

encouraging the teacher-agent: resisting the neo-liberal culture in initial teacher education

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abstract

Influenced by Sachs' (2001) 'activist identity' I propose that pre-service teacher education or initial teacher education (ITE), as I will refer to it, could, and indeed should, encourage a new form of teacher: the 'teacher-agent.' This teacher-agent would be aware of the pressures and dictates of the neo-liberal educational culture and its ensuing performative discourse, and choose to resist it, in favour of a more holistic view of education. This view of education encourages inclusive, creative and democratic forms of education concerned with encouraging a social conscience in children and young people, as well as seeing education as concerned with the whole child. These more holistic approaches to education could include pedagogical approaches such as Philosophy for Children (P4C), Rights Respecting Education and Slow Pedagogy, which can not only provide a more balanced understanding and deeper experience of education for both teachers and pupils, but can also help teachers to resist the debilitating impact of the neo-liberal performative discourse, potentially also thus impacting on their wellbeing and ability to retain their integrity as professionals. This may also have the potential to halt the rapid exodus of new teachers from the profession. It is my contention, that engaging with pedagogies such as P4C in this new iteration of ITE could help not only to encourage the Student Teacher-Agent, but also, as a consequence, develop the Citizen-Agent in the children they are teaching. In this paper I consider four key areas where I propose P4C could play a role in this alternative model of Initial Teacher Education: democracy in action, the teacher as Teacher-Facilitator, a space for co-construction of knowledge, and encouraging Social Justice.

key words: performativity; teacher identity; Philosophy for Children; student teachers; initial teacher education.

estimulando o professor-agente: resistindo à cultura neoliberal na educação inicial de professores

resumo

Influenciado pelo conceito de 'identidade ativista' (Sachs, 2001), proponho que a educação de formação de professores ou educação inicial de professores, como vou me referir a ela, possa – e na verdade deva – encorajar um novo tipo de professor: o 'professor-agente'. Este professor-agente estaria atento às pressões e ditames da cultura educacional neoliberal e seu consequente discurso performativo, e escolheria resistir a tais forças, a favor de uma visão mais holística de educação. Esta visão encoraja formas de educação inclusivas, criativas e democráticas, preocupadas em estimular uma consciência social em crianças e jovens, além de se preocupar com a criança como um todo. Essas abordagens educacionais mais holísticas podem incluir metodologias como a Filosofia para Crianças (P4C), Educação em Respeito aos Direitos e a Pedagogia Lenta, que podem não somente promover uma compreensão balanceada e uma experiência mais profunda de educação

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para professorxs e alunxs, mas também ajudar xs professorxs a resistir ao impacto debilitante do discurso performativo neoliberal, e potencialmente também, portanto, impactar em seu bem-estar e capacidade de manter sua integridade enquanto profissionais. Isto pode também ter o potencial de refrear o intenso êxodo profissional dos novos professores. Minha afirmação é de que, nos engajando com pedagogias como a P4C nesta nova reformulação da educação inicial de professores, poderíamos lograr não somente o estímulo ao Estudante Professor-Agente, mas também, como consequência, desenvolver o Cidadão-Agente nas crianças às quais eles ensinam. Neste artigo, considero quatro áreas essenciais em que proponho que a P4C pode desempenhar um papel neste modelo alternativo de Educação Inicial de Professores: democracia em ação; o professor como professor-facilitador; um espaço de co-construção do conhecimento; e o estímulo da Justiça Social.

palavras-chave: performatividade; identidade do professor; filosofia para crianças; professores estudantes; educação inicial de professores.

incentivando al maestro-agente: resistiendo la cultura neoliberal en la educación inicial de maestros

resumen

Bajo la influencia de la "identidad activista" de Sachs (2001), propongo que la educación de los maestros previa la servicio o educación inicial de maestros (EIM), como me referiré a ella, podría, y de hecho debería, incentivar un nuevo perfil de maestro: el "maestro-agente". Este maestro-agente estaría conciente de las presiones y dictámenes de la cultura educativa neoliberal y su consiguiente discurso performativo, y elegiría resistirlo, en favor de una visión más holística de la educación. Esta visión de la educación promueve formas inclusivas, creativas y democráticas de educación interesadas en promover una conciencia social en los niños y personas jóvenes, así como también concibe a la educación como preocupada por el niño como un todo. Estos acercamientos más holísticos a la educación pueden incluir abordajes como Filosofía para Niños (FpN), "Rights Respecting Education" y "Slow Pedagogy", las que pueden no sólo proporcionar un entendimiento más equilibrado y una experiencia más profunda de educación tanto para maestros como para estudiantes, sino también ayudar a los maestros a resistir el impacto debilitante del discurso performativo neoliberal, potencialmente también impactando en su bienestar y habilidad para conservar su integridad como profesionales. Ésto también podría tener el potencial de detener el rápido éxodo de la profesión de los nuevos maestros. Mi argumento es que involucrarnos con pedagogías como FpN en esta nueva iteración de la EIM podría ayudar no sólo a alentar al Estudiante Maestro-Agente, sino también, como consecuencia, a desarrollar al Ciudadano-Agente en los niños a quienes están enseñando. En este artículo considero cuatro áreas clave en las que propongo que la FpN podría jugar un rol en este modelo alternativo de Educación Inicial de Maestros: democracia en acción, el maestro como Maestro-Facilitador, un espacio para la co-construcción del conocimiento, y fomento de la Justicia Social.

palabras clave: performatividad; identidad del maestro; filosofía para niños; maestros estudiantes; educación inicial de maestros.

encouraging the teacher-agent: resisting the neo-liberal culture in initial teacher education

introduction

The worldwide move towards education policies focussed on performative goals has had a significant impact, not only on the educational landscape of schools, but also on teachers (Ball, 2003; Clandinin, Downey, & Huber, 2009; Sachs, 2001). Research indicates that teachers are struggling to reconcile the demands that these policies place on them, with potentially diametrically opposed philosophies, values and beliefs about the purpose of education (Clandinin et al., 2009; Sachs, 2001). One possible result of this is suggested by poor retention rates of teachers (Ball, 2003). Clandinin et al. (2009, p. 142) describe how the 'shifting landscapes' evoked by these tensions impact not only on a teacher's identity but also on the educational contexts of society. Interestingly this performative culture even changes the language of education; when terms such as performance, accountability, outcomes and effectiveness (Kilderry, 2015) replace terms such as child-led, individual, personal and inclusive - education ceases to be about the child, or even learning (Troman, 2008), but about benchmarking against standards, or the production of data.

