'There's not much room for anything to go amiss': Narrative and arts-based inquiry in teacher education

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Drawings offer new possibilities to develop understandings about how pre-service teachers experience becoming a teacher. It is in drawings that often "those elusive hard-to-put-into-words" (Weber & Mitchell, 2004) aspects of the self appear to add to the developing story of what it is to become a teacher. Using a triangulated approach to the research process of narrative, drawings and graphing, a Graduate Diploma of Education Primary pre-service teacher from a Western Australian University was asked to envision himself as a teacher, and to draw that vision. This vision tells us much about 'the multiple contexts' in which the teacher self is being formed and how the pre-service teacher envisioned, reflected, related to, and felt about the journey he undertook.

Introduction

Pre-service teachers have spent many years as observers and participants in the teaching learning process and have also been influenced by the representation of teachers in film, television and in newspapers (Stuart, 2006; Trier, 2001; Weber & Mitchell 1995). It is the intention in this paper to extend understandings about how the teacher self is formed by focusing on the multiple contexts which inform the process of becoming a teacher. To do this, drawing has been utilised along with graphing and narrative to offer new possibilities in developing understandings about becoming a teacher.

The term 'becoming' is used because it provides a sense of the contexts within which teacher identity is being formed. Becoming is about "continually shaping and being shaped by the dynamics of social practice, social structure and history" (Britzman, 2003, p. 49). These contexts are competing "chronologies of becoming" (Britzman, 2003, p. 70) and each context whether it is the personal or the professional aspects of life, brings with it differing demands and understandings to negotiate. This negotiation is the 'prickly' aspect of the process of becoming a teacher. What pre-service teachers understand about themselves, their life history and how this informs their dispositions to learn, their views of teachers and teaching and what is happening in their lives as they negotiate the university course, the schools and wider community all contribute to perspectives about the teacher they envision themselves to be (Billet, 2009; Minor, Onwuegbuzie, Witcher & James, 2002).

This study focuses on the experiences of John (pseudonym used), one of four Graduate Diploma of Education Primary pre-service teachers, who took part in a research project about becoming a teacher. John wanted to be a teacher because he felt that it would fit better with his life as the father of twelve-month old twins. He believed that his work in a church organisation where he managed youth camps and missions made him a

suitable candidate for teaching. It was in teaching that he would find parent friendly hours and be able to spend more time with his family. During the early part of the study, John expressed general satisfaction with the process of becoming a teacher and felt that his expectations of teachers and teaching were being replicated. He felt that his previous experiences with difficult adolescents had prepared him for the reality of teaching. To understand whether his understandings of his developing teacher self were matched with his experience, drawings and other arts based methodologies were employed to develop insights into the teacher John was becoming.

Drawing

As an individual interested in art, I was attracted to the work of researchers who used drawing and images to develop understandings about pre-service and in-service teachers. My own work as an educator of young people—where stories, drawings and other arts based methods were used to help individuals express feelings that may otherwise have been hidden—has guided the methodological choice. This methodology given the name of a/r/tography by Sinner, Leggo, Irwin, Gouzouasis, and Grauer (2006) is described as a "commitment to aesthetic and educational practices, inquiry_laden processes, a search for meaning, and interpreting for understanding" (p.1223). In this study, the aesthetic was not a focus although from the story and drawings, a picture of John that might otherwise have remained hidden is revealed. The use of narrative, drawing and graphing is used to search for meaning, to enquire and to find understandings by interpreting the data.

The study is informed by researchers such as Coughlin (2001) who used drawings to depict pre-service teachers' understandings of teachers at work both before and after an initial field experience, and Utley and Showalter (2007) who used drawings to find out how pre-service teachers viewed themselves as either teacher or child centred mathematics teachers. In a study focused on the images early childhood teachers working in childcare centres had of themselves, Black (1999) involved the teachers in a cycle of talking, thinking, drawing, reading and writing to access information about the everyday work of teachers. Further, Weber and Mitchell (1995) used art as a tool to research the experiences of reflecting on, and being a teacher and to explore how the media portrays teachers, while Murphy, Delli and Edwards (2004), compared drawings by pre-service, in-service and 2nd grade students to develop deeper understandings about beliefs about being a 'good' teacher.

