-coherence and management of anxiety. The perceived threats to this therefore had to be defended against. My analysis built on Brown's (2006) work to analyse *how* students could retain identificatory coherence between, 'the person I used to be; the person I want to remain; the person I hate to be; the teacher I fear to be; the teacher I want to be' (p.677). I identified that it was only when students could engage with the professional competences that they could begin to take on professional responsibility. Once they had reached a place of psychic safety that had allowed them to look beyond their own needs to the needs of others, they began to recognise themselves - and were recognised by others – as a teacher, nurse or police officer. This reflects a staged development of how each individual's psychic apparatus responded to anxiety associated with the expectations on them. Each individual was uniquely positioned to the demands on them; they expressed anxiety and defended against this in different ways. However, there was commonality in the stages that students progressed through in order to be recognised. This included taking responsibility which could only be possible once students had managed anxiety in a way that enabled them to undertake the tasks required of them in their professional role.

Within each student's account, there was tension between an ongoing desire to realise their idealised-selves and the management of anxiety associated with demonstrating professional competencies, assuming responsibility and developing a recognised teacher, nurse or police self. My findings outlined how some defences such as intellectualisation and affiliation prevented the students from engaging in practice whereas defences such as isolation and denial enabled students to engage.

#### **4) Transitions as stimuli for change**

Rather than analysing re-formation of identity through the cumulative developmental process reached by the end of the programme, my research focused on the first experience of being a student in a professional setting and how this begins to stimulate re-formation of the self. Most literature which focuses on the identity of pre-service teachers tends to refer to the combined development over the course of the programme which usually includes multiple professional practices. My research contributes to the field of professional development by conceptualising the first placement as a particular time of transition. My decision to focus on this very early transition through a psychoanalytic lens enabled me to develop theorisations of how students' anticipatory and emerging selves were formed.

Reflecting on his experience prior to the first placement, Tim had referred to being in limbo - 'you're kind of in limbo, you're kind of "look I'm a student teacher that's not teaching" so you're kind of in this unknown stage.' [Int.2:164-166/600]. Starting the first placement could therefore be conceptualised as a threshold into what Tim thought would be less unknown. This comment, interpreted as an idealisation of knowing what was ahead, reflected Tim's ongoing idealisation that he was now in a knowing stage. However, my interpretation of Tim's reported experience of the placement illuminated not a stage of knowing but a different stage of unknown. This emphasises the in-between stage noted by Turner (1969) as the 'limbo of statuslessness' (p.97). Turner's reference to neophytes in near-naked states was reflected in Tim's experience of the first placement by his lack of knowing, lack of status and the lack of certainty that he would be a success as a teacher. Through my application of Turner's concepts (drawn from his anthropological work) to students' experience of the first placement, the vulnerability and ambiguity associated with the first professional placement as student-professionals was brought into focus. This provided insight into my interpretations of how a sense of self was formed during a specific time period.

My analysis of questionnaire and interview data revealed students' ambivalent feelings about the first placement. Filinkova (2016) classified transitions based on personal factors, situational factors and psychological readiness. By focusing my research on the very first transition to professional practice through a psychoanalytic lens, I identified how these different factors were connected. Furthermore, I identified the students' psychic resilience as a factor which might determine their success when managing transitions. It was the degree to which students could manage the demand of 'psychic reorganisation' (Giddens, 1993, p.304) that determined the extent to which they could engage with the expectations of the placement. The contribution of my research outlined how this psychic reorganisation might take place.

The first placement had a particular role as a transition as it was the first time that students had to engage with embodied practice. They were a physical presence in a space but were not qualified – something which led Martha to feel as though she was getting in the way of qualified professionals on the ward who had distinct roles. Holly had been clear that she did not want to be 'babied' but as a student had not been allowed to carry out procedures without a qualified police officer present. Students were therefore 'betwixt-and-between' (van Genep, 1909 cited in Turner, 1969) the stages of being a university student and being a qualified professional. My research illuminated how this betwixt stage was not just a state of limbo but was a necessary and productive stage at this point in their development that offered a time of growth and development.

My research also contributes to the growing literature that links an individual's unconscious with learning. I identified how the unique way in which a student is psychically positioned to the demands on them determines how successful they are in navigating a transition. This is a new way of thinking about the conceptual space within the physical space of the placement that Buckingham *et al.* (2006, p.898) identified as an 'active agent of change' during transitions. My research illuminates the dynamic and powerful, but yet hidden and unknown, influences that are being played out in the physicality of the placement setting. It is the potential conflict that arises from an individual's conscious and unconscious anxiety - and how this is managed - that determines the extent to which they can respond to the demands on them and maintain a coherent sense of self. As Buckingham *et al.* (ibid) outlined, this is particularly demanding when working in public domains with high levels of visibility whilst still novices. Although not visible to others, my findings identify how the student's ideal-self is present alongside their emerging-self and influences the way anxiety is managed.

My analysis of students' narratives shows that greater acknowledgement of students' high-stakes visibility – and linked to this, the students' desire for support – might be particularly important during what could be conceptualised as particular rites of passage. Head (1992) suggests that there should be more explicit recognition of these rites during student teachers' transition of becoming a teacher. I conceptualised rites of passage as specific first-time experiences for the students in my study – Tim's first lesson, Martha's first cannula removal and Holly's first arrest. I link these to the nature of their anxieties. Whereas rites of passage are usually set events or activities embedded in a culture, my research shows how an individual might construct their own significance regarding any meaningful initiation into the profession they are preparing to enter.

Turner's work on liminal entities highlighted the way in which neophytes were 'ground down to a uniform condition,' (1969, p.95). An emerging issue from these concepts, when applied to the process of becoming a teacher or other professional, is the extent to which an individual might be expected to fill a predetermined mould or whether there is freedom to develop their version of being in a professional. In the context of outcomes-based assessments of individuals' practice against predetermined professional standards, it can be difficult to see where the space for individuality lies. My research identified the ways in which students made sense of their development in highly personal ways. Although there were certain profession-specific skills and knowledge that they were required to demonstrate, the people that Tim, Martha and Holly were becoming reflected a very personal construction of what it meant for them to be a teacher, nurse or police officer. This included their past personal biography which had in part led to the unique way in which they experienced and managed emotion and anxiety. Whilst outcomes-based 'training' approaches might endure, my findings suggest that there is space within transitions to notice how the individual is constructing their own unique way of re-forming their sense of self.

## **5) Significance of my research**

In this section, I reflect on my research findings to identify the significance they might have in the field of professional education. This includes: knowing the person in the process of becoming; understanding the possible effects of unconscious dynamics; students' ambivalence concerning the first professional placement; and the function and futility of the idealised-self.

### Knowing the person in the process of becoming

My research demonstrates the value of knowing who the individuals on professional education programmes are. This includes their personal histories and their emotional responses to the demands (or perceived demands) of their professional development. Conceptualising professional development as a shift in a sense of existing-self (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009) rather than a development of new 'professional identity,' emphasises the importance of understanding their development as people and how becoming, for example, 'a teacher' might challenge, change or threaten them. Students' anticipatory-selves reveal that, before the placement begins, they already have a sense of their future-self as a professional constructed through connections with past experience. Students' responses demonstrate that a sense of what is widely used in literature as the development of a 'professional self' already exists within the individual before any placements begin.

### Understanding the possible effects of unconscious dynamics

The significance of psychoanalytically informed understandings of students' progress can account for what is not known through other models of professional development – for example, cognitive, behaviourist and humanist theorisations. Application of psychoanalytic theory recognises that unconscious dynamics are influencing an individual's ability to engage. For example, a student who resists participation or misses time from a placement may not be lazy or incompetent but is unable to defend against anxiety associated with the demands on them. Psychic conflict is threatening their coherence of self. One reason for this may be because they are not able to live up to their idealised-self. There is dissonance between this idealisation and their emerging-self which may not reflect what they had hoped they would become. Therefore, knowledge of students' constructions of their anticipatory-selves could help mentors to understand the nature of students' difficulties when the experience of the placement threatens their idealised-self.

