Drawing identity: Beginning pre-service teachers' professional identities

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Developing a professional teacher identity can be complex as pre-service teachers engage with a process informed by their previous experiences of teachers and teaching, by learning in their pre-service course, by field placements, and by societal expectations. Using drawing as the method for gathering data, pre-service teachers in an Australian university were asked, prior to their first professional experience, to draw themselves as the teacher they hoped to become. Drawings (N=125) were coded according to the presence or absence of teacher, students and artefacts of teaching. Representations indicated that pre-service teachers identified themselves as teachers who would conduct enjoyable learning experiences, have positive relationships with their students and who were confident in themselves as a teacher. There was little evidence of the potential complexities or challenges of teaching, raising a dilemma for teacher educators in how to prepare pre-service teachers for the reality of the workplace while maintaining their positive approach.

Introduction

Becoming a teacher is a more complex process than many pre-service teachers may have initially thought (Beattie, 2000; Britzman, 2003). In his seminal work on the 'becoming teacher', Lortie (1975) described the pre-service teacher as bringing to the business of becoming a teacher a history that informs their beliefs about teaching and the work of teachers. Life history, the personal, and those experiences of schools and teaching that the pre-service teachers bring with them to teacher preparation courses affect the way they manage the 'becoming' process. It has been argued that "clear self-image and ownership of an emerging professional identity" are necessary conditions that help pre-service teachers effectively apply knowledge acquired from teacher education programs into workplace situations in the future (Bennett, 2013, p. 55). Moreover, the examination of pre-service teachers' perceptions of their future selves may reveal doubts and unrealistic expectations, as well as provide a road map for developing the skills or dispositions required to become the teacher they aspire to be (Brand & Dolloff, 2002).

This paper reports a study focusing on beginning pre-service teachers as they imagine, and graphically represent, the teacher they hope to become. It discusses the themes emerging from these drawings as teachers at the very beginning of their career journey imagine the identity they see for themselves. Teacher educators have been challenged "to recreate the space for construction of an individual, meaningful, resilient professional identity underpinned by strong beliefs and values" (Smethem, 2007, p. 478). Understanding early

pre-service teachers' emerging identity may enable teacher educators to prepare pre-service teachers for their teaching career, through facilitating the development of a professional identity as teachers, and eventually the development of effective teachers who thrive in the profession.

Developing a teacher identity

It has been suggested that "teacher identity is not simply who teachers think they are" (Kress, 2011, p. 8) and that "teacher identity is hard to articulate, easily misunderstood and open to interpretation" (Olsen, 2008, p. 4). Nevertheless, understandings of identity from different conceptual frameworks have some common elements: identity is shaped by multiple personal and contextual factors; these factors interact in a reciprocal and dynamic way; and so identity is continually reshaped over the life of an individual. Each of these elements will be briefly discussed.

The first common element in the literature about identity is that definitions of identity need to consider both personal and contextual factors. Gee (2000) illustrated this when stating that identity may be thought of as being seen by the self and others as a particular sort of person in a particular context at a particular time. Avalos and De Los Rios (2013) maintained that motivation and commitment, work demands and satisfaction, self-efficacy, and perception of society's views of teachers are key concepts in how teachers identify themselves as professionals. Individuals' beliefs and experiences as well as their perceptions of what is expected in a particular context are an important aspect of teacher identity, and influence their choice of certain teaching practices (Horn, Nolen, Ward & Campbell, 2008; Katz et al., 2011). Research on the developing identity of pre-service teachers outlines potential tensions between the personal and the professional (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009), especially in light of the many educational changes taking place which "may conflict with what teachers personally desire and experience as good" (Beijaard, Meijr & Verloop, 2004, p. 109).

A second common element in the literature is that personal and contextual factors interact in a reciprocal way to shape identity. McCaslin (2009), for example, proposed a co-regulation model "to capture the dynamics of reciprocal press of personal, cultural, and social sources of influence to understand the emergence of identity" (p. 134). Avalos and De Los Rios (2013) argued that teacher identity may be seen as "a co-construction involving one teacher and other significant agents, or teachers and the broader society to which they belong" (p. 156). Such relationships and reciprocity can vary between individuals and between local and national communities of practice (Czerniawski, 2011).