Other art based research has engaged the use of film, in which teachers were portrayed, to encourage pre-service teachers to engage in critically reflective practice about themselves as teachers (Trier, 2001); animation and narrative vignettes along with pre-service teacher narratives to help develop understandings about their sense of self and their developing teacher identity (Tettegah, Whang, Taylor, & Cash, 2008); while Stuart (2006) used visual arts-based approaches to the work of addressing the perceptions of pre-service teachers views on HIV AIDS to develop understandings for their work in schools. The use of art-based methodologies within the field of teacher education provides a richness of meaning where " images can convey multiple

meanings that can be used to evoke the complexity of our work and the contradictions that are inherent to it" (Weber & Mitchell, 1995, p.18).

Graphing

The notion of graphing the personal and professional trajectory of the individual over the year of the Graduate Diploma program of study has been developed to add to the data collection process. This was to triangulate the data collection to capture multiple perspectives (Patton, 2002) and to verify if what was told in story, and what was drawn were replicated in the graph, using 'a/r/tography' as the method of data collection.

The personal hand drawn graph extends the idea of the visual representation of the differing contexts within which the individual endeavours to become the teacher he/she envisions. Emerging from the work of Bandura (1995) and Elder (1995) where the notion of (in this case) the developing teacher self is based on the idea of life trajectory where the interplay of changing lives and changing social worlds predicate how the individual's life will unfold. The graph provides a visual representation of John's professional and personal growth. Work, study and family inform and act on the life course of the individual and it is important to understand the past if we are to have any hope of understanding the present (Elder, 1995).

In this study rather than looking across a life span we are looking back over the twelve-month period of the research and it is in the narrative that we find how what has occurred during the life of the individual has acted on or been influential in the idea of becoming a teacher. The narrative with the graph and image of the teacher he wants to become, flesh out the developing teacher and help the researcher to get closer to the real person and his experiences. Consequently the vision of himself as a teacher and the graph of his levels of life satisfaction during the period of the study provide further information about how the individual becomes a teacher, for "we are always in the state of becoming and are shifting our position to deal with the contingencies of the different pulls" (Dunne, Pryor & Yates, 2005, p.168). The vision we have of ourselves at any time is informed by the differing contexts in which we reside at different times in our lives.

Narrative

The narrative as part of a/r/tography, is important in telling the story of this pre-service teacher, as it is chronological, meaningful, social and tells of the series of events that have meaning and that are produced for a particular audience (Elliott, 2005). John's story provides information about him that describes his life as he looks back and as he experiences what is happening now. However, individuals will define themselves according to how they want to be seen by others because "the narratives of lived experience—the story, or what is told—are always selective, partial and in tension" (Britzman, 2003, p. 35). The teller of the life story divulges only what it is that they wish to share with the listener. To make sense of who we are, the narrative is important because it is through the telling of story that our "identity is both interpreted and constructed" (Rodgers & Scott, 2008, p. 737). The relationships we develop in the

contexts in which we live and work and the time we spend in these contexts affect the story being told (Rodgers & Scott, 2008). For John, the telling of his narrative changes during the year of the study as the circumstances of his life change and as the teacher self he is becoming is formed and reformed.

The narratives, drawings and the graph tell much about 'the multiple contexts' in which the pre-teacher self is being formed. This self that is negotiated and dynamic and dependent on context, people, objects, tools (Gee, 1997) and that influences the way John envisioned, reflected, related to, and felt about the journey he undertook. His unique trajectory is informed and constrained by his personal history, dispositions towards learning, and what was happening in his life and they all have an important effect on the teacher he is becoming. In this interpretative study, the data provides rich descriptions of one pre-service teacher experiences.