I have personal experience of the impact of the performative culture. My last school had such a strong performative focus that I was considering leaving the profession. It was at this critical point that I was introduced to Philosophy for Children, and this was, for me, a revelation and resonated with why I had gone into education in the first place. It felt like an antidote to the focus of my school and transformed my practice and my teacher identity.

In this paper I will firstly explore the impact of the neo-liberal agenda on schools and teachers in England, specifically focussing on the concept of performativity. I will then explore the impact that this has on Teacher Identity, with a particular focus on Pre-Service, or Student Teacher Identity.

My interest in this area was a result of conversations with students at the end of their Bachelor of Education (BEd) (Teacher Training) degree. They were

reflecting, somewhat lamentedly, on the disparity they felt between what we were teaching them in the university (regarding creative, holistic approaches to pedagogy and education in general) and the reality that they had faced in their final school placements. One reflection that struck me was; if we encourage our students to embrace more holistic anti-performative approaches to education (for example, encouraging democratic and collaborative practice, embracing the more creative and inclusive aspects of education and learning, such as Philosophy for Children) could we be argued to be setting them up to an identity crisis? It seemed to me that ITE programmes must *explicitly* teach them how to navigate and survive the 'shifting landscapes' (Clandinin et al., 2009, p. 142).

Finally, I will briefly explore alternative proposals/an imagined alternative for ITE. This, I suggest, could help new teachers to develop an identity that allows for integrity and values and encourages a philosophy of education that embraces creativity, democracy, rights, slow pedagogy and wellbeing of teachers and pupils, which could potentially help them to resist the performative discourse that is prevalent in England currently.

performativity

Performativity is by no means new. The 1976 James Callaghan speech at Ruskin College in Oxford, inspired a new debate around education, bringing 'an era of accountability and a restructuring of the governance of education' (Ranson, 2003, p459). The so called 'Ruskin Speech' called for an end to the autonomous professional education community, in lieu of a publicly accountable public service (Ranson, 2003). The public trust for professionals was replaced by a mood of distrust, preferring instead to hold professionals to account to ensure compliance of practice (Lloyd & Davis, 2018; Ranson, 2003).

Ranson (2003, p. 462) proposes that a practice of neo-liberal accountability has grown gradually 'over time, extending and intensifying into a coherent regime of regulation,' culminating most recently, in a normalisation of performativity expectations (Kilderry, 2015). Public accountability, meant that 'the public (as consumer) was empowered at the expense of the (professional) provider' (Ranson, 2003, p. 465). In practice, in schools, this meant parents could be provided with

information to judge and theoretically select schools of their choice, with the belief that competition would improve standards as well as ensure teacher accountability (Connell, 2013; Jeffrey, 2002; Wilkins, Busher, Kakos, Mohamed, & Smith, 2012). Consequently school leadership became inextricably connected with inspection, with school's finances and reputations dependent on successful gradings and rankings, resulting in a culture of 'coercive compliance' (Wilkins, 2011, p. 392).

With a focus on accountability there comes a culture that looks to maximise outputs and minimise inputs, meaning that rather than assessing the quality of education, the focus is on evaluating how efficient it is (Holloway & Brass, 2018; Ranson, 2003); in effect, aligning public sector organisations with the values, methods and approaches of that of the private sector (Ball, 2003). Correspondingly, there developed a focus on teachers' performativity. In the 1990s the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted), a non-ministerial department of the UK government reporting to Parliament, was introduced. Ofsted is responsible for inspecting a range of educational institutions, including state schools and some independent schools. This introduction meant there were national benchmarks and criteria to assess both teachers and schools - viewed by many as a 'deliberate assault on professional autonomy' (Wilkins et al., 2012, p. 67). Any decision of the Ofsted inspector is largely indisputable. This presents an issue about who determines what is valued, and by whom? Additionally, it raises the question of who is qualified to judge? Is it Ofsted inspectors, or local education authority (LEA)² inspectors, school leaders or the government? Turner-Bisset (2007, p. 194) argues that whilst formerly LA inspections were done in a supportive spirit of partnership and professional dialogue; Ofsted inspections take a different approach and are 'done *to* a school rather than *with them*' (emphasis added).

These arguments around accountability and worth, reflect an on-going debate about the measures being used to hold schools to account, with a particular concern that this can undermine teacher autonomy, professionalism and

² Local education authorities (LEA) are the local councils in England and Wales that are responsible for education within their jurisdiction.

responsiveness (Keddie, 2017). The highly public exaltation or shaming of a school based on measurable targets (Keddie, 2017; Wilkins, 2011), results in a reductionist agenda, where a school's worth is solely evaluated on their success in achieving favourable inspection awards, and the requisite data levels in national tests (Jeffrey, 2002).

impact on schools

An impact of this reductionist agenda of the performativity culture is the insistence on teaching being something that is 'legible, calculable, measurable, evaluate-able, and comparable', leading to a school environment where teachers feel compelled to measure themselves against their colleagues; where 'collegiality is replaced with competition, and autonomy is replaced with bounded (and calculable) expectations' (Holloway & Brass, 2018, p. 363). The focus or product of schools is argued to move away from the 'internal goods of excellence' – such as values, virtues and integrity, towards 'the extrinsic goods of effectiveness' (for example, wealth, status and power)' (Ranson, 2003, p. 460). This creates a tension that can be felt in the school environment, where there can be a permanent sense of worry, or even an 'ontological insecurity' (Keddie, 2017, p. 1250), with teachers constantly doubting their practice: 'obsessed by what we have become by measurability, we have lost sight of what we know about pedagogy' (Berry, 2016, p. 72); as whole school communities and practices become translated to a set of quantitative data (Ball, 2003). Any inspiration, opportunities or spontaneity are excluded.