The third common element in understandings of identity is that personal and contextual factors interact in a dynamic way over an individual's lifetime. For example, it has been argued that the development of professional identity is a dynamic process (Day, Sammons, Stobart, Kington & Gu, 2007; Moore, 2004) and is often negotiated "through a rich and complex set of relations of practice" (Chong & Low, 2009, p. 70). Finding a balance between personal views and experiences and the professional or cultural

expectations of what it means to be a teacher is an important aspect of developing a professional identity as a teacher (Pillen, Beijaard & Brok, 2013). As pre-service teachers navigate between potentially conflicting worlds, tensions can occur and the gap between their expectations and the reality shock they experience when they eventually begin teaching has been described as "shattered dreams" (Friedman, 2004, p. 312).

The work of teachers at all stages is complex, and this complexity can increase as pre-service teachers encounter the content of their courses and begin to experience the work of teachers in their school field placements. A focus on the developing professional identity of pre-service teachers is timely given the issues of retention and resilience in beginning teachers (Beltman, Mansfield & Price, 2011). Developing a strong, coherent teacher identity in beginning teachers is related to teacher retention, teacher resilience and teacher effectiveness, particularly in the early years of the profession (Mansfield, Beltman & Price, 2014). Understanding how pre-service teacher professional identity develops over the duration of a teacher education program will assist teacher educators to better prepare pre-service teachers for the rigours of teaching and may shed light on how to engage in "a productive process of constructing their professional identities" (Izadinia, 2013, p. 695). The next section of the paper provides a brief overview of how teacher identity has been examined, particularly in its early stages during pre-service courses, including studies using drawings as a research method.

Traditional and visual methodological approaches to examining teacher identity development

The exploration of professional identity in pre-service teachers has been mainly qualitative and researchers have used approaches that have the participants' voice at the forefront of the research. These include interviews (Brown & McNamara, 2011; Czerniawski, 2011; Furlong, 2013; Timoštšuk & Ugaste, 2012), questionnaires either on their own or with an interview (Avalos & De Los Rios, 2013; Hong, 2010; Pillen et al., 2013), documents (diaries and journals) (Zembylas, 2005), and focus groups (Avalos & De Los Rios, 2013). These studies rely on pre-service and early career teachers sharing their perceptions or stories, but as suggested by Weber and Mitchell (1996) it is the inner world that can be revealed by using drawing as a method. In the present study, drawing has been adopted as the visual method to capture pre-service teachers' vision of themselves as the teacher. Drawing, a realisation of a/r/tography (Sinner, Leggo, Irwin, Gouzouasis & Grauer, 2006) assists researchers to get to the elusive, hard to put into words aspects of the developing teacher self (Ganesh, 2011; Mitchell, Theron, Stuart, Smith & Campbell, 2011).

There have been some studies that have used drawings to research pre-service teacher identity. Brand and Dolloff (2002) asked music education students in China and North America, to draw their ideal teachers and themselves as teachers. There were some cultural differences with Chinese students, for example, having a more fluid view of the potentially competing identities of musician and of teacher, and North American pre-service teachers representing classrooms as organised and orderly, and ideal teachers with smiles and visible hearts. Drawings of the pre-service teachers' actual selves indicated uncertainties

regarding classroom management, leading the authors to suggest that drawings can be valuable as starting points for reflection and discussion in class.

Dawn Bennett has also examined the potentially conflicting identities of musicians preparing to become teachers (Bennett, 2013; Freer & Bennet, 2012). Using surveys and drawings of music majors in Australia and the US, Freer and Bennett (2012) examined whether subjective (the way they see themselves) and objective (the way others see them) identities were congruent. Participants were asked three times to draw themselves as a musician and to describe this. The drawings occurred in the context of surveys that asked about them as musician, as music teachers and as teachers – what kind of music teacher or musician they hoped as well as feared becoming. Participants were more confident about their longer established musical identities and some feared that their focus on music teaching would detract from their performance skills as musicians.