In working with John during the twelve months of the study, it became apparent that the multiple contexts within which he was becoming a teacher were informing that process. For John, becoming a teacher seemed to be without difficulties as he negotiated the experiences of the past, with what was happening in the university, the school and in his personal life. His stories and his drawings seemed to indicate that he was negotiating the differing contexts with ease. It wasn't until he drew a graph to outline the contexts of the personal and the professional that a different story became apparent. It was here that the vision of himself as the teacher and the multiple contexts in which he was situated began to be seen more clearly. As father, husband, worker, student, and prospective teacher, he began to describe the pressure of the competing demands on him emotionally and physically. It was where those aspects of himself—which may previously have remained hidden—were brought to the forefront through the use of an arts based inquiry. The emotional, the physical and the intellectual are aspects of the self that must be in balance for the pre-service teacher to make sense of who they are becoming (Alsup, 2006). Developing an identity as a teacher, becoming what he thought he should be within the contexts in which he lived and worked, were tensions John was trying to negotiate.

The development of teacher identity has been the focus of a great deal of research which has explored how pre-service teachers become a teacher from a number of perspectives: beliefs (Alsup, 2006; Coughlin, 2001; Minor, Onwuegbuzie, Witcher & James 2002; Murphy, Delli & Edwards, 2004; Scott, 2005), visioning (Britzman, 2003; Fenimore-Smith, 2004; Hammerness, 2003; Lim, Ieridou &Goodwin, 2006; Utley and Showalter, 2007), reflection (Loughran, 2002), narratives, (Beattie, 2000, 2001; Elliot, 2005) personal history (Sleeter, 2008) and social and cultural connections (Hoban, 2004). In a seminal work, Rodgers and Scott (2008) have drawn together much of the extant work and outlined the main findings. Their study concluded that teacher identity is based on contexts, relationships, stories and emotions.

In this current research, I wanted to continue this exploration and to extend the idea that it is the contexts of the pre-service teacher's own experiences that inform the process of becoming a teacher, and that emotion and relationships are part of that context. The stories told about these contexts are only a part of the developing teacher

self, and arts based methods provide an opportunity to move beyond the words and into a deeper understanding of the challenges and tensions faced by pre-service teachers. These studies have indicated that both *drawing* and *narrative* are key art-based methods in developing this understanding.

Inquiry

In a series of three interviews and using 'a/r/tography' as the methodology, John was asked to draw his vision of himself as the teacher, on two occasions as part of these interviews. The first interview was at the beginning of the year before the Teacher Education program of study began, the second, midway through the program after the first school experience, and the last at the end of the academic year. In the first interview, he was asked to draw his vision of himself and again at the final interview. He was also asked to graph his experiences of the year both personally and professionally. This envisioning of himself as the teacher was to allow him to articulate his ideal teacher self and provided valuable information about that vision. Visioning can help the pre-service teacher bring to the surface beliefs held about teachers and teaching and by sharing the vision they can be helped to understand what it is they believe about the profession. For example, in Utley and Showalter's (2007) paper on pre-service teachers' visions of themselves as mathematics teachers, the majority of students still perceived themselves as at the centre of learning despite explicit teaching about student centred classrooms, Reflecting on these visions can help teacher educators assist with the gap that may appear between the hoped for teacher self and the reality of the personal experience (Hammerness, 2003). This gap can be the disconnect between theory and practice, and when pre-service teachers look back to previous experiences they can take up familiar practice from a past context (Fenimore-Smith, 2004). The process of drawing the vision offers ".... a different kind of glimpse into human sense-making than written or spoken texts, because they can express that which is not easily put into words: the ineffable, the elusive, the not-yet-thought-through, the subconscious" (Weber & Mitchell, 1995, p. 34).

Because becoming a teacher is a complex task, the tools needed to track the journey of a pre-service teacher needed to be able to capture that complexity. Therefore, a triangulated approach was used to verify and validate the qualitative analysis (Patton, 2002). The methodological tools of drawing, narrative and graphing enabled a more complex understanding of what is a complex process and to answer the question—How do Graduate Diploma of Education Primary pre-service teachers envision the teacher they are becoming? Drawings and narratives have been used in previous research (Black, 1999; Murphy et al, 2004; Utley & Showalter, 2007), but in this case using narrative, images of the self as a teacher and graphing levels of personal and professional satisfaction are not reflected in the literature.