The particular concern here, is the refusal by Ofsted to acknowledge any of the wider social and environmental influences that can impact on the school environment, and the children's learning and progress (Keddie, 2017). The pressure felt by schools to meet these target-orientated measures, can lead to a manipulation of performance (Ranson, 2003; Troman, 2008), an 'intentional 'gaming' of teacher, school and system performance targets' (Hardy & Lewis, 2017, p. 673). There is the potential that the focus can be on producing data that appears to maximise learning (Hardy & Lewis, 2017; Troman, 2008), rather than on

any educational benefit of the data. Furthermore, considerable time is needed to produce this “success-story” data, time that is taken away from teaching, planning and marking (Hardy & Lewis, 2017).

Similarly, there is a danger that the preoccupation with data and targets can lead to a reductionist curriculum, where teachers focus disproportionately on subjects that are data accountable (Adams, Monahan, & Wills, 2015; Connell, 2013; Hardy & Lewis, 2017). In Keddie’s (2017, p. 1251) research headteachers stated; ‘if it’s not measured, it’s not important’. This ethos is worldwide, where ‘teaching to the test can become the main objective (Adams et al., 2015, p. 200; Connell, 2013; Turner-Bisset, 2007). In England this has specifically impacted negatively on certain subjects, such as the humanities and arts.

It should be noted however, that there continues to be a resistance to this agenda, with some schools actively seeking an alternative way to educate our young people; reporting a renewed interest in creativity (Berry, 2016; Turner-Bisset, 2007). This resonates with the pre-performativity culture, where education and educational learning theory was influenced by the humanist discourse, centred on holism, individuals and relationships (Jeffrey, 2002). Fundamental to the humanist approach was a mutual interdependency, where both the teacher and the child could influence the focus of the curriculum. This is in stark contrast to the performative discourse, where children can become dependent on the teachers to “deliver” the necessary knowledge to enable them to “perform” as expected (Hardy & Lewis, 2017; Jeffrey, 2002).

impact on teachers

Significantly, performativity is argued to produce new types of teachers; the ‘marketized teacher, managed teacher and performative teacher’ (Holloway & Brass, 2018, p. 362), impacting not only the behaviour of the teachers, but also on the teacher themselves (Ball, 2003; Ball & Olmedo, 2013; Ranson, 2003). In parallel with the realigning of the school’s values and ethics towards a more corporate culture, teachers’ values are ‘being challenged, compromised, or displaced by escalating regimes of managerialism, markets, and performativity’ (Holloway & Brass, 2018, p. 363). The performativity regime demands that teachers behave in a

particular way, in response to specified targets, inspections and reviews, and resistance to these expectations is portrayed by the government as 'irresponsible' (Ball & Olmedo, 2013, p. 88). Indeed, the performative rationale is presented as 'the new common sense, as something logical and desirable' (Ball & Olmedo, 2013, p. 89). Ball (2003, p. 215) argues that this can necessitate an 'existence of calculation' and a side-lining of teachers' values and beliefs. He suggests, that whilst some teachers might rise to this challenge, seizing opportunities for the 'outstanding' label, promotion and advancement, for others 'it portends inner conflicts, inauthenticity and resistance' (Ball, 2003, p. 215). Thus performativity can be seen to be exerting both external and internal pressure (Ranson, 2003) – externally in terms of control, inspections, measures and accountability, and internally in terms of changing identities, objectives and philosophies regarding the purpose of education. Accountability measures and target-led cultures, can result in self-focussed teachers, primarily concerned with meeting/exceeding targets, and where 'commitment and service' are devalued in favour of productivity (Ball, 2003, p. 217). Ball (2003, p. 221) calls this 'values schizophrenia', where teachers choose to, or feel compelled to, sacrifice their professional judgement and integrity for external performative validation. The impact of this can be a sense of inauthenticity for teachers, where practice is no longer based on theory, beliefs or even experience, rather on the dictate of what "works" (Ball, 2003; Ball & Olmedo, 2013).

This inauthenticity can have a significant impact on a teacher's self-esteem, sense of worth and wellbeing, when productivity becomes the main measure of success and validation (Ball, 2003; Ball & Olmedo, 2013; Hardy & Lewis, 2017), and can develop a progressive cynicism in teachers as a result of feeling they are no longer trusted as professionals; rather teaching 'primarily for accountability purposes' (Kilderry, 2015, p. 634).

It would be false to claim that there was no support for educational accountability; the performativity discourse can appear attractive, as it lauds excellence and achievements, with government rhetoric persistently claiming that it is raising standards (DfE, 2014; 2016; 2017; 2018; Jeffrey, 2002). Some teachers

reported that focussing on data helps them to critically reflect on their own practice, seeing data 'as being able to positively influence the effects of teaching on student learning ... rather than merely being an end in itself' (Hardy & Lewis, 2017, p. 677). Equally, Moore and Clarke (2016) found that many teachers reported no significant difference between their preferred practice and that dictated by current policy directives. However, critics claim that this culture has led to a 'risk-averse, target-chasing ethos' (Wilkins, 2011, p. 391).