Psychic conflict might also be threatening students' coherence of self because as demands on the student become real rather than imagined, their defence mechanisms may no longer be able to contain the anxiety they experience. This may mean that students who start on professional education programmes in an apparently strong position later disengage, become stuck or appear to regress. For example, Martha's academic work and knowledge was good but during the initial stages of practice, she had been unable to engage. Intellectualisation kept her stuck in an observer position. The way students defend against anxiety could also explain potential non-linear development across future placements. For

example, Holly's denial that she would see anything worse than what she had already seen with her Dad could be threatened on her next placement where she is no longer protected from the more difficult cases she would have to attend. The defence mechanism of denial may no longer be sufficient to contain anxiety associated with the more dangerous and unpredictable situations she would ultimately have to encounter.

The temporal dimension of my study revealed students' constructions of self were not fixed during the early stages of professional development. My findings offer an explanation of the dynamic process of becoming which Deleuze and Guattari (1987) describe as a continual process within the self. In my research, I attribute this process to an individual's dynamic unconscious. The formation and evolution of the emerging-self as it negotiates alignment with - and contradiction of - the anticipatory-self reveals the self in flux. Rather than interpreting lack of visible progress as a time when learning and progress is not taking place, this could indicate a productive time of change and negotiation during which the individual is consciously and unconsciously restructuring the ways in which they are able to manage anxiety. This may in turn strengthen the coherence of self and place them in a more robust position to manage greater demands.

Insight into students' psychic conflict through interpretations of their emotions and reported experience offered an understanding of students' behaviour. Understanding how they are defending against anxiety will determine the nature of any support required either in containing anxiety when defences are no longer effective, or in the co-deconstruction of defences required in order for the student to finally engage in practice. For example, the physically close support and step-by-step instructions that Martha required to challenge her avoidance - and which ultimately led to her successfully removing a cannula.

#### Students' ambivalence concerning the first professional placement

Through analysis of questionnaire and interview data, my research identified the contradictory nature of transitions which may indicate time when students feel very ambivalent. As a necessary transition into the profession, the complexity of how a student navigates the anticipation and experience of the first placement has been illuminated by my interpretations of students' narratives. The language associated with excitement and expectation and with anxiety and fear that was revealed in students' responses to the questionnaires highlights contradictory emotions. The ways in which the professional placement is talked about by university tutors – for example as a time of possibility and development or as testing and difficult – could impact on students in particular ways at this

time. Such comments could trigger anxiety, reinforce defences, and influence the construction of their idealised-self. The significance of this point relates to how students are prepared for the first placement in ways other than subject knowledge, professional understanding and how to complete the required paperwork. The way that university tutors might develop an awareness of students' ambivalence (despite the placement being a necessary part of the programme they signed-up for), could lead to less threatening transitions for students and help to promote stability for their sense of self.

Since I began this research, initial teacher education has migrated away from universities to school-based learning in the form of programmes such as School Direct. During this time, universities have become more involved in nurse education and have seen the introduction of police studies. This change marks the way in which students become professionals through the process of a university programme and how theory and practice-based components are structured (White and Heslop, 2012). My initial focus on how student teachers manage the transition from university-based learning to a professional placement is now perhaps more relevant to student police officers. Managing transitions to placements is less relevant to those models of teacher education which emphasise 'on the job' learning – models which have previously aligned more with the training of new police officers. The nature of transitions between university and practice-based learning vary greatly across the many routes into teaching, nursing and policing. They reflect the ongoing debate concerning 'education' versus 'training,' what knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes are required to meet the professional standards, and where this learning best takes place.

#### The function and futility of an idealised-self

The way that I interpreted my data demonstrated the role of idealisation as a defence mechanism against anxiety associated with the unknown transition into practice. It reflected an unconscious construction of a self where the demands, desires and expectations of the id and the superego could be met. The idealisation formed a buffer as students approached the first transition into practice. It formed a stable walkway into the unknown which connected students' past, present and future. This conceptualisation reflected the productivity of an idealised-self as a useful glue to keep the self coherent enough to successfully meet the demands of the placement - or at least not fall apart. This construction of a future-self that extends beyond hope, self-efficacy and a belief that they will succeed seems useful. However, an idealisation does not have to be realistic and by definition, cannot necessarily be achieved. This places the individual as always living in a not-yet-good-enough space. The perfectionist tendencies that some professionals confess reflect a

job never done well enough. They can never become the person they desire to become. Perhaps the defence to this is to disengage from the role and demonstrate that they apparently do not care. This links to the nature of the impossible professions that have been set up to achieve an impossible task. There is an ongoing risk that the individual might fall apart psychically in a futile attempt to meet the desire of the id and fulfil the superego's expectation to prevent society from falling apart. There is scope for those working on professional education programmes to explore my conceptual contribution with their students. That is, to talk about psychic conflict with those who are preparing to work in the impossible professions and how this might disrupt their development.

## **6) The potential impact of my work and recommendations stemming from this study**

### Provision of a safe, unassessed space to support the re-formation of self and development

My research highlighted the value in providing students with a reflexive space to talk about their experience of self re-formation during the process of professional development. The space to talk about their own experience offered an opportunity for them to make sense of the way in which they were becoming a teacher, nurse or police officer through dialogue. The process of putting their experience into words, which were heard by an interested listener, seemed to validate their experience in some way. It provided a way to open a dialogue which saved them from any isolation caused from their 'intimate, personal and internal drama,' (Bloomfield, 2010 p.222). I argued that in a limited sense, this might have been a therapeutic space. The space I provided was to some extent structured, in that it was a research interview, however, what was of crucial importance was that this space and process of reflection was not assessed. The role and value of such spaces conceptualised by Bhabba (1990) and McIntyre and Hobson (2016) as a 'third space' seems to lie in the opportunity to meet face-to-face. Students' email exchanges with university tutors (Cook-Sather, 2006) and students' blogs (Wood, 2012) linked to conceptualisation of liminal spaces became a productive space for students. They were found to be supportive during professional placements, however, they were limited by their virtual nature, a lack of neutrality and lacked the opportunity to explore meaning through dialogue. A recommendation stemming from the value of my work is how HEI providers might create safe, unhurried and unassessed spaces for students on professional programmes to talk

about their experience. This would be a space where they could talk freely about the impact of their practice-based experience including negative emotions of conflict, doubt, disappointment or resentment. The provision of a safe space could be enhanced by equipping students with the language of expressing emotion and feelings of anxiety. This has particular importance at a time when individuals' mental health is suffering something of a crisis and contributing to high attrition rates in a range of professions including teaching and nursing.

#### Adoption of psychoanalytic interpretations of behaviour and emotion

Recognition of the role and possible chaos of the unconscious would disrupt current models of professional education. Although some rethinking would be required in order to effectively embed psychoanalytic conceptual understandings of development into professional education, these programmes will remain impoverished if they fail to acknowledge an individual's emotional and unconscious responses to the impossible task they are faced with. The impact of adopting a psychoanalytic framework which understands individuals' behaviour and their emotional responses through interpretation of their past and their unconscious dynamics could be transformational. Designing the process of 'becoming' in a way that is centred on working through anxiety would thus enable the individual to better engage with the potential demands on them as teachers, nurses or police officers. This approach would provide students and those involved in professional development with a language and conceptual framework to explore resistance, conflict, depression, disengagement, compartmentalisation and denial in a way that is embedded in their development as professionals. The professional education programme would not become a therapy session but would include a therapeutic dimension in the way that students are supported to recognise and work through anxiety arising from unconscious conflict. This is a challenge for current models of professional education but of great importance as these current models do not seem to be working well for all. There does not have to be a binary choice of which model to adopt but rather the current models could be adapted and enriched by incorporating ways to recognise an individual's emotions and unconscious dynamics.