Telling the story

To tell the story of another is a difficult process. Despite the best efforts of the teller to 'know' the other, the story is always going to be predicated upon the teller's view of the world. In this study, it is my understandings and interpretation of John's process to

become a teacher that is described. In John's own words, we read briefly of his life history, how he came to teaching, what it was like to be the teacher and how he has felt about the year of study. The themes that arise from his narrative are matched with the themes that arise from the drawings and his graph of life satisfaction.

John's drawings were analysed in terms of the 'particulars' or the 'salient features' (Murphy, Delli & Edwards, 2004), that is, what is in each drawing and how this related to John's vision of himself as the teacher. This included, whether artifacts of teaching or classrooms were included (e.g. whiteboards, desks, books, writing equipment), whether children are in the picture, how the teacher was positioned in the class, what the teacher was doing and how these related to John's narrative and graph. An analysis of the two drawings and the graph was also included in order to gain insight as to how John had understood his trajectory throughout the year.

John's story

John's story was told over the year of the Graduate Diploma Program during the three interviews. Each interview focused on particular aspects of becoming a teacher such as his personal history, his experiences of schools and in the final interview a reflection of the year. Two excerpts are presented in detail below, specifically his personal history, and his teaching experiences. In the excerpt below, he recounted his background in some detail, including his decision to become a teacher and the people and events that influenced this decision.

Personal history

I was born in the UK and my family moved to Australia when I was in my teens. I finished high school in Australia and studied computing and mathematics at university. I worked in the mining industry for a couple of years and then made a complete career change and did a Graduate Diploma in Outdoor Pursuits. I work in a Christian oganisation as the Director of Camps and Mission and so I've worked with many kids and teenagers over the last eleven years. But I've kind of reached a point where I can't see any career move from here and I'm ready for something else, so I decided on teaching, mainly because of the experiences I've had working closely with teachers, schools and kids. I know the kind of work teachers do especially outside of the classroom.

When I was ten I had a teacher who really knew me as a person and he came to my house when I was sick to encourage me to join a scout group he was developing. My parents still say he was the best thing that happened to me in my schooling. In high school in England I had two really terrible teachers who were violent toward students and I don't know how they got away with that. I've also seen inspiring teachers through the camps I've organised and all of these have had an influence on the kind of teacher I want to be.

I see myself concerned with, and actively involved in the local community through the kids in the school. I see teaching as being about engaging with the

community and I'd like to see myself being an active participant in the life of that community. The primary thing I want the kids to see is that I value openness and authenticness and I want them to know as much as is appropriate of the whole me, and that my teaching comes from within me and who I am now.

At the time this interview was conducted, John created his first drawing to illustrate his vision of himself as a teacher (Figure 1).
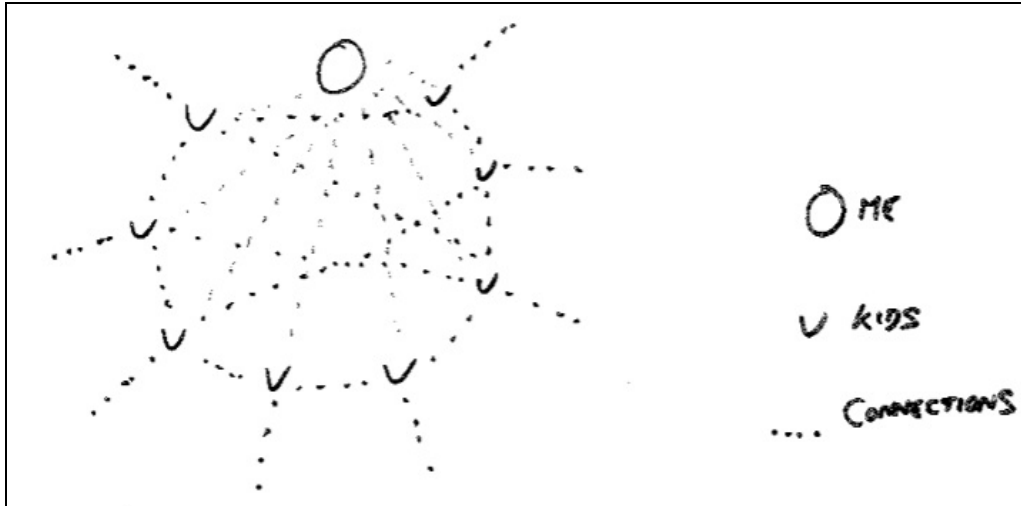

Figure 1: John's vision of himself as the teacher - January.