Additionally, a significant number of teachers reported worrying tensions, often around more philosophical aspects, such as the purpose of education and pedagogical approaches (Moore & Clarke, 2016). Upon closer inspection, it can be seen that performativity is at the expense of many of the more holistic, creative or inclusive aspects of education. For many teachers, a driver of their identity, and perhaps a reason they entered the profession, concerns values and beliefs, that are deeply personal and central to who they are as a human (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002; Korthagen, 2004; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). If these more holistic drivers are no longer valued, or are even in opposition with current policy (Moore & Clarke, 2016), this can result in an uninspired and disenfranchised workforce.

Indeed, one challenge levied against performative cultures is the propensity to limit teacher autonomy and agency due to their instrumental nature (Wilkins et al., 2012), causing teachers to question the value of, and lose motivation for, teaching (Lloyd & Davis, 2018; Ranson, 2003). Jeffrey's (2002) research reported teachers describing how teaching had become less exciting, both for them and for the children, in addition they felt that relationships had suffered, becoming less personal and more target-focussed. They reported that this created a tension between the desired environment of, particularly primary, classrooms, where intimacy and relationships are key, and the performativity discourse, which encourages more formalised relations between children and staff, meaning that 'children's and teachers' unique dispositions and humanity became less relevant' (Jeffrey, 2002, p. 534).

Moore and Clarke (2016) propose that teachers currently fall into three groups: firstly, those who are broadly supportive of the current policy; secondly,

those who markedly reject key aspects and seek out opportunities where they can practise alternative pedagogies, and finally teachers who, although resistant to the policy, remain within the system in order to try to alleviate the negative impact on children. Moore and Clarke (2016) term the latter 'reluctant compliance' and suggest that this is where significant tensions arise, when teachers become responsible for supporting and implementing policies which they are ideologically opposed to, but feel compelled to administer, arguably then supporting the very performative culture that they disdain. Holloway and Brass (2018) and Kilderry (2015) reported teachers describing psychological costs of this compliance, attributing feelings of shame, cynicism and loss of integrity.

However Wilkins et al. (2012, p. 68) challenge the suggestion that most teachers fall into the first or third category illustrated by Moore and Clarke (2016); proposing that the majority of teachers are not passive, but will actively 'mediate, interpret, resist and subvert policy imperatives, bringing their own values to bear on the implementation of performative objectives', thus retaining their personal agency. However, they add that this necessitates resilience to hold on to their values and motivation.

I would like to stand with Berry (2016) and Lloyd and Davis (2018) in hoping that teachers will continue to resist the reductionist accountability culture's attempts to dictate practice, continuing to move towards an educational discourse that forefronts children's real learning needs, and in doing so 'resist systemic impulses to make them producers of *human capital* and claim their role as transformative institutions of *human possibility*' (McGregor, 2009, p. 345).

A conceptualisation of teachers who reject current policy, that resonates with my positionality, is the activist-identity as proposed by Sachs (2001). She posits that this emancipatory approach flourishes in democratic schools, where genuine open debate, collegiality, critical reflection and concern, sits alongside concern for dignity and rights for all. Although these schools still operate under the same policy dictates as other schools, they interpret and implement the policy in their own way. In such schools, where teachers have confidence in their identity and role, there is a 'sense of agency, of empowerment to move ideas forward, to

reach goals or even to transform the context' (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009, p. 183). Sachs (2001) celebrates the fact that many schools encourage their teachers to act autonomously, however cautions that this should not be taken for granted, particularly when governments often do not encourage outspoken, autonomous teachers.

counter narrative on performativity

There are of course contrasting views on the subject of the performativity discourse. Keddie (2017) cautions an idealising of former educational discourses, warning that there is no guarantee that the removal of performative constraints would result in the ideal progressive culture. Literature demonstrates a mixed economy of practice in schools today, both in terms of policy implementation as well as in terms of their culture of beliefs/values. Whilst many schools/teachers are bowing to, or even complicit in, the prevalent accountability culture (Keddie, 2017), equally there are schools and teachers who are not only resistant to this, but are actively countering it (Adams et al., 2015), both in their classrooms as well as in their 'souls' (Ball & Olmedo, 2013, p. 90).

Research was carried out by Keddie (2017) with head teachers from LEA schools and a large academy chain³. This research demonstrated a stark contrast in how the current neo-liberal performative discourse was viewed by the Head Teachers of these two distinct or, some might argue, opposed types of school systems. Whilst the LEA heads felt that the test-orientated culture and performative demands of Ofsted undermined trust in their professionalism and capacities, the academy Head Teachers embraced it, aligning it with their desire for excellence and success. The LEA Head Teachers went as far as to designate this approach as 'perverse or anti-educational', whilst the academy heads felt it 'elevated the status of their professionalism' (Keddie, 2017, p. 1254).

Equally, Holloway and Brass's (2018) research found that after ten years of increased accountability, testing, reductive policies and undermining of teacher autonomy and professionalism, many teachers were indicating that this

³ Academy schools are state-funded schools in England which are directly funded by the Department for Education and independent of local authority control.

performativity discourse was now becoming their 'onto-epistemic framework' (Holloway & Brass, 2018, p. 378), arguably because this approach to education is now becoming the norm. Whilst the teachers in the first round of interviews, ten years earlier, had raged against this regime, the second group were now indicating that for them performance indicators equated with good teaching; data helped them to understand their own value and rank; comparison and competition motivated them, and inspections improved teaching. Holloway and Brass (2018) posited that this onto-epistemological shift demonstrated that for some teachers 'objectification, quantification, and measurement are no longer treated as antithetical to teacher professionalism, but as precisely what teachers need to know and monitor themselves, improve themselves, and fashion themselves as professionals' (p. 380).