In a second study Bennett (2013) examined surveys, drawings and journals of a range of pre-service classroom music and music performance teachers over the semester of an education methods unit which included peer teaching activities. Asked to draw a 'teaching situation' rather than themselves as teachers, changes over the semester could be seen. For example, there was an increasing understanding of the role of teacher-student relationships, greater confidence about their ability to become a teacher and often less teacher-centred drawings.

Focusing on the teaching of mathematics, Utley and Showalter (2007) used drawings to find out how pre-service teachers viewed themselves as either teacher- or child-centred mathematics teachers. The research indicated that two thirds of the pre-service teachers drew a teacher-centred classroom while the other third were more student-centred. Changes over time were also evident when Katz et al. (2011) found a significant transformation of identity from a teacher-centred to a more student-centred approach to teaching, during a semester where pre-service teachers (first, second or third year students in a primary course) engaged in a voluntary after school science project. Coughlin (2001) analysed 40 pre-service teachers' drawings before and after a school based placement. The first drawing tended to be stereotypical, but post-placement the teacher was no longer the focal point with the inference being that they saw themselves differently after experiencing the reality of the classroom. In a one year postgraduate program in Australia a study used interviews, graphing and drawings to help bring beliefs about teachers and teaching to the surface (Glass, 2011). Later drawings in one case study showed greater complexity and in conjunction with other data demonstrated a complex inner struggle of "frustrations, disappointments, concerns, fears and joys" (p. 141) as the participant developed the teacher self he aspired to be.

In an interesting study, Murphy, Delli, Edwards and Meaghan (2004) compared the beliefs about good teaching of second graders, pre-service and inservice teachers using drawings, a survey and open ended questions. The results were similar across all groups and indicated that good teachers were seen as caring, polite and not boring and that, according to the drawings, good teachers and teaching are characterised by "student centred instruction, happy students, teachers who are standing or moving about, inferring that

active teaching leads to active learning" (p. 87). The findings indicated that by the second grade students already had firm beliefs about good teachers and teaching, so by the time an individual is in a teacher education program they would have had many years of observation and experience to shape such beliefs.

The present study

As Beattie (2000) argued, it is important to investigate student teachers' "authentic voices at the outset of professional education" (p. 17). How do beginning pre-service teachers understand themselves as the teacher and how do they present themselves in a drawing of the teacher they aspire to be before they undertake field work in schools? Do they see the work as complex? How do they position the teacher and the students? Are they already experiencing conflicts in relation to ideas or practices? Are they thinking about the environment in which they will work and whether it will be supportive? Do they have a clear vision of themselves and the kind of teacher they will become?

Specifically, the research question guiding the present study was: *How do beginning pre-service teachers graphically represent the teacher they hope to become*? Drawings were used as a method of data collection to enable insight into how beginning pre-service teachers envision themselves as the teacher. In choosing drawing as the method for collecting data about pre-service teachers' understandings of themselves as the teacher, we acknowledge that the drawings will not necessarily be works of art in themselves. It is not their capacity to draw that is of interest, rather *what* they draw in rendering their vision of themselves as the teacher.

Methodology

Procedure

The research was conducted in an Australian university after obtaining the necessary ethical approval. Participants received an information letter explaining the purpose of the research and that the submission of the drawings was not related to any assessments in the course. It was assumed that if drawings were handed in that consent was given to include these in the study. Participants were given the option to identify their drawing which would allow for future data collection. Data collection was incorporated into two units selected because of their relevance to the research topic.

Primary and early childhood pre-service teachers were in a combined first year program. Data collection for this group occurred in a performing arts unit and pre-service teachers in the unit were comfortable working in multimedia. Data collection occurred near the end of Semester One in the last 30 minutes of workshops. Secondary participants completed their drawings during workshops in a unit preparing them for their first school field placement. Drawings were collected in the first week of Semester Two in their first workshop entitled *Uncovering the kind of teacher you plan to be: Expectations, assumptions and reflections*. Workshop activities encouraged participants to think about their own personal

teaching philosophy, and drawings were included with other activities such as discussing attitudes to and relationships with students, and relationships with colleagues, parents and carers.