In the first drawing John has himself as part of a circle with children, although he is represented by the largest figure and is at the top of the drawing. This may represent himself as being in charge, in control of the class, as the most important person. As he explains, "this is about the kids and connections, that is, the connections between me, the kids and then the connections between them and each other and their wider family or community." John was confident in his belief that he understood teaching from his experiences running camps for adolescent students. Although the image indicates no artifacts of teaching and the drawing is non figurative, the intention is clear. He is part of the class and as he says, "I'm trying to work on empowerment of the kids." John's vision of himself as the teacher could be described as 'ideal'. There is no reference to the reality of the daily life of a class despite his previous experiences with children in a camp situation.

Teaching
In this second excerpt of John's story, he discusses the match he felt between his vision of what teaching was and what his experiences indicated to him.

    The school experience was really good, very, very good. It was a year 6/7
    class and I was able to do a lot of teaching because he (the mentor teacher)

trusted me with the kids. I had to really work on the classroom management stuff because I was used to dealing with kids in a camp environment and I needed to be different in the class. Although at the start management was an issue, the kids did settle down with me and I got a bit of respect. I guess I have to get my head around what schools expect in terms of management. I like a bit of noise and activity in the classroom and so I don't equate management with silence and so I guess I had some chance to experiment a bit with, when stuff becomes disruptive versus when there's a certain amount of banter in a useful way. These kids are in a pretty good school and it's not an area with huge amounts of disruption and so I think what I was dealing with was just kids that were trying me out a bit.

Thus far it has confirmed that I'm well suited to teaching and that most of what I would have thought about teaching seems to line up with what my experience has been, I haven't taught in a variety of situations yet or with a variety of kids so I'm quite conscious that my experience is quite narrow. I think I'm a bit of an idealist and I can see that teachers who have been teaching for a while will become more cynical perhaps and I've seen a lot of that. There's a huge variety in the teaching profession.

I'm a little daunted by teaching but still feel motivated and committed towards the pathway (to teaching). There's a lot put onto teachers now, more than ever before to be responsible for learning, to be inclusive, to cope with different levels of kids, to try and manage behaviour using a different set of tools to those that were used 10, 20 year ago, so I think to teach, to be an excellent teacher is very daunting. I'm not doing the course in one year and I'm glad about that decision because I'm not ready to go out and teach.

Nothing I've done in terms of the course or school experience has dissuaded me from teaching and if anything I'm more comfortable with the idea than I was when I started. Because the school experience was really good and the school reacted positively to me and I got some good affirmation from the teachers, supervisor and some parents, I've gone back to the school just to visit and I could really see myself doing this (teaching).

It is a positive thing because having been in the working world for 15 years I've spent several years thinking what's next, realising I've needed a change I was probably going to study towards some other career and deciding that primary teaching was the career. Then putting in the work to earn that qualification and juggling all that with family. It is a positive thing because I have a longer term strategy and I'm now half way through the course and I'm clear about wanting this and there's no sense that I've got myself into something I shouldn't have.

In his second drawing completed at the final interview John has a different perception of himself as the teacher.