Acceptance of psychoanalytic interpretations of individual and collective behaviour could have a significant impact for qualified professionals. Transitions into new job roles, promotions, involvement in mentoring and restructures might be times of particular volatility especially for those working in the 'impossible' professions. Understanding the influence of unconscious dynamics enables the exploration of alternative explanations including acceptance of not knowing. My findings demonstrate how psychoanalytic concepts,

interpreted from reported experience, could lead to insight into students' lack of productivity and how to provide more effective support structures to promote engagement. Insight into unconscious dynamics and the individual's drive to avoid anxiety could explain why someone might resist or avoid their work, why they might appear not to care or frequently call in sick. Rather than watching repeated patterns of a workforce not meeting the demands on it, a psychoanalytic approach could provide a way to recognise anxiety and to support individuals and groups to manage this. With the current state of the 'impossible professions,' it would be timely to revisit the work of Obholzer and Roberts (1994) on the unconscious processes in organisations (updated 2019) - and the subsequent research this has stimulated (for example, McMahon, 2009 and O'Sullivan, 2019). The impact of bringing together evidence concerning the unconscious has the potential to identify how anxiety can be recognised and worked through in order to promote productivity and to reduce the human cost and fallout.

## **7) Limitations of my study and gaps for further research illuminated by my work**

Reflexive engagement with my research enabled me to identify a number of limitations of the study which illuminated areas for future research. These included: the size of the sample; the first professional placement; the voice of the student; adoption of Freud's theoretical concepts; analysis of data not the research process; and the impossible professions.

### The size of the sample

Although all transcripts informed my process of analysis, I included examples from only three of my participants in the presentation of my research. This enabled me to engage with in-depth analysis and interpretation of conscious and unconscious influences on the development of self. I recognise that generalisations from three individuals are limited despite the way in which I found commonalities across three distinct professions. In future studies, theorisations of anticipated and emerging selves could be used to analyse professional development to test their generalisability. This would include the specific focus on three distinct factors of professional competence, responsibility and recognition and how these link together. Analysis of my small sample provided insight into the ways in which an individual's emotions and unconscious dynamics shape self re-formation. This specific insight can now be applied to professional education in different national and international

contexts to explore how recognition of my theorisations might offer productive ways to make sense of behaviour and engagement.

### The first professional placement

My study included an in-depth focus on the very first transition embedded in professional education programmes when students moved from university-based learning to professional contexts. This included analysis of data from interviews at two distinct points – before and towards the very end of the first placement. Although I did generate data from interviews and a focus group at the end of the first year of the programme, I did not include this in my findings as the evolution of my research-focus led to a more detailed analysis of the significance of the first placement. This specific conceptualisation of a liminal threshold became a means to theorise development of self at the very early stages of professional development. Future research could continue to map students' development specifically focusing on the idealised-self and its role in the ongoing emergence of teacher, nurse and police selves. Furthermore, the specific defence mechanisms which I identified in my interpretations of students' emerging-selves could be traced to the next placement to analyse the extent of their effectiveness. Do defence mechanisms continue to contain anxiety? How might defences which prevent or resist engagement be deconstructed in manageable ways? Does an individual's psychic positioning to the expectations on them shift? In what ways did the first professional placement set a trajectory of development? Is the transition into the next placement characterised by continuity or disruption to the individual's sense of self? Do they have to un-learn things from the first placement which may have been demonstrated just to pass that placement?

### The voice of the student

My research focused on hearing the voice of those involved in the process of professional development. Although I had interviewed some people involved in leading professional education programmes, including one experienced police officer who worked some shifts and taught on the university-based programme, I decided to centre on the students' perspective. This would enable me to understand my research focus in a more in-depth way and keep my positionality as a teacher educator (which had become closer to ethnography) out of my analysis. The voice of those involved in leading the university-based and placement-based learning is missing in my research. Hearing their experience of working in the profession (either in the past or currently) and their involvement in professional education

programmes could lead to a better understanding of the relationship between universities and the current professional context. Conflict associated with power, locus of control, funding, accountability, development of knowledge and the ways in which different entry routes have blurred the boundaries between university and professional contexts could be productively analysed through a psychoanalytic lens.

#### Adoption of Freud's theoretical concepts

My research drew on one psychoanalytic perspective, namely Freud's theorised concepts of anxiety and unconscious defences. Application of psychoanalytic concepts to analyse development of professionals could extend to concepts used by those who have adapted Freud's original concepts or other concepts introduced by Freud. For example, a conceptualisation of the very early stages of professional development through a lens of depression and melancholia. Rather than focus on the re-formation of self in the construction of an idealised or emerging-self, the process of becoming a teacher could be analysed as a process of mourning and loss of previous identities and freedoms.

#### Analysis of data not the research process

Adopting a psychoanalytic approach shaped the way I led the research interviews: semi-structured interviews with open questions and infrequent interruption led to an unhurried space for students to talk. The data from the questionnaire had made me aware of the presence of students' collective anxiety but I was careful not to assume that my interview participants felt anxious or that they would respond in the same way they had when completing the questionnaire. Reflecting on the process, I identified the research interview as being potentially therapeutic. However, I did not adopt a psychoanalytic framework during the process of interviewing students and thus missed out on the way that my interaction with my participants could have been interpreted. For example, I did not systematically note my emotional responses, hunches or possible interpretations of, for example, students' projections or defence mechanisms. There is scope to further re-theorise the interview space in productive ways exemplified by Lapping and Glynos (2019).

#### The impossible professions

The professions included in this study were limited to three which were loosely translated from Freud's reference to education, healing and governing. There is scope to apply theorisations of anticipatory and emerging selves to the development of other professions

aligned with Freud's impossible professions. Most directly, these include medics, social workers and prison officers - all of which are professions experiencing current shortages in England and whose structures are in some way preventing those who work within them to meet society's needs and demands. This work could connect to the field of inter-professional work (Ruch and Murray, 2011), to enhance practice and explore ways for professions to work together to create more effective social defences to collective anxiety.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, yes my research questions were answered and my research aims were met. New theorisations of the re-formation of self with embedded psychoanalytic concepts and interpretations form my conceptual contribution to knowledge. This included theorisations of anticipatory and emerging selves and how idealisation formed a bridge between the two temporal stages. Reflecting on the inter-relationship of the three factors associated with the emerging-self, I identified a sequential pattern that could be applied to all students: it was only through engagement with professional competencies that students could begin to identify and take on the responsibility inherent in their professional role through which their integrated emerging-selves could be recognised by others and by themselves. My empirical contribution focused on the very early stages of professional development across three distinctive professions. This included the developmental role of the very first professional placement conceptualised as a specific transition.

Britzman (2009) noted that transitions can cause or reveal anxiety. Transitions often demand that an individual has to change in order to grow. Recognition of possible anxiety at times of transition could lead to more supportive models of development. My reflections on the nature of the interview space as potentially therapeutic led to a recommendation that non-assessed spaces could be a productive way to help students manage anxiety during professional development. The extent to which anxiety can be managed, contained and defended against might be the most influential factor in determining the extent to which a student is successful in the process of professional development. Recognising psychoanalytic concepts as a way to understand human behaviour and relationships could also be productively applied to understand the anxiety experienced by qualified professionals and to the collective experience of working in a professional or multi-professional team. This has particular

relevance at a time when there are high attrition rates and high levels of absenteeism due to mental health difficulties in professions linked to those Freud named as impossible.

My research contributes to the field of psychoanalytic understanding of learning and education. The urgent focus now is to understand how my theorisations can be effectively embedded into learning processes in professional education programmes and in the ongoing development of professional practice.