A generational response to performativity is a recurring concept. Older, more experienced teachers are seen as more likely to resist this culture, objecting to the restrictions on their autonomy, the perceived disinterest in true learning and ensuing tension with their values (Keddie, 2017; Kilderry, 2015; Troman, 2008). In contrast, younger, less experienced teachers appeared to be more compliant, or accepting of the performative discourse, potentially due to the fact that they themselves have been educated in an increasingly performative culture (Keddie, 2017; Kilderry, 2015; Troman, 2008; Wilkins, 2011). It could be argued that this seeming compliance might be due to lack of confidence and experience, with new teachers happy to follow the perceived wisdom as they are learning the craft of teaching; perhaps as they develop in confidence and experience, they might feel the confidence to challenge the status quo and potentially pursue other, more holistic approaches to education.

Wilkins et al. (2012) propose that a key theoretical concept is at play with new teachers, namely that of liminality, as teachers adjust from the Initial Teacher Education (ITE) culture, to that of their new professional context. They argue that successful or less successful negotiations of these potentially contested spaces might directly impact on new teachers constructing either 'a teacher identity at odds with their personal and professional values, or a more 'authentic' identity

that counters performative discourses' (Wilkins et al., 2012, p. 65). It is interesting that Wilkins et al. (2012) denoted the latter 'authentic', as in reality, for these younger teachers, their authentic teacher identity might co-exist happily with performativity.

Research shows that Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes have traditionally focussed more on knowledge, skills and competencies, than on areas such as identity formation (Furlong, 2013; Pillen, den Brok, & Beijaard, 2013a). However, if developing teacher identity is important, then it stands to reason that ITE providers might need to re-evaluate the importance placed on this on their programmes and ensure that time and space is given to develop these areas with students (Anspal, Eisenschmidt, & Löfström, 2012; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Kagan, 1992).

Research has demonstrated that some teachers are able to resist the performative demands, successfully navigating the neo-liberal policy measures (Jeffrey, 2002; Jeffrey & Troman, 2011; Kilderry, 2015; Wilkins, 2011). Coping strategies devised by teachers facing these demands, might include distancing themselves from accountability measures, restructuring their identities, or even constructing multiple versions of themselves (Jeffrey, 2002; Jeffrey & Troman, 2011; Kilderry, 2015; Wilkins, 2011). Wilkins (2011, p. 649) terms this the 'post-performative' teacher and claims this generation of teachers are 'neither compliant nor resistant' to performativity but manage to balance accountability with autonomy. This links with Lloyd and Davis' (2018) research, which argues for a 'a pragmatic model of professional learning that allows teachers to balance public accountability with professional autonomy' (pp. 92-93). In the research carried out by Moore, Edwards, Halpin, and George (2002), most of the teachers interviewed tended to be walking a middle line, neither comprehensively supporting or rejecting the current discourses, rather attempting to negotiate or modify their practice to bring it towards current policy, in a 'spirit of compromise' (p. 552).

teacher identity

Over the last two decades, the concept of professional teacher identity has become an increasingly common area of debate and research, both nationally and

internationally (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Clandinin et al., 2009; Pillen et al., 2013a; Sachs, 2001); not only focussing on defining or conceptualising this identity, but also on exploring how it is developed or shaped (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Pillen et al., 2013a). This focus has become particularly pertinent as those involved in education explore the impact that shifting educational policies have on both the educational landscape, as well as specifically on the teachers and pupils involved (Clandinin et al., 2009). These ever-shifting policies mean that attempting to achieve a shared understanding of what is meant by teachers' professional identity is challenging; potentially each party involved, from government officials, unions, head-teachers, parents to the teachers themselves, might define it differently (Sachs, 2001). In addition, this concept of identity will be continually redefined and renegotiated with every new policy or initiative that appears.

One factor that seems to be unanimous in literature, is an agreement of the difficulty of defining identity, due to its multi-faceted nature (Flores & Day, 2006; Korthagen, 2004; Pillen, den Brok, & Beijaard, 2013b). Taken at its most basic level, professional identity encompasses skills or characteristics that are attributed to a particular group, often by external parties or equally by the members themselves (Sachs, 2001). Teacher identity is central to the teaching profession; it not only informs and guides teachers on how they want to 'be' as teachers, but influences their behaviour, their standing and their philosophy on education (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Significantly, this is not something that can be taught, or even copied, but develops in tandem with experiences, meaning-making and understanding of both who they are as a person and what they bring to the role of teacher (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Equally it is not a discrete or uniform entity, rather idiosyncratic and deeply personal.

There can be seen to be two distinct aspects of teacher identity; with the teacher's personal knowledge, beliefs and values endeavouring to mesh with the expectations, demands and standards of both schools and educational policies (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Pillen et al., 2013a). Attempting to reconcile these two complementary, or arguably competing, foci, can cause conflict for teachers;

Korthagen (2004) cautions that inconsistencies between teachers' personal and professional identities can cause significant stress for the individual.

What is evident when reading about teacher identity, is that this must be seen as a plural concept, or an umbrella term, which attempts to unite the multiplicity of identities that make up the average teacher. In the simplest terms, a primary teacher will have a general primary teacher identity, which potentially is then separated further into year group identity, subject leader identity or maybe a leadership identity (Sachs, 2001). Gee (2000, pp. 99-101) develops this idea, suggesting that there is a 'core identity', but that this takes a different form or shape across different contexts; from 'nature-identity', which refers to how one is defined by one's natural or biological state, 'institution-identity', which refers to recognition by authority or the position we hold in society, 'discourse-identity', which comes from engagement in professional discourse, such as mentoring, and/or collegiate collaboration, and finally 'affinity-identity', which has to do with relating to groups with shared experiences or objectives.