Participants

All participants were in the first year of their four year undergraduate course and had not yet undertaken a formal field placement in a school. Drawings were submitted by 125 pre-service teachers in the Primary/ECE (*n*=82) and Secondary courses (*n*=43). As only 49 (39%) of these students identified themselves, the drawings were regarded as a whole set, rather than as belonging to someone from a particular course or of a certain gender.

Data collection

The following task, based on Freer and Bennett (2012), was used: *"What kind of teacher do you hope to become? Please draw a picture of yourself as a teacher and then describe in words what you have drawn."* There was no strict time limit and participants decided when and whether to hand in their drawings.

Data analysis and credibility

Although many of the drawings included text, the drawing was privileged over the text. This decision was congruent with the project's aims of using drawings to provide data that may not emerge in other forms of data gathering. It was also consistent with the instructions given to the respondents about having drawn their picture, to "then describe in words what you have drawn", which is different from asking respondents to reflect on their drawings and then write about the teachers they hope to become. For the initial coding, the text was only used to understand symbols such as when circles were labelled as children. Using the text only to refine the interpretation of the drawing rather than in the initial coding, also asserts the primacy of the drawing and adheres to the first criterion of visual methodology identified, being that images need to be taken seriously and must be carefully examined (Murphy, Delli, Edwards & Meaghan, 2004; Rose, 2012).

All drawings were photocopied then given an individual identification number. The drawings were coded according to the content of what was drawn in them, in a similar way to Murphy et al, (2004) where drawings were analysed by using the unique features of each image and what was included in all drawings. This is consistent with the method of content analysis used by Rose (2012). That is, the drawings were coded inductively according to the key elements found in the drawings (teacher, students, artefacts) and irrespective of interpretations, the drawings contained or did not contain those elements. Artefacts, or physical objects related to teaching, ranged from a sketchy representation of a desk, to detailed representations of a whole classroom environment.

Authors 1 and 2 independently coded all the drawings according to whether they contained teachers, students or artefacts, or all possible combinations of those aspects. Discrepancies were discussed until agreement was reached. A postgraduate research

student, with experience in visual coding, who had not been part of the previous coding discussions, recoded all drawings. An overall reliability of 0.89 was obtained which is above the suggestion that overall reliability of 0.80 is a "reasonable minimum" (Slavin, 2007, p. 193). The 13 discrepancies were re-examined by the first two researchers and the final coding confirmed. The use of multiple coders may also be seen as a form of triangulation (Berg, 1995). Triangulation in any form adds validity and credibility to an investigation (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984).

Results

Grouping the drawings based on their content resulted in eight categories. One group of three drawings could not be coded, resulting in 122 coded drawings. Table 1 indicates the key component of each category, the description used for coding, and the frequency of drawings in each category. Except for the categories of *Other* (*n*=3) and *Students only* (*n*=1), each category will be described with illustrative examples.

Table 1: Coding categories, descriptions and frequencies

Category name	Category description	Frequency
Teacher and students and artefacts	Drawing clearly includes a teacher, students and artefacts (objects related to teaching).	74
Teacher and students only	Drawing includes a teacher and one or more students. No artefacts of teaching are present.	22
Teacher only	Drawing is of a teacher alone; no students or artefacts.	14
Teacher and artefacts only	Drawing contains a teacher with some artefacts. No students are present.	4
Metaphors	Drawings (explained by accompanying text) represent teachers using metaphors. No teacher, students or artefacts are present.	4
Artefacts only	Drawing includes teaching artefacts only. No teacher or students are present.	3
Students only	Drawing only includes students.	1
Other	No clear artefacts, teacher or student or explanation.	3
Total		125