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## Appendices

- A. Glossary of conceptualisations of defence mechanisms to manage anxiety
- B. Introduction to research and invitation to participate in interviews
- C. Completed questionnaires
  - i. Tim – student teacher
  - ii. Martha - student nurse
  - iii. Holly – student police officer
- D. Confirmation of ethics approval
- E. Example transcript. Transcript from Interview 2: Martha – student nurse

## Appendix A: Glossary of conceptualisations of defence mechanisms to manage anxiety

This is not a complete list of all defence mechanisms but includes those which I identified in the analysis of students' interview transcripts. They are presented here as a form of glossary to clarify my use of terms. Unless otherwise cited, the content is paraphrased from Psychologist World (2019).

Affiliation	Anxiety is associated with being alone. This defence mechanism involves turning to others for help in order to reduce anxiety.
Avoidance	One way to reduce anxiety is to remove the trigger through avoidance. This mechanism does not confront this cause of anxiety but can reduce its effects of tension and conflict.
Compartmentalisation	Parts of an individual are separated from awareness of other parts and behaving as if one had separate sets of values.
Compensation	Overachieving in one area to compensate for failure in another.
Denial	Certain thoughts, feelings and experiences are pushed out of conscious awareness because they have become too anxiety provoking. Denial of one's feelings or previous actions is one defence mechanism to avoid damage to the ego caused by the anxiety or guilt of accepting them.
Idealisation	This defence mechanism involves creating an ideal impression of a person, place or object by emphasising positive and rejecting negative qualities. The ego-ideal or the ideal-self is an individual's version of what they ought to be even though this might be unrealistic. Idealisation adjusts the way in which we perceive the world around us and can lead us to make judgements that support our idealised concepts.
Intellectualisation	Thinking about something logically without any attached emotion. When a person is attached emotionally to an issue, this defence mechanism enables them to engage with it in intellectual terms. This often involves standing back from the situation and attempting to take a cold, neutral view of it.

Isolation	Isolation can lead a person to separate ideas or feelings from the rest of their thoughts. In distinguishing an emotion or impulse from others in this way, a person attempts to protect the ego from anxieties caused by a specific situation.
Phantasies And Fantasies	<p>'The term 'phantasy' may be used by psychoanalysts to mean an imaginative fulfilment of frustrated wishes, conscious or unconscious. This approximately condenses what is generally seen as Freud's main use of the term.' Hayman (1989, p.105)</p> <p>'Fantasy' can be a way of escaping reality through more conscious processes. They to explore alternatives to negative situations. However, unrealistic expectations of them being fulfilled can lead to an individual losing touch with reality and taking more viable actions to improve their life.</p>
Rationalisation	Creating an acceptable but incorrect explanation for a situation. Rationalisation occurs when a person attempts to explain or create excuses for an event or action in rational terms. In doing so, they are able to avoid accepting the true cause or reason resulting in the present situation.
Repression	<p>This is perhaps the most significant of defence mechanisms in that repressed feelings and impulses can lead to the use of many other mechanisms. In order to live with intrapsychic conflict, Freud believed that our minds repress the thoughts at the source of our anxieties: instead of contemplating them consciously, they are 'bottled up' in the unconscious mind, emerging in symbolic dreams and unexplained patterns of behaviour.</p> <p>Murray (2008) notes that analysts regard repression as 'a mechanism of ego-defence resorted to in the face of intolerable frustration occasioned by conflict between some positive drive and the need to preserve self-respect.' (p.473).</p> <p>At different points in his work, Freud sometimes used the term 'repression' instead of 'defence.' (Strachey, 1961).</p>

## Appendix B: Introduction to research and invitation to participate in interviews



Leading education  
and social research  
Institute of Education  
University of London

### The impact of professional training on new students' sense of self.

#### A research project

Autumn 2012 – Autumn 2013

Information for student primary teachers/ paediatric nurses/police constables

Please will you help with my research?

My name is Helen Glasspoole. I work as a tutor on Primary Initial Teacher Training Programmes at [REDACTED] University and am a part-time PhD student.

#### **Why is this research being done?**

The key purpose of the research is to consider the experience of students on selected public sector professional training courses. I am interested in how students feel equipped to overcome any challenges they face and how their sense of professional identity develops over the theory and practice based elements of the training course. This leaflet gives an overview of my research and outlines what is expected of you should you choose to take part.

#### **Who will be in the project?**

Three to five students from the following professional training courses will be involved:

- Primary Teachers – from the start of one year PGCE course
- Paediatric Nurses – from the first year of a 3 year training course
- Police Constables – as they start Phase 1 in the first year.

Participants will be self-selected volunteers of any age or gender.

#### **What questions will be asked?**

There are no set questions. The nature of the questions will relate to the theory-based and placement-based elements of your training course. As your experience and professional development will be

unique to you, the questions will ask for your perspective on how you are progressing through the course.

### **What will happen to you if you take part?**

There will be three individual interviews at a mutually agreed time. These will be up to one hour in length. One will be before your first professional placement, one whilst you are on this first placement and the other one after that. Although I will ask certain questions about your experience of your training, there will be no set questions that we have to follow. I am keen that the interview will be determined by what is important to you. If you agree, I will tape record some of the sessions and type them up later. I am not looking for right or wrong answers, only for what you want to talk about from your perspective as a student.

### **Could there be problems for you if you take part?**

I hope you will find it useful to reflect on and talk about your experiences. If you want to stop talking at any point, we will stop the interview. I will arrange the interviews at times most convenient to you and can arrange to meet you at your training institution or another agreed venue thus limiting any time or travelling costs.

### **Will doing the research help you?**

I hope you will enjoy contributing to this research. It will mainly consider the nature of perceived challenges within professional training courses and may lead to a review of how such programmes are structured to support the students. I also hope that the process of interviews will help your reflection and evaluation of your personal professional progress and possible continued professional development.

### **Who will know that you have been in the research?**

Apart from me, my research supervisor and your course leader, no-one will know that you have been involved. I will not tell anyone else of your involvement unless I think that someone else is in danger in some way. If so, I will talk to you first about the best thing to do.

I will keep tapes and notes in a safe place, and will change all the names of participants, training courses and settings in my reports. Any named acknowledgements in the final report will only be included if agreed by you.

### **Do you have to take part?**

You decide if you want to take part and, even if you agree, you can drop out at any time or say that you don't want to answer any of the questions. If you agree to participate, I will ask you to sign a

consent form as confirmation that you are willing to be interviewed. Once you have signed, you are still free to ask questions or to clarify any previously asked questions that you might have.

**Will you know about the research results?**

Once the data has been analysed and written up, you will have the option to receive a copy of the research electronically as a PDF and have access to a hard copy. Before any data relating to your interviews is included in the final report, you will have the opportunity to read it.

**Who is funding the research?**

I am funding the research myself with a contribution from my current employers,

████████████████████

**The project** has been reviewed by the Faculty Research Ethics Committee at the Institute of Education where I am a part-time PhD student.

**Thank you for reading this leaflet.**

I welcome your questions if you would like to know more about the research. If you would like to be considered to take part in the case study, please contact me by email with your name and telephone number so that I can contact you to discuss your involvement further.

Helen Glasspoole

[hglasspoole@████████████████████](mailto:hglasspoole@████████████████████)

## Appendix C: Completed questionnaires

### Ci: Tim – student teacher

**Questionnaire – professional training**

1. Which profession are you training for: Nursing    Police    Teaching (please circle)

2. How long is your training course?: 1 Year

3. List three things that attracted you to this profession:

- Working with people and children also interested in social development of others.
- Prospects
- Multiculturalism - opportunities to teach abroad and amongst people of different cultures.