The second drawing is more complex, but still indicates a strong belief in connection, although now with the wider school and global community. For John the child (the arrow) would negotiate the class, the school and the community with the teacher acting as a facilitator to empower the child on the outward going journey. The teacher now appears as part of a circle of influence encompassing all. This change from being part of the class to a facilitator indicates a change in his perceptions of himself as the teacher. From being part of the class in January (Figure 1), to November (Figure 2), where he sees himself as surrounding the class, with the sense that he is important in the facilitation of the journey that each child must make. John had concerns about his ability to manage a class of children and came to the conclusion that, "I have to get my head around what schools expect in terms of management." The drawing may well represent his attempts to do just that. John found his school experiences confirmed for him his suitability for teaching and that his vision of himself as the teacher and his experience of being a teacher were closely aligned. However, the Graph of Life Satisfaction also drawn during the final interview indicates that perhaps not everything was as connected as it might have been and that the competing pressures John was feeling were beginning to have an effect on the teacher he was becoming.
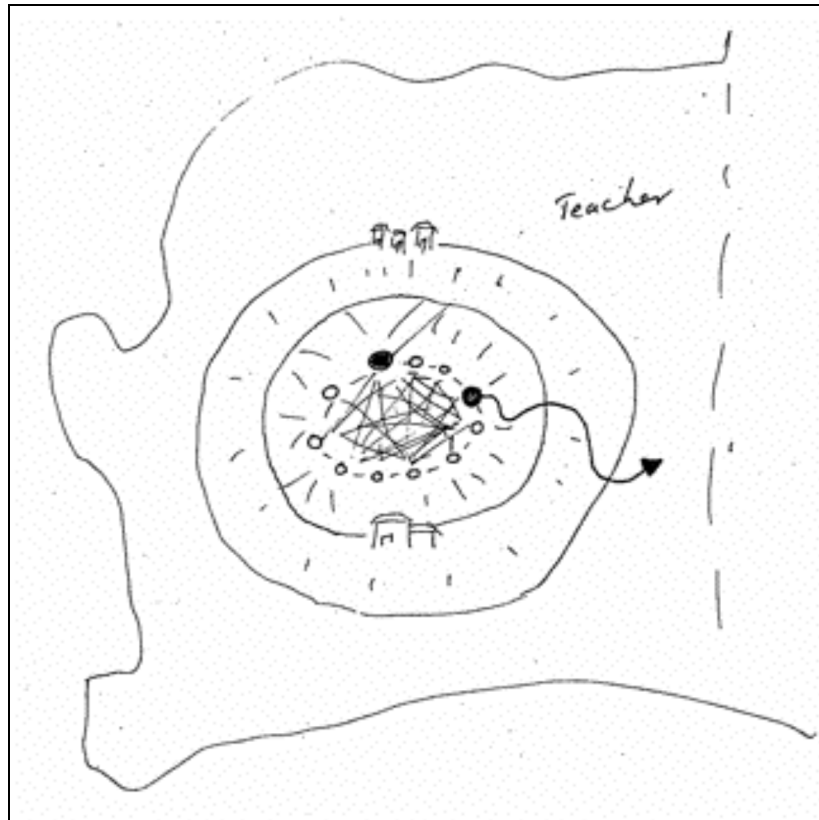
Figure 2: John's vision of himself as the teacher – November

In Figure 3, John has used three lines to tell the story of his year. The university line, the 'me' line which runs closely to the university line, and what he called 'my life satisfaction line' appearing at a lower level than either of the other two indicators. John sees these three contexts clearly and in different places on the graph. There is his developing teacher self, negotiating his university course and then there is what might be called his 'personal self' or the 'self in his home life' and it is here where a slightly different story is told. In his graph we see that there were problems with his job and that subsequently he changed it to improve his family situation. "It was all becoming too much." He then has an improved reported rated of satisfaction until August when his health becomes an issue. For John the family, work and university were becoming difficult to manage and it is in the graph that we see these things being played out. John was a willing participant in the research but did not share any of the issues that were causing difficulty in the interviews in the early part of the year. He appeared confident of his success, as he became the teacher he wanted to be and was affirmed by his school experiences. However in the graph, the personal and what was happening in his life began to interact with his ability to deal with the professional part of his life and this caused him some stress.
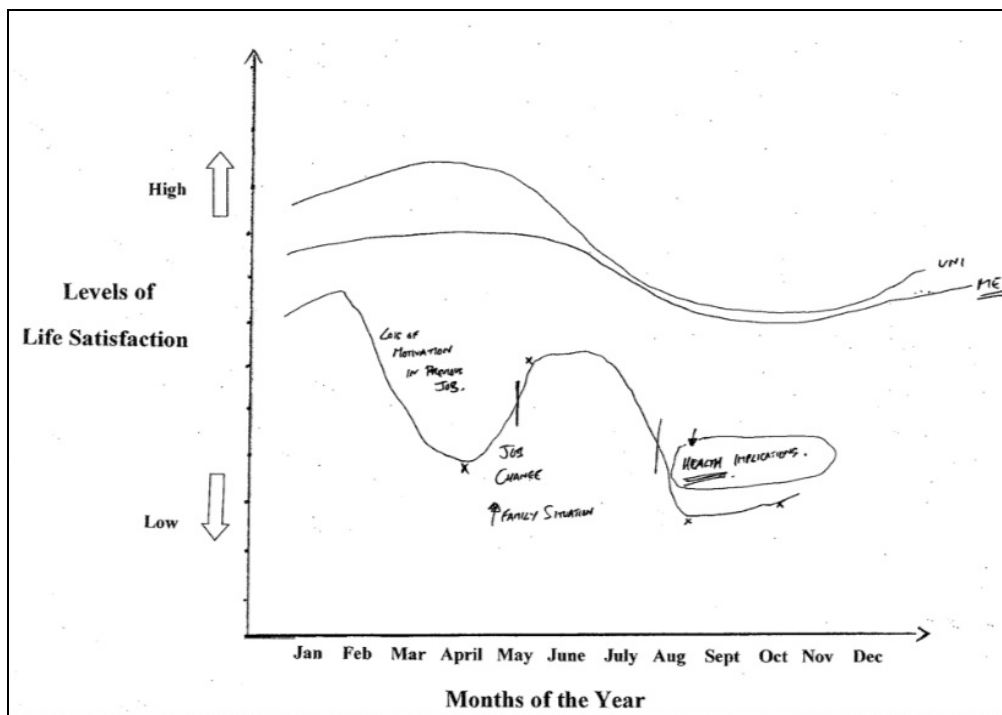