Teachers, students and artefacts

In the drawings in the largest category (*n*=74), *Teacher, students and artefacts*, all three components were included, however the detail of depiction of each varied. For example, an artefact could range from an imprecise representation of a book to a complex classroom with a variety of furniture, student work and teaching resources. Participants with more complex drawings pictured their teacher self as an active agent engaged in some aspect of their daily work. The school or classroom is the setting where the performance of identity is enacted. Figure 1 is an example of a more complex representation of artefacts. The teacher is represented as doing the 'work' of teaching. The classroom is

represented as a learning space with the teacher centrally placed directing the teaching and learning in a positive manner. The artefacts of the work of teaching such as technology, learning centres and spaces, desks, beanbags and sofas, and an outside play area are included as tools to express the work and identity of the teacher. These more complex drawings included the classroom, the teacher in a place of importance and the artefacts required to enact the work of teaching.
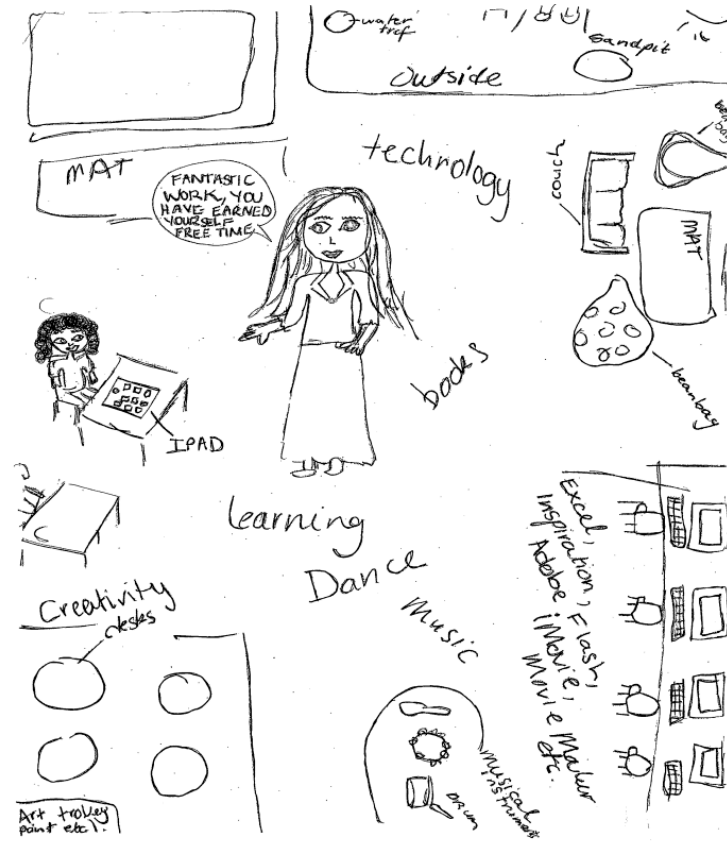

Figure 1: Teacher, students and artefacts category example

In less complex drawings which still included a teacher, students and artefacts, the depiction of the teacher was based on the notion of the teacher as an important focus for children and with some of the artefacts of teaching. In Figure 2, for example, the teacher is seen as a happy individual, smiling and telling jokes to maintain interest. His enactment of his teaching identity can be viewed as a capacity to encourage the enjoyment of learning in the sciences. He sees learning as fun and as the way to engage the students. The size of the teacher is relevant as he is in a position of authority in front of the class. The tie and collared shirt depicting the conservative nature of the way teachers might portray themselves is also indicative of the drawings in this category.
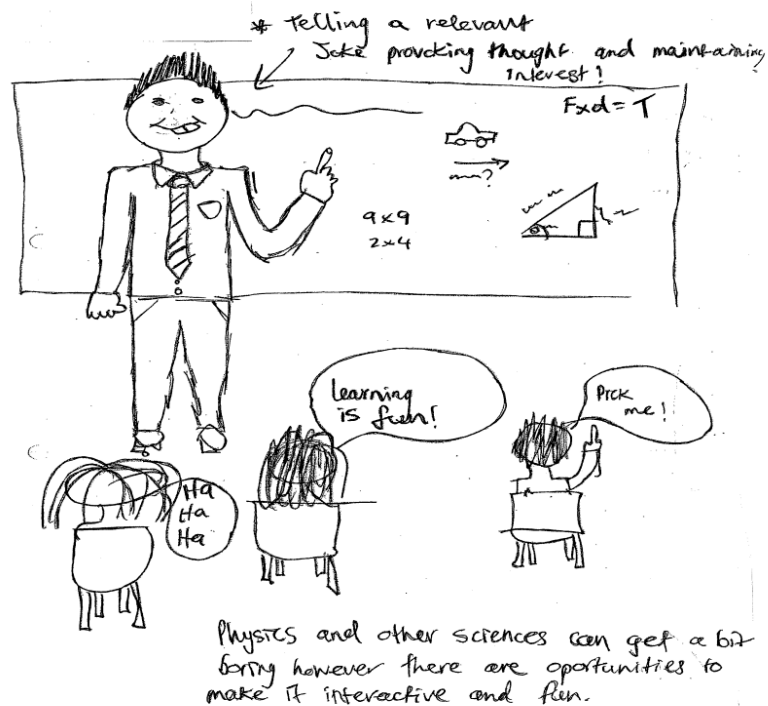
Figure 2: Teacher, students and artefacts category example