4. For how long have you been thinking about training for this profession?

2-3 years

5. What do you think makes you suited to your chosen profession?

Engagement and understanding with/of others + my enjoyment of developing others.

6. What are you most looking forward to about the professional placement?

Experiencing different settings than those I have already worked in, meeting other like minded professionals and developing my own skills and understanding of professional practice.

7. What are you least looking forward to about the professional placement?

8. Do you think your chosen profession is collaborative or competitive? What makes you think so?

Collaborative - the entire process of teaching and learning is something I see that is only successful if you include yourself with the opinions and ideas of others.

9. To what extent do you think you can be 'trained' for your chosen profession?

I think you can be 'trained' to understand the requirements and expectations and, to an extent, to be successful at the tasks you encounter. I don't think you can be trained to be an effective teacher however, I think that is self-developed and largely dependent on the individual and their skills + abilities.

I am looking for volunteers to meet me on an individual basis to talk about their ongoing professional development. We will meet for up to an hour at some point before, during and after your first placement. I hope that this will provide a useful opportunity for you to reflect on your progress and how you are feeling equipped for your chosen profession.

The key purpose of the research is to consider the experience of trainees on selected public sector professional training courses. I am interested in how you as a trainee feel equipped to overcome any challenges that you may face and how your sense of professional identity develops over the theory and practice based elements of the training course.

If you would like to volunteer to find out more information about meeting to discuss your professional development, please complete the section below:

Name

Please complete your preferred mode of contact – email or phone:

**Cii: Martha - student nurse**

**Questionnaire – professional training**

1. Which profession are you training for: Nursing Police Teaching (please circle)

2. How long is your training course?: 3 years

3. List three things that attracted you to this profession:

- Working with children
- Have a caring role
- Doing what I enjoy for a living

4. For how long have you been thinking about training for this profession?

3 years (seriously thinking)

5. What do you think makes you suited to your chosen profession?

I like to help others that are in need, such as those who are ill or children with special needs.

6. What are you most looking forward to about the professional placement?

Being able to put into practise everything I have learnt in the past, both in education and life experiences.

7. What are you least looking forward to about the professional placement?

Being the new one on the ward and facing new challenges

8. Do you think your chosen profession is collaborative or competitive? What makes you think so?

Collaborative, because being a nurse is very much about teamwork.

9. To what extent do you think you can be 'trained' for your chosen profession?

I think the 'practical skills' sessions that we have before placement will be very useful training, but the majority comes from being with patients.

I am looking for volunteers to meet me on an individual basis to talk about their ongoing professional development. We will meet for up to an hour at some point before, during and after your first placement. I hope that this will provide a useful opportunity for you to reflect on your progress and how you are feeling equipped for your chosen profession.

The key purpose of the research is to consider the experience of trainees on selected public sector professional training courses. I am interested in how you as a trainee feel equipped to overcome any challenges that you may face and how your sense of professional identity develops over the theory and practice based elements of the training course.

If you would like to volunteer to find out more information about meeting to discuss your professional development, please complete the section below:

Name

Please complete your preferred mode of contact – email or phone:

### Ciii: Holly – student police officer

Name of police force blanked out

✍

**Questionnaire – professional training**

1. Which profession are you training for: Nursing  **Police**  Teaching (please circle)

2. How long is your training course?: 2 years

3. List three things that attracted you to this profession:

- Main influence is my dad who retired from the force in June 2012 after 30 years service, so I have grown up in that environment.
- The excitement and that every day ~~day~~ I will face new challenges
- ~~I~~ I'd like to think that I will help the community and will get the chance to meet a diverse group of new people.

4. For how long have you been thinking about training for this profession?  
I have always considered it, but only really decided on it for definite around 3 years ago so decided to complete a work experience placement with [redacted] to improve my knowledge.

5. What do you think makes you suited to your chosen profession?  
I am a 'people-person' so feel that I have good communication skills and that I enjoy interacting with different people. I enjoy challenges and problem-solving situations which is vital within the police force.

6. What are you most looking forward to about the professional placement?  
I am looking forward to the foundation training and also the scenarios as these are more practical, which will make a huge difference from assignments and it'll give me a chance to put what I have learnt into practice.

7. What are you least looking forward to about the professional placement?

8. Do you think your chosen profession is collaborative or competitive? What makes you think so?

I think it is a mixture of both...

- Collaborative: Teamwork plays an important role in the police as ~~we~~ we will have to work effectively with colleagues and other organisations.

- Competitive: Personally I would like to progress through the police force, preferably working with the dog squad, so it is competitive in the fact I'll need to

9. To what extent do you think you can be 'trained' for your chosen profession? <sup>prove myself against others.</sup>

Training does provide a foundation for learning, however I believe it initially comes down to someone's personal attributes and how these relate to the police.

I am looking for volunteers to meet me on an individual basis to talk about their ongoing professional development. We will meet for up to an hour at some point before, during and after your first placement. I hope that this will provide a useful opportunity for you to reflect on your progress and how you are feeling equipped for your chosen profession.

The key purpose of the research is to consider the experience of trainees on selected public sector professional training courses. I am interested in how you as a trainee feel equipped to overcome any challenges that you may face and how your sense of professional identity develops over the theory and practice based elements of the training course.

If you would like to volunteer to find out more information about meeting to discuss your professional development, please complete the section below:

Name

Please complete your preferred mode of contact – email or phone:

## Appendix D: Confirmation of ethics approval

**Ms Hazel Croft**  
Faculty of Children & Learning  
Dean of Faculty: Professor Richard Andrews

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**Ms Helen Glasspoole**



19 March 2012

Dear Ms Glasspoole

### **Ethics approval**

**Project title: The impact of professional training on new trainees' sense of self**

I am pleased to formally confirm that ethics approval has been granted by the Institute of Education for the above doctoral research project. This approval is effective from 20 February 2012.

I wish you every success with this project.

Yours sincerely

+++++

Hazel Croft  
Research Student Administrator  
On behalf of the Faculty of Children & Learning Research Ethics Committee

cc: Dr Tamara Bibby  
IOE Research Ethics office

## Appendix E: Example Transcript

### Transcript from Interview 2: Martha – student nurse

All transcripts are available on request.

1 **Nurse Interview 2: Martha**

2 HG: I can't remember when it was, actually, when we last met.

3 Nurse 2: It doesn't seem too long ago, but it was just before I was going into placement.

4 HG: Yes. I think it was literally the week before. So, how has it been going?

5 Nurse 2: Very well thank you, I'm pleased to say. We have had about two shifts a week  
6 since we last spoke and very long hours, but they seem to really fly by because you are  
7 pretty busy all day. All of the staff have been lovely on the wards and very welcoming to  
8 me. I've been surprised at how much they will let us do really. At first, I thought we would  
9 just be following our mentor around, but they are just happy to let you go and see the  
10 patients on your own, and there are certain things that you can do on your own as well,  
11 like a set of observations – blood pressure, temperature, and that kind of thing. Then, if  
12 there was anything that you don't understand, you just barrage your mentor with  
13 questions. They are all happy to answer them. So, yes, it has been going very well.  
14 Three shifts left before Christmas.

15 HG: Did you think that you would be doing these things, but supervised rather than on  
16 your own?

17 Nurse 2: Yes. It's because, pretty much on my first shift, she was letting me do them,  
18 which I was quite surprised at, and then ... what else did she let me do? ... things like  
19 taking the patient down to theatre. You go with them into the anaesthetic room, and that's  
20 quite interesting really. You watch them being put to sleep, and it's amazing how quickly  
21 that they get off to sleep. Things like the pre-op check list, we are allowed to do. Going  
22 through that with them, and I think, technically, we are allowed to take them on our own,  
23 but I haven't done that yet. You can take ... do you know the cannulas' that we have, yes,  
24 we are allowed to take those out. Going around doing all those is quite fun.