For many teachers, a driver of their identity, and perhaps a reason they entered the profession, is bound up with values and beliefs, that are deeply personal and central to who they are as a human. Korthagen (2004, p. 85) refers to this as the 'level of mission' and suggests that it can be a significant element in their professional development. These values or ideals are often referred to as positive traits or character strengths in positive psychology, and are suggested to have a great influence not only on a person's wellbeing, but also on their ability to mediate between their own self, experiences and external pressures (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002; Korthagen, 2004; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Central to identity development for teachers then, is not only a perceptive understanding of themselves, but also that of their relationship with others, or the social element; for a teacher's identity 'is shaped and reshaped in interaction with others in a professional context' (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009, p. 178).

student teacher identity

When considering teacher identity, there are some specific concerns pertinent to student teachers. It is widely understood that the process of becoming

effective practitioners is complex and lengthy, in particular the impact of potentially conflicting messages, practices and values that the new teacher will encounter (Flores & Day, 2006). This can often result in challenges, at a time when the teacher is also attempting to navigate the day to day pressures of the job; 'for some, feelings of isolation, mismatch between idealistic expectations and classroom reality and lack of support and guidance have been identified as key features which characterize their lives' (Flores & Day, 2006, p. 219).

What is certain, is that in these challenging early days, the student teacher must also consider the development of their own teacher identity, ideally supported by their training mentors and colleagues. Research shows, that whilst other initial challenges, e.g. behaviour management or planning, are relatively straightforward to resolve - often through time/experience - tensions around their professional identities are more complex, as they often deal with deeply held values, convictions and feelings, and the attempt to reconcile their personal and professional selves, 'adapting personal understandings and ideals to institutional demands' (Anspal et al., 2012; Pillen et al., 2013a; 2013b, p. 86). This ongoing attempt at reconciliation informs and develops their emerging teacher identity (Pillen et al., 2013b).

performativity and teacher identity

It stands to reason, that the performative agenda will have an impact on how teachers construct and reconstruct their professional identity/identities (Sachs, 2001). Wilkins et al. (2012, p. 68) warns that a consequence of performativity is to 'homogenise the discourse of professionalism', marginalising the full range of social influences (gender, culture, religion etc) that might have an impact on identity. In addition, the dismissal of the emotional or caring aspects of teaching by performativity narratives means that this too can be marginalised in the developing teacher identity (Wilkins et al., 2012); if something is not valued or measurable, then there is no incentive to invest in this area. Wilkins (2012, p. 68) proposes that the loss of the 'ethic of care' produces inauthentic relationships.

The culture of performance equally has an impact on teacher identity – both the performance of the teachers themselves in inspections and reviews, but

equally that of their pupils; a teacher who manages to meet all of their prescribed targets for student achievement, will be deemed a success, regardless of their pedagogy, professionalism or relationships with their pupils (Wilkins et al., 2012).

Wilkins' (2011, p. 404) research shows that the 'post-performative' younger generation reported minimal or no conflict between their professional identity and the current discourse. This is in stark contrast with his research with older generation teachers, arguably 'post-Ruskin,' for whom the current discourse is seen as a 'conflict model' with their identity. Indeed, in an interesting dichotomy, younger teachers often went as far as to welcome the accountability regime, whilst still feeling they kept their autonomy. Wilkins (2011) suggests an illuminating metaphor to explain this; that one interpretation of this 'could be that they are 'in denial'; prisoners of a Foucauldian panopticon unaware of their invisible gaoler' (p. 404). Whatever the reality is, these younger teachers certainly articulated a different sense of professionalism than that of older teachers; a more accepting response to the performativity discourse (Troman, 2008; Wilkins, 2011).

One dispiriting consequence reported with some teachers who fall under the 'conflict model', is of a growing survival mentality, with teachers becoming 'less obviously ideological or political in the construction of their profession' as they internalise 'discourses of compromise' (Moore et al., 2002, pp. 551-552; Troman, 2008).

alternative model of initial teacher education

Influenced by Sachs' (2001) 'activist identity' I propose that initial teacher education could, and indeed should, encourage a new form of teacher, the 'teacher-agent.' This teacher-agent would, I suggest, be aware of, and determined to resist, the pressures and dictates of the neo-liberal educational culture and its ensuing performative discourse, in favour of a more holistic view of education. Namely, one that encourages inclusive, creative and democratic forms of education concerned with encouraging a social conscience in children and young people, as well as seeing education as concerned with the developing the whole child, that is, the affective dimensions as well as the cognitive dimensions. These more holistic approaches to education could, I suggest, include pedagogical

approaches such as P4C, Rights' Respecting Education and Slow Pedagogy (Love, 2018b).

the potential impact of philosophy for children in ite

It is my contention, that engaging with pedagogies such as P4C in this new iteration of ITE could help not only to encourage the Student Teacher-Agent, but also, as a consequence, develop the Citizen-Agent in the children they are teaching. In this paper I consider four key areas where I propose P4C could play a role in this alternative model of Initial Teacher Education; Democracy in action, the teacher as Teacher-Facilitator, a space for co-construction of knowledge, and encouraging Social Justice.

democracy in action

P4C is commonly viewed as an example of democracy in action (Anderson, 2016; Burgh & Yorshansky, 2011; Kizel, 2016; Lipman, 2003), or even as an approach that can help to achieve particular political and social outcomes (Burgh & Yorshansky, 2011; Kizel, 2016; 2017). Underpinning this view is a vision of education as enabling and empowering children to conduct their lives in a thoughtful manner (Burgh & Yorshansky, 2011). Burgh and Yorshansky (2011:437) add a note of caution, claiming that democracy must be situated on two defining characteristics; 'citizen control over public decision-making, and equality between citizens in the exercising of making decisions.' These two principles are however held to be fundamental in P4C (Haynes, 2008; Sharp, 1987). Ann Sharp believed that even with the youngest children, the CoE has a political dimension;

In a real sense, it is a commitment to freedom, open debate, pluralism, self-government and democracy ... It is only to the extent that individuals have had the experience of dialoguing with others as equals, participating in shared, public inquiry that they will be able to eventually take an active role in the shaping of a democratic society (Sharp, 1993:343 cited in Burgh & Yorshansky, 2011:443).