Figure 3: John's graph of life satisfaction – November

As John noted in his final interview,

> I changed jobs so I could work more from home. I had sort of run out of steam
> in the other job and was going down hill but working from home in terms of

family life has been great, although it has brought with it a whole lot of other challenges. I had this virus that has dragged on for months and I have susceptibility towards depression from having had previous episodes and one of the things that bothers me about this virus is that it leaves me a bit susceptible. Depression is one of those things you can slide into gradually and I've had a bit of a history of the treadmill of depression treatments. I guess what sustains me at the moment is that this is a situation I'm willing to sustain for a time and for a purpose.

It is now that there is a possibility of a different interpretation of the November drawing (Figure 2). John having tried to keep each part of his life in separate compartments is now aware that the contexts in which he is becoming a teacher have an affect on that becoming. Being a teacher is about the contexts in which the teaching and learning is enacted and in this later drawing we see that he views the teacher in a much broader sense. The encompassing, facilitating teacher may be his understanding of how context mediates how he is in the world and how this has an impact on his work as the teacher.

Although there is evidence in the education literature that personal history, including experiences of teachers and teaching, inform the individual's disposition to learn (Billett, 2009; Britzman, 2003; Fenimore-Smith, 2004; Hammerness, 2003, Minor, et al., 2002), there is little evidence to indicate how what is happening in the life of the individual interacts with, and informs the process of becoming a teacher. For John, what was happening in his life—his job and his illness—were having an effect on the teacher he was becoming. John was reluctant to talk about these issues but in his graph, these feelings spilled out in a form described by Weber and Mitchell (2004) as 'unbidden'. As John suggests, "There's not much room for anything going amiss whether it's health or a family crisis."

Discussion

What does all this tell us about how this particular pre-service teacher experienced and envisioned himself within the education program? The experience for John seemed to be dependent on how he understood teaching and the work of teachers, his life history in terms of previous experiences of teachers and teaching, and what was happening in his personal life. It seems clear that what pre service teachers bring with them to their teacher education programs in terms of their personal history, dispositions, experiences of schools and teaching, attitudes and vision of what teachers are and do has an effect on the teacher they are becoming and become. (Minor et al, 2002). For John his previous experiences, his vision of himself as the teacher and his attitude toward that becoming and what was happening in his personal life influenced how he experienced the process of becoming a teacher. In fact what was happening in his personal life seems to have had a profound effect. However, it was not mentioned in the interviews and only became clear through an explanation of the graph of life satisfaction. "Much of what we have seen or known, thought or imagined, remembered or repressed, slips unbidden into our drawings, revealing unexplored ambiguities, contradictions and

connections. That which we have forgotten, that which we might censor from our speech and writing, often escapes into our drawings" (Weber & Mitchell, 1995, p. 34).