25 HG: Did you feel sort of prepared to do all those things that you were asked to do?

26 Nurse 2: Well, when I was first asked if I wanted to take the cannula out, I hadn't ... I have  
27 had it done to me before ... but I've never seen anyone ... I didn't see any of the nurses do  
28 it, but she was with me and she talked me through exactly what to do. Basically, it's just  
29 taking off a plaster and then just pulling each one straight out. It's easy really, but it's just  
30 the thought of being able to do it being actually quite scary. Once you've done one, then  
31 it's fine then. It's quite simple. And then, the more advanced things, you just ask if you  
32 can watch and they are all happy to have you in the room at the time. Especially at the  
33 xxxxxxxxxxxx because it is very specialised. You get to see quite a lot of rare things.

34 HG: Which ward are you on?

35 Nurse 2: The adolescent ward called (2.48).

36 HG: So, is it as you thought it would be in terms of an adolescent ward, whatever you  
37 think of with that label?

38 Nurse 2: I didn't really know what to expect because a friend had been saying that they  
39 are just going to be a load of moody teenagers, but it's really not like that. It's the smallest  
40 ward in the hospital. There is twelve beds and they are meant to be aged between 12 and  
41 16, but because it just depends on where the free beds are in the hospital, as to who can  
42 come on, you can get 9, 10 and year olds as well, and some that are older than 16 I  
43 should think. You get some that are planned admissions. For example, those with cystic  
44 fibrosis coming for planned physio or you get teenagers which have just had a normal  
45 accident that stay in for the night. You get some that have very rare conditions that even  
46 the Ward Sister hasn't heard of before. They are quite cool to see.

47 HG: So it's medicine and surgery?

48 Nurse 2: Yes. There is a whole range that come on to it, which is good for me as a first  
49 year student to be able to experience quite a range of things, whereas some of my friends  
50 that I've heard talking ... like, there is a couple on the oncology ward that say that that is  
51 very specialised and that they have learnt a lot about cancer but not much about anything  
52 else. I get to do quite a whole range.

53 HG: That's good. Has there been anything that you have ... obviously skills, it just sounds  
54 as though you have to practice to get more confident or fluent with them ... has there been  
55 anything that you found quite difficult to handle? Maybe personally rather than not  
56 knowing what to do?

57 Nurse 2: I suppose, at first, it's basically just knowing what you are allowed to do as a first  
58 year student, and not wanting to over-step the mark really. We've got a list of  
59 competencies that we have to get through before Christmas. Things like behaving in a  
60 professional manner and ... oh, I don't know ... things that you can help out with, like  
61 answering the phone, and so, they do give us guidelines as to what we can do on the ward  
62 which is useful in knowing your boundaries. The things I've found hard ... I suppose that  
63 when you're on the ward, you're with one mentor that you get to know quite well, but then  
64 all the other staff are changing every shift, and so ... and then you've got doctors coming  
65 in and out from tonnes of different departments, and it's very busy in the day with people  
66 coming and going, then I suppose it's really hard to not feel that you are getting in the way.  
67 You're wanting to learn, but then you don't want to be asking too many questions of your  
68 mentor because she still has her work to do. It's finding a line between learning but using  
69 your initiative as well which is a bit challenging, and still is, I guess, but you get to know the  
70 staff quite well.

71 HG: How do you handle that? The balance between under and over-stepping ...?

72 Nurse 2: It's hard really. I suppose, for me, if I don't feel comfortable doing anything, I will  
73 just tell them. I would say that I would just rather watch someone do it first and then I'm  
74 very willing to have a go, but the other problem that I have is, because I have had some  
75 experience of working with children with complex needs, that I feel like I know more than  
76 they think I do, because I've not come straight from school, I'm more confident, I suppose,  
77 in being able to do things from the off. Whereas ... I suppose they have to make sure  
78 everyone's coming from the same page, aren't they, but all the basic skills first.

79 HG: So, there are potentially areas that you have already got competence in, that perhaps  
80 have not yet been recognised?

81 Nurse 2: Yes, I suppose so. A lot of it comes from already having this biology degree, so  
82 that when they are explaining maybe a condition that someone has, I feel that they are  
83 explaining it to me in very basic terms whereas ... I suppose it's because I haven't really  
84 told them that I have done a lot of science before that I don't suppose they recognise that I  
85 want to know a bit more about it. But, that's my own fault for not telling them, I suppose.

86 HG: Do you think it would change things if you did tell them?

87 Nurse 2: Yes, maybe. I suppose I should do. Maybe on the next shift I might do.

88 HG: Yes, slip it in.

89 Nurse 2: Yes. I haven't really thought about that until now when we've just talked about it.

90 HG: What about when you put the uniform on? Because I think you were just saying that  
91 you had got the uniform or you were just getting the uniform when I last spoke to you?

92 Nurse 2: Was I excited?

93 HG: Yes (laughs).  
94 Nurse 2: Still exciting every time I put it on.  
95 HG: Is it?  
96 Nurse 2: Yes, and when I first got my swipe card as well, so that you could get anywhere  
97 in the hospital with that. It was good. A bit of pressure though - not losing it. And I got a  
98 fob watch as well - that made me feel like a proper nurse. It's very useful.  
99 HG: I bet it is actually because I suppose you can't wear any jewellery or watches can  
100 you.  
101 Nurse 2: No, nothing below the elbow they say.  
102 HG: So why do you think it's exciting?  
103 Nurse 2: Because I've had it in my head that I wanted to do nursing for so long now, that  
104 when I finally got into the uniform, with a fob watch which is the mark of a nurse isn't it, that  
105 I was feeling that I was doing what I wanted to do, and it has really felt like that. It has  
106 been better than I hoped it would be, and I'm just really pleased that I have got there in the  
107 end.  
108 HG: What about how you think other people see you? You were saying that you know  
109 that it is a student uniform, or that it means you are unqualified, but maybe other people on  
110 the ward wouldn't?  
111 Nurse 2: Yes. It is bright turquoise, so people who have been in the hospital will see  
112 bright turquoise and know it's a student. With the adolescents, those that are coming in  
113 and out of hospital, they are just so used to the system that the parents are very happy for  
114 students to do things with their child. It's those that have never been in hospital before  
115 that are maybe a bit more wary, but in those situations, I think they are just happy to have  
116 someone who can spend a bit more time with them to talk to them because the nurses  
117 have about four patients each and are quite time consuming really, so they don't really get  
118 the chance to sit down and talk to parents. I quite like it when I'm able to do that,  
119 especially with those that need a bit more reassurance.  
120 HG: So, it's almost as if they are more wary than they are expecting too much from you?  
121 Nurse 2: Yes. I think that ... like the first time that I did the blood pressure on someone, I  
122 got the cuff the wrong way around and they just laughed it off when I said 'sorry, this is my  
123 first day', and they really didn't mind. They thought it was funny.  
124 HG: That's good. So, it sounds as though it's quite a supportive environment for you to be  
125 training in?  
126 Nurse 2: Yes, definitely.  
127 HG: How does that feel? It's obviously not something; though I know you've done skills  
128 things here; but you're learning in quite a public way aren't you?  
129 Nurse 2: Yes, it is. Because the parents are there 24-7 pretty much; as there is no visiting  
130 set times within a children's hospital; they are always there, when you do anything with the  
131 child, they are going to be watching you with beady eyes. But, as a first year, you don't  
132 really do anything that's going to or could possibly cause any harm whatsoever. It's just  
133 blood pressures and temperatures, and things, and so they are quite happy for you to do  
134 that and to learn. Usually, they are quite interested in where I'm training, what we do at  
135 Brookes and different placements. They are usually quite happy to talk and learn more  
136 about it.  
137 HG: That's good. Do you feel like a nurse?