Haynes (2008:48) states that democracy as seen in the CoE is a 'means to manage transitions of power, including the leaking of power from adults to children.' Indeed, one distinguishing feature of the CoE as a pedagogical

approach, is the change in power dynamics in the classroom; the power shifts away from the traditional teacher dynamic, to an empowering of the children/students (Haynes, 2014; Haynes & Murriss, 2011; Pardales & Girod, 2006). As a consequence, this can lead to learning environments that celebrate pupil-voice and democratic practices, are meaningful and engaging for those involved and where pupil-talk rather than teacher-talk predominates (Burgh & Yorshansky, 2011; Kizel, 2016; Lipman, 2003; Pardales & Girod, 2006). As Kizel (2016:499) states, the CoE offers a 'physical and metaphorical space in which to listen, speak, or remain silent, thereby enabling children to experience what happens when they make choices and decisions, however difficult or complex.' This I argue, has the potential to not only empower children in the classroom, but can be liberating for student teachers who often feel a pressure to control the dialogue, or fill the silence.

Burgh and Yorshansky (2011) however, question the assumption that the CoE is always a democratic practice. They are particularly concerned with the realities of the distribution of power amongst the members of the CoE, specifically the presuppositions around 'openness to inquiry and readiness to reason, and mutual respect of students and teachers towards one another' (Burgh & Yorshansky, 2011:436). They caution that these conditions require a shared commitment to such ideals and the ability of the members to enable power-sharing effectively. This ceding of power is not without challenge; Haynes and Murriss (2011) share how teachers can be nervous at the uncertainty of the CoE, with little or no control over the direction of the dialogue or even choice of the question to be explored, and sometimes demonstrate a lack of confidence or trust in the CoE members. This is particularly relevant with new or student teachers who are starting to establish themselves as teachers.

the teacher-facilitator

One significant element of P4C, is the concept of the teacher-facilitator (Anderson, 2016; Haynes, 2008; Kennedy, 2004). This transition to facilitator, with its corresponding move from transmission model to dialogical model can be

challenging for both the student teacher, as well as for the established teacher (Haynes & Murriss, 2011; Kennedy, 2004; 2010). The teacher in the CoE does not fit into the traditional roles associated with teaching, that is knowledge-deliverer, authoritarian or disciplinarian; instead the community is seen as 'autopoietic, that is, as a dynamic, self-organizing system' (Kennedy, 2004:753). Therefore, the teacher-facilitator models and scaffolds particular skills and attributes of the CoE, encouraging the group towards a point where the teacher is less active in the community, almost just another member of the group (Haynes, 2008; Haynes & Murriss, 2011; Kennedy, 2004). Kennedy (2010:152) conceptualises this dual role of the teacher-facilitator as acting as 'synaptic bridge for the continual redistribution and reconstruction of knowledge' amongst the community members. This, he clarifies, is achieved by the facilitator actively restating, summarising, clarifying and drawing out implications and/or consequences of the contributions of the group.

co-construction of knowledge in the classroom

One of the powerful characteristics of the CoE is the space it affords children and young people to negotiate, construct and co-construct their world views, often influenced by hearing other points of view in the community (Kizel, 2016; Sharp, 1987). In what is often perceived to be a safe space, enquirers feel enabled to try out new ideas, experiment with different perspectives, and, as their critical thinking skills develop, recognise that their initial thoughts might not in fact be the most reasonable, which can be enlightening for the community (Kizel, 2016; Sharp, 1987). Sharp (1987:40) remarks; 'when this happens, [...] our entire paradigm of knowledge is changed, and we begin to see things in a totally different way.' This is a mark of a successful or practised CoE:

The very fact that human beings have changed their world views presupposes a community of inquiry – a community of persons-in-relation, speakers and hearers who communicate with each other impartially and consistently, a community of persons willing to reconstruct what they hear from one another and submit their views to the self-correcting process of further inquiry (Sharp, 1987:42).

Burgh and Yorshansky (2011) make the point that a well-functioning CoE, is one where the group have stopped seeing themselves as individuals, but rather allow themselves to transform into an interdependent whole. However, they caution that in order for this to happen, trust and care must be integral to the community – both amongst the children, as well as between the children and teachers.

social justice

An underlying principle of P4C is its coherence with a rights respecting pedagogy, and its potential for engaging with issues around social justice in the community (Kizel, 2016; 2017; Lipman, Sharp, & Oscanyan, 2010; UNICEF, 2012). Kizel (2016) proposes that the CoE engages in a critical examination of society and seeks to change it. In essence, he suggests, Lipman's central idea was that the community could impact on two circles of influence; 'the present time, in the shape of the philosophical community of inquiry that allows activist skills to be honed, and a social space that extends into the future as a forum for applying principles and bettering society' (Kizel, 2016:497). Kizel (2016:500) proposes that these ideas are centred around 'two temporal poles - the philosophical community of inquiry as a model of socio-pedagogic activism in the present and as a model for social activism in the future.' He expounds that Lipman's thinking was built on the belief that the CoE might enable the community not only to identify societal problems, but also, collaboratively propose solutions; 'Philosophy is thus a motivating force not only for (self) action but also for (social and environmental) activism, helping to transform personal competency into social activism' (Kizel, 2016:502).