It was this slippage that provided rich data and enabled a clearer picture of John to emerge. The frustrations, disappointments, concerns, fears and joys that occurred during the twelve months of the research were revealed in greater detail and gave an insight into the struggle that is 'becoming a teacher' for this pre-service teacher. This struggle within the individual, is shaped through social interactions and mediated by life history and the "individual's relationship to the meaning of his/her lived experience" (Britzman, 2003, p. 23).

As a researcher of the lived experience of one Graduate Diploma of Education Primary pre-service teacher, I found that the triangulation of the data collection methods of a/r/tography (narrative, drawing and graphing) enabled a clearer picture of the experience of becoming a teacher, a 'search for meaning' (Sinner, et al., 2006) within the contexts of becoming. What was not stated in the interviews seemed to slip unbidden (Weber & Mitchell, 2004) into the images and graph. How much I was permitted to know and what was censored I do not know, although I was privileged to engage in discussions with John about his experiences and contexts within which he was becoming a teacher. I am also not clear about how much the original vision of himself as the teacher is replicated in the second drawing (Figure 2). Karen Hammerness (2003) suggests that the vision is stable over time, and to some extent that seems to be true. However, when the balance of life is disrupted and one part of that life dominates, it appears that the vision of the individual as the teacher can be disrupted. In the representation of life trajectory it became obvious that what is said in the interview is sometimes censored and only those aspects of John that he wished to expose were presented to the interviewer. John had concerns during the year and it was a combination of the interview and the graph that allowed these concerns to surface. He was reticent in discussing disabling factors in his journey to becoming a teacher until the graph was completed. It was only then that he seemed to be aware that there had been difficulties that impinged on the developing teacher he was becoming. This realisation seemed to catch him by surprise, and it was almost as if by completing the graph he gave himself permission to share with another the difficulties he had faced during the year.

In an investigation of the emotional, the physical and the intellectual aspects in teacher education, Janet Alsup (2006) has suggested that they must be in balance for a pre-service teacher to make sense of who they are becoming. It is my contention that without this balance becoming a teacher is a difficult and perhaps impossible task. John's drawings, graph and abbreviated narrative provide an opportunity to discover what is happening for him and to develop understandings about his life balance. In Alsup's (2006) terms the 'balance' of John's life was disrupted. He is sure he will complete the course but what is happening in his life is informing his decisions about how he will complete the course. The narrative, the drawing and the graph together provide a more fully rounded picture of John's lived experience as he works towards becoming the teacher he envisions himself to be.

Conclusion

The experience of becoming a teacher is about developing a teacher identity that is predicated on previous history, personal interactions, and what is happening in your life. "The influences of the past, present and future [are] caught up in the images developed by the pre service teachers" (Black, 1999, p. 11). Utilising aspects of art/o/graphy as a methodology these influences can be brought to the forefront of teacher education programs because becoming a teacher is a struggle within the multiple contexts of an individual's life. The personal, the physical and the emotional need to be in balance (Alsup, 2006) and this struggle for balance can catch pre-service teachers unaware, for it can appear that becoming a teacher is a seamless process when viewed from outside teacher education programs. Becoming a teacher is not a static process and the becoming does not end at the completion of the teacher education program. As Gee (1997) suggests it is the individual's progress through multiple pathways (contexts) that makes the 'you unique and individual' (p. xv), therefore it is important to assist the pre-service teacher to understand that they bring to the education program existing beliefs and understandings about teachers and teaching. By analysing and reflecting on what they have drawn, written and narrated, and by developing understandings of their past lives and what they are experiencing within the university, in schools and in their personal lives, they can be assisted to find not only the image or vision of themselves as the teacher but the way forward to put that vision into practice; to negotiate the 'prickly aspects' of the process; to know that teacher identity is informed by and informs the multiple contexts in which it develops. Further research on this interaction will enhance the possibilities for teacher education.

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