138 Nurse 2: Yes, I do. I think it's the buzz of the ward. When you're there on a day shift, you  
139 can answer the phone and even sometimes answer the questions that they are asking of  
140 you. The doctors start to get to recognise your face. If my mentor is busy then they might  
141 ask me about how a patient is doing. It really does make you feel as though you are part  
142 of the whole hospital atmosphere.

143 HG: What do you think about the buzz? Is that quite a personal thing, the buzz?

144 Nurse 2: I suppose it's how I describe it, but I've heard friends say it as well because  
145 we've been comparing night shifts to day shifts, and we much prefer day shifts because of  
146 that 'buzz'. There is so much more going on. It's not like Casualty or anything, but it is  
147 doctors in and out, and nurses trying to get paperwork done and see the patients, and  
148 parents coming and asking very strange questions. You get the porters bringing back  
149 patients from theatre. It's just how I imagined it to be.

150 HG: So what do you think you enjoy about that environment?

151 Nurse 2: The fact that I'm part of it, I think. Being able to do what I want to do. I used to  
152 volunteer in a children's hospital before, and you didn't really get that because you knew  
153 that you weren't really allowed to do anything. You were just there. You could sit with the  
154 patients and talk to them, which I really liked doing, but you didn't see how the whole  
155 system worked. You really do quickly pick up how everything fits together. Just looking  
156 through a patient's big folder of notes, you can look back at correspondence from GPs  
157 from when they were first born and follow it through to why they are in hospital this time.  
158 It's like a story and it's good reading it through to see how it all fits. You get professionals  
159 from all over. You get Social Workers ringing, you get Health Visitors asking about  
160 patients, that you can answer the things to do ... It's good. It's just like one huge health  
161 care team. Sometimes it falls apart, but most of the time it works.

162 HG: Do you think you've changed your perception of the role of a nurse since you have  
163 been working on this placement?

164 Nurse 2: I'm trying to think what it used to be like. It's hard isn't it?

165 HG: Yes, it's hard once you're in it.

166 Nurse 2: I'm trying to think. I suppose, not from just being on placement, we've just done  
167 an essay for one of the modules about person-centred care, and it's all about how nursing  
168 used to be very task orientated where one nurse would go around and do all the blood  
169 pressures and another nurse would go around and change all the dressings. Whereas  
170 now, you focus on one patient and you see them as a person, and you have to think about  
171 the whole person rather than their acute medical need, and that's very apparent in when  
172 I've been on placement now. It really shows that the readings I was doing for the essay  
173 and how it does work in practice for nurses. I suppose it's because they do bring in so  
174 many different professionals and get Social Workers on to the ward, and dieticians and  
175 everyone really, that they are not just focussed on acute treatment. I suppose that's  
176 changed since I've come to university. Realising how much that is part of nursing.

177 HG: What do you think about that sort of change, that sort of shift to a more person-  
178 centred approach?

179 Nurse 2: I think it's brilliant. Really I do. There are also different models like the family-  
180 centred framework which is more for children. So they are saying that it's not just the  
181 patient that you should be caring for, but their family as well, because the parents are seen  
182 as constants in that child's life, and so the way that you can support them will also affect  
183 the well-being of the child. The nurses I've seen on the ward do make sure that the

184 parents are alright and check up on them as well saying 'have you managed to eat' or 'are  
185 you sleeping ok' making sure they are alright and comforting if they are a bit concerned.  
186 So, I've seen how important that can be as well in helping the child.  
187 HG: It sounds as though you can get quite close to a family or certainly quite close if you  
188 were caring for one of these young people that's either on the ward for a long time or they  
189 keep coming back. Is that ... ?  
190 Nurse 2: Yes. It's hard at the moment because with we've only got two shifts a week to  
191 observe, usually at the end of the week, that the patients change. Most of them have  
192 changed by the time you go to your next shift. There are a couple who are in for the  
193 longer term that you get to know better, and there is one in particular that I was with for a  
194 few shifts and then it was strange when I came back and she had been discharged. I  
195 hadn't been on the ward when she hadn't been there, and she was a lovely girl really. She  
196 had cerebral palsy and was quite dependent on the nurses. She needed everything doing  
197 for her but she was just so lovely. I just got on really well with her. I'm aware ... I used to  
198 get quite close to people, and then was quite affected when, for any reason, I couldn't see  
199 them any more, and so, I do know how important it is to be able to take a step back and  
200 remember that you're not allowed to let yourself get too close.  
201 HG: Do you have training to help you deal with that side of things as well as the skills?  
202 Nurse 2: Not specifically that, no. We have training for things like self-reflection to be able  
203 to think back to a shift and reflect on what you did right or wrong to be able to help yourself  
204 next time, but not specifically about getting too close to patients. It's all about  
205 confidentiality and all that side of it.  
206 HG: It's almost about protecting the patients rather than really about protecting you.  
207 Nurse 2: Yes. We do have a huge support network if you need anything, but no, they  
208 haven't really mentioned not to let yourself ... which is very possible in a children's hospital  
209 to let that happen. Some of the nurses, you can tell, have got close to some patients who  
210 have been coming in regularly. Recently, one of them died and some of them went to the  
211 funeral. I think they were aware that it's their job to care for them and you couldn't not  
212 have got too close to this patient. Some of them that come in a lot don't have a great life  
213 span anyway, and so, I think that's always at the back of your mind that it might happen.  
214 HG: Yes ... and I suppose that might come out further along in your training?  
215 Nurse 2: Yes. Maybe.  
216 HG: You still have quite a lot of ... is it three years?  
217 Nurse 2: Yes. Don't remind me.  
218 HG: I know. It's interesting that you refer to the readings that you've been doing for the  
219 recent essay. Do you find it's quite easy to link the more theory campus based part of the  
220 course with the placement?  
221 Nurse 2: Yes. I do. Definitely. Yes. The essay I did was on type 1 diabetes and that's  
222 one of the most common things that we see on the adolescent ward, especially those that  
223 have just recently been diagnosed because they are not very good at managing it yet.  
224 When the teenagers start to rebel against things, for various reasons - being at school and  
225 not wanting to be seen as different, do they, so it can be an attention thing for some to  
226 stop taking insulin injections and they end up in hospital. So, I could really see how the  
227 work I had done for the essay ... it was really good to see the patients' thing coming in and  
228 being exactly what the literature was saying about it.  
229 HG: That's good.

230 Nurse 2: Yes.

231 HG: Now that you've been on placement for a little bit, do you think that anybody can be a  
232 nurse?

233 Nurse 2: No.

234 HG: Ok.

235 Nurse 2: No. There is a girl in my year that I over-heard talking a few days ago to  
236 someone else saying how she and this other girl had just been hiding out in the laundry  
237 cupboard for a bit to waste time and that she's really not getting that much from her  
238 placement because she's not putting herself forward and she's just seeing it as twelve and  
239 a half long hours that she has to be there where she's not been paid rather than seeing it  
240 as something that ... she wants to be there, she wants to be learning, she wants to be ... I  
241 don't know. It just didn't seem right what she was saying. The rest of the year though, it  
242 sounds as though they are getting into it and comparing what you've been doing, and so, I  
243 think, first of all, you have to know why you want to do nursing and have had some  
244 experience in it so that you know what you are letting yourself in for.

245 HG: I imagine that would seem quite important?

246 Nurse 2: Yes. I really admire those that come straight from school and are able to throw  
247 themselves into it. I'm not sure that I could have done that. I've had various different  
248 voluntary places where I've built up to deciding 'yes, I can do this'. It's a long term job. I  
249 think you have to be able to use a lot of your own intuition ... is that the word ...