Kizel (2016:503) suggests that Lipman saw the philosophical dialogue in a CoE as a 'form of training for action,' where practice in dialogical reasoning, justification and critical thinking, could lead to a paradigm shift in the thinking of the community. Specifically, this links to Lipman's vision for education: namely to improve society, with the CoE providing a possible model of a democratic, pluralistic society (Kizel, 2016). The two particular elements of the CoE that Lipman believed could promote activism, were its democratic nature coupled with

the personal dimension, namely encouraging children to think for themselves (Kizel, 2016). Kizel (2016) suggests that the goal of encouraging activism through the CoE is to enable the participants to find meaning in their lives. Through their philosophical discussion, asking of questions and the expectation of reasonableness and justification of opinions, he claims that the members of the CoE 'gain both a sense of purpose and a sense of direction, the latter representing the ability to identify aims and targets – including those that may later be subject to change' (Kizel, 2016:506). Kizel (2016) posits that the very nature of the CoE, where the participants not only have the space to share their opinions and to be listened to, but also engage in discussion with others around their, potentially conflicting, opinions and reasons, develops in them an openness and flexibility of mind, that he suggests is 'vital for espousing the activism necessary to implement change' (p. 508). It could thus be argued, that the nature of the CoE, which carries an expectation of questioning, challenging and reasonableness, encourages 'a sense of social, political and economic activism in their members' (Kizel, 2016:510), and consequently potentially developing the citizen-agent child, but also as co-members of that community, the teacher-agent.

It is my contention, that engaging in pedagogies such as P4C in ITE, can not only provide a more balanced understanding and deeper experience of education for the student teachers, but might also help them to resist the debilitating impact of the neo-liberal performative discourse, potentially also thus impacting on their wellbeing and ability to retain their integrity as professionals. This may have the potential to also halt the rapid exodus of new teachers from the profession. In the UK, retention of newly qualified teachers is at a critical state. The National Foundation for Educational Research's (NFER) latest figures show that the numbers of working-age teachers leaving the profession has increased by 44%, from 25,000 in 2010-11 to 36,000 in 2016-17 (NFER, 2018). Their research also shows that retention rates of new or early career teachers are also lower now than they were a few years ago. Specifically, they reported that the three-year retention rate dropped from 80% in 2011 to 73% in 2017 and the five-year rate dropped from 73% in 2011 to 67% in 2017 (NFER, 2018).

This alternative view of ITE, is one that resists or even subverts the dominant discourse by openly encouraging and critically examining, with student teachers, possible alternative views of education. This would include explicit and critical engagement with the neo-liberal influences on education and the potential impact on schools, teachers and pupils; mindful of the fact that the current generation of student teachers have themselves experienced their whole education thus far under this performative focus (Keddie, 2017; Kilderry, 2015; Troman, 2008; Wilkins, 2011). Additionally, it would promote deliberate engagement with more creative, holistic areas of the curriculum – such as emotional wellbeing, inclusive education, as well as promoting foundation subjects rather than the prevalent dominant focus on core subjects (maths, English, science).

My proposal is that, by encouraging student teachers to acknowledge the reality of the current educational climate, whilst at the same time encouraging an engagement in this alternative view of education, this might potentially aid retention, and enable teachers to not only survive in the performative culture, but to thrive. This concept, of a new teacher thriving despite the performative culture, is something that I am currently exploring in my doctoral studies, namely the concept of the '*perform-able*' teacher (Love, 2018a).

conclusion

What I found surprising, and dispiriting, when reading about the impact of the neo-liberal performative culture on teachers, is the generational angle (Keddie, 2017; Kilderry, 2015; Troman, 2008). The consideration that younger teachers have less issue with performativity only serves to reinforce for me the vital role that ITE has to play in order to successfully challenge the prevalent discourse and provide genuine opportunities for debate. Although I would not want to dictate how new teachers view the prevalent performative discourse, it is imperative, in my opinion, that they are aware of it, and the potential impact it might have on education. The role that ITE plays, both in resisting performativity, but equally importantly on addressing identity as an ongoing process (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009), has made me reflect on how emphatically we mention this in our

programmes, and determine to ensure we engage with this more explicitly in the future.

The report that some schools are demonstrating a renewed interest in creativity (Turner-Bisset, 2007) has certainly been my experience in ITE; where our students vote in high numbers for options that forefront creative, holistic and inclusive aspects of education. Ultimately, the question that needs to be asked, by teachers, teacher-educators and all who are involved in education, is, does this performativity culture benefit teachers, schools or children? As Wyn, Turnbull, and Grimshaw (2014, p. 3) state; 'Any educational reform, regardless of good faith or noble intent that is not in the best interests of the students [teachers, schools] themselves is a failed reform.'

I am drawn to Sachs's (2001) activist-identity. This emancipatory approach understands that democracy is more than just an 'ideal', but translates into values that are embedded and aims to 'eliminate exploitation, inequality and oppression', centred in social justice and equality principles (Sachs, 2001, p. 157). This approach, which welcomes open debate, collegiate trust, critical reflection and pastoral concern, resonates with my axiology and is an avenue that I am keen to explore further in my thinking on ITE. Sachs (2001, p. 158) warns however, that this identity does not always come naturally to teachers, rather must be constantly 'negotiated, lived and practised'. She encourages perseverance however, proposing that this identity when developed in a community of practice that facilitates the values of 'respect, reciprocity and collaboration' (p. 158), can not only enable genuine debates around policy and practice, but in addition can enable an individual's personal and professional emancipation. Interestingly, Sachs (2001, p. 157) suggests that developing an activist identity necessitates shedding 'the shackles of the past, thereby permitting a transformative attitude towards the future' - personally this is where my thinking differs, I do not think that teachers/students need to shed the shackles of the past, rather shed the shackles of the performative and reductionist "present", in order to return to previous, more holistic approaches and philosophies of education.

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