250 HG: Initiative?

251 Nurse 2: Yes, that's it. Your initiative for a lot of it because your mentor can't be following  
252 you all day checking up on you and making sure you're doing the right thing, and  
253 sometimes, you're caught off guard. A patient needs something straight away and you  
254 have to just do it for them without running after your mentor all the time. You just have to  
255 want to care for people. You have to be compassionate towards the parents as well and  
256 see what they are going through to be able to help.

257 HG: I imagine, you sort of mentioned intuition being in there as well, I imagine that that  
258 plays quite a part in it when you perhaps don't know the right answer. There is, I don't  
259 know, where gut feeling would be factored in with the stuff you know, the skills that you  
260 can do, but I imagine that maybe as time goes on that your gut feeling about things plays a  
261 part in your judgment?

262 Nurse 2: Yes. You see that with the nurses that are there. Sometimes they might not  
263 agree with a prescription that a doctor has written up or a care plan that they have come  
264 up with. They will challenge the doctors and say 'I'm not sure this is quite right', and most  
265 of the time, the doctors agree with them and say 'oh yes, you're right'. It does show that  
266 the nurses are thinking about the patients and not just going by what the doctor says, and  
267 using their own initiative.

268 HG: Have you been surprised with anything that you have seen? Either good or bad?

269 Nurse 2: I'm amazed by what some doctors can do really.

270 HG: Ok. In terms of the authority that they've got or ...?

271 Nurse 2: No. By the medical skills that they've got.

272 HG: What ... by the lack of or not?

273 Nurse 2: No. No. It's good. Some of the very rare conditions that some of the children  
274 that have made it to adolescent years really and are still going strong. I'm really  
275 impressed by that.

276 HG: And how have you been thinking ... I know you were thinking about medicine at one  
277 point, as you were saying last time, and is that or have you completely moved on from  
278 that?  
279 Nurse 2: Yes. I'm pleased to say.  
280 HG: That's good.  
281 Nurse 2: Yes. I'm no longer having a major dilemma as to what to do. I have found it.  
282 HG: Brilliant. Do you think you have changed at all after your placements?  
283 Nurse 2: I don't know. You have stumped me with that question. Have I changed? I  
284 don't think I have that much. I think I'm just developing skills really, and no, I don't think  
285 I've changed.  
286 HG: Great.  
287 Nurse 2: I'm not sure about that. Wait and see.  
288 HG: Maybe I will ask you about that at the end of the year?  
289 Nurse 2: Yes. I'll think about it.  
290 HG: Is there anything else that you would like to say that we haven't covered or anything  
291 else that you've been thinking about whilst on placement?  
292 Nurse 2: There's nothing that's springing to mind. We're out in the community after  
293 Christmas. That will be a completely different placement out with a Health Visitor. It will  
294 be a bit of a slower pace, I think, but I will be in contact with babies instead of just  
295 adolescents.  
296 HG: So you are on a course training from babies to adolescents? Is that your span?  
297 Nurse 2: Yes and in lots of different fields as well. Next year, we will have a mental health  
298 placement. We might go to Helen House, the hospice, and what else do we do? We  
299 could put in a preference in our third year to go into the high dependency unit or neo-natal  
300 care. You do get the whole range of things.  
301 HG: You mention that the shifts are quite long, especially the night shifts, if they are a  
302 slower pace ...?  
303 Nurse 2: You do get a sleep break though, hopefully, if it's not too busy, for two hours.  
304 Fast asleep.  
305 HG: That's quite strange.  
306 Nurse 2: Yes, it was. I was in the treatment room with the rails on so that I didn't fall off.  
307 HG: So literally, you just grab any space ...?  
308 Nurse 2: Yes. Anywhere.  
309 HG: That's quite good but then you could be called in the middle of your sleep to attend to  
310 someone.  
311 Nurse 2: Yes. I was actually. My mentor had been ... Since I had had my sleep break,  
312 everything just kicked off. My mentor hadn't had a rest, so they woke me up so that I  
313 could take over for a bit whilst she got her break.  
314 HG: I imagine that's quite ... Not many people sort of see their colleagues asleep. I  
315 imagine it brings a sort of different team dynamic, somehow.  
316 Nurse 2: Yes. It's very strange. I mean, I've only had one night shift, so I don't know how  
317 representative it was. It was a very different atmosphere on the ward. It's so quiet and  
318 most of your patients are asleep, and those that aren't, are probably quite unwell, so a lot  
319 of your focus is on a couple of patients. There is no doctor in and out unless they are  
320 needed for an emergency or something. You are just left to talk with your colleagues  
321 really and we read some magazines.

322 HG: And do your essay?  
323 Nurse 2: Yes. Not at that time. I was just like this trying to stay awake.  
324 HG: So is that the biggest challenge would you say with shifts and staying awake at night  
325 or were there any other challenges?  
326 Nurse 2: The day shifts are fine. I just have an early night. It's hard to get up in the  
327 morning but when you are actually there, twelve and a half hours goes very quickly. It's  
328 good on this ward because we all try and sit down with our breaks and lunch together. So,  
329 yes, I don't find that a problem. The problem is when you go back home and you think  
330 you're tired but your head is still spinning around with what's happened during the day,  
331 and you find it quite hard to get to sleep because it's all going around and around in your  
332 head. So, you do find yourself a bit tired and drained the next day, but that's just an  
333 excuse to have a lazy day.  
334 HG: Have you got some sort of strategies for dealing with all of that stuff that is going on  
335 in your head?  
336 Nurse 2: I tend to watch something that doesn't require thinking. Music helps. I've got a  
337 guitar, so I like to play that, and just talking to classmates about other stuff. I'm quite glad  
338 that I don't live with nurses because you can just forget about it for a bit. But even ... read  
339 or something before you go to bed just to unwind down a bit, but as soon as I turn my light  
340 off, it all comes back again. You just have to try to think of something else.  
341 HG: Do you have a sort of de-brief at the end of shifts?  
342 Nurse 2: I did start ... do you mean ...  
343 HG: At the hospital.  
344 Nurse 2: We have a hand-over last thing. So, we hand-over to the night staff specifically  
345 about each patient and what the plan is for them, and then we just sort of go. I did start  
346 keeping a reflective diary, like they recommended at the university, and it did help a bit to  
347 come home to write that and then think 'that's just done now' and I can just concentrate on  
348 what I am doing tomorrow. I haven't done that for the past couple, but I suppose the  
349 novelty wore off a bit, but I might start it again.  
350 HG: Do you think that replay ... was it replaying things to see how you would do them  
351 differently or do you think they were concerns?  
352 Nurse 2: At first, it was just a tonne of exclamation marks about how excited I was about  
353 everything. I suppose if I did write it now, it would be things on how I could improve or  
354 things that I did well maybe.  
355 HG: It wasn't sort of concerns about patients?  
356 Nurse 2: No, not so much. It was more what I did that day and what I enjoyed about the  
357 day.  
358 HG: Just the 'buzz' coming back?  
359 Nurse 2: Yes, trying to get it out. The problem is when you are not allowed to tell people  
360 very much about it because of confidentiality, so you are there bursting with everything  
361 that you have done that day, like anyone would be from any day, and you can't ... it's more  
362 challenging to try and talk about it because you're always wary about what you are saying  
363 because you can't names which it's quite to omit those. But then, you are not really sure  
364 how much you can say about what a patient has got or their treatment or about the staff,  
365 so that you find it's safer not to say anything but it's building up inside you, so it's good to  
366 write it down.

367 HG: I bet in a couple of years' [time](#), looking back, you may be quite surprised at what you  
368 have written.  
369 Nurse 2: Yes. I think it might be fun to read back. It's like those childhood diaries that you  
370 read back.  
371 HG: It sounds as though, already, that you have done so much in just those placements  
372 and have moved on in so many ways, so I imagine that looking back at different  
373 placements would be quite interesting.  
374 Nurse 2: Yes.  
375 HG: Great. Excellent. Thank you very much.