Teachers and students only

The second largest category *(n=22)* included the teacher and the students, but not the environment or artefacts related to teaching. The teacher is not based in a bounded learning environment such as a classroom, but the teacher self is again depicted as welcoming and engaged with the students. Typically, the teacher is surrounded by a group of smiling students in a non-identifiable environment. Many of the drawings focused on the emotional aspects of the teacher student relationship. The illustrative drawing (Figure 3) indicates the teacher self as smiling, conservatively dressed with two smiling neatly dressed students looking out towards the viewer. There is a confidence in the teacher self that is revealed in the slightly lop sided smile and the open pose that she takes with the students. Her professional look personified by the wearing of glasses, the skirt and top with a name badge and the formal shoes is in line with the students who are neatly attired in a school uniform. The identity being represented here is one of confidence and care with a focus on the social and emotional aspects of teaching and this is typical of the drawings found in this category.

Figure 3: Teacher and students category example

Teacher only

The third most prevalent category of drawings *(n=*14*)* depicted the teacher without any artefacts such as desks, boards, teaching spaces or any students present. Drawings still included elements of care towards students. Central to the sense of teacher identity in this category are concerns such as the personal qualities the teacher self brings to the situation and the attention given to children's emotional well-being. The illustrative example (Figure 4) depicts the focus of the respondents included in this category. The drawing focuses on the teacher herself and what she offers. The open smile, open stance and inclusion of 'Ha, ha, ha' projects a happy demeanour and confidence and signifies the respondent's belief that these qualities are an important aspect of her developing teacher identity – and by inference – an important asset for the job. This is further reinforced by the musical signifier near the mouth suggesting a lighted-hearted mood in the classroom and that singing may be a feature of the school day. Two question marks are positioned in the company of other signifiers around the head. In this context they suggest that an inquiring mind, or knowledge, is part of the teacher-self. Love heart symbols emanating from the chest – and viewed in the context of the open-armed stance - signify that a loving disposition is an important and valued aspect of this person's teacher identity.

I see myself as confident well enthused teacher cho is helpful, kind and loving. I will bring new ideas and a creative fun new way of learning and growing.

Figure 4: Teacher only category example

Teacher and artefacts only

In the fourth, relatively small category (*n*=4), the teacher was depicted within a classroom or teaching environment in which the work of the teacher is enacted, but without students being represented. Teaching artefacts are recognisable and clearly part of the work of the teacher. The focus is on the teacher and the environment of teaching, as illustrated in the representative drawing from this category (Figure 5). The drawing depicts the teacher located within a classroom environment. The classroom is the setting for the teacher to perform his/her identity. The teacher is at the centre of the environment and is presented as a primary agent for learning. The teacher is represented as confident and welcoming and the text (e.g. "welcoming", "warm", "encouraging" included makes this clear.

Metaphor for the teacher

In another small category (*n*=4) some participants included a metaphor rather than depicting the teacher figuratively. The teacher is depicted as a metaphor and is described in terms of the effect they might have on students. In the exemplar used (Figure 6), the tree represents a teacher viewed as nurturing, and helping students to grow and develop. The metaphor of the tree indicates the idea of teacher identity being realised in a way that assists students to grow and develop in a protected environment. The teacher portrayed as a tree bearing much fruit and the analogy of the notion of reaping what is sown are indicative of the idea of a teacher identity that is enacted through the nurturing of the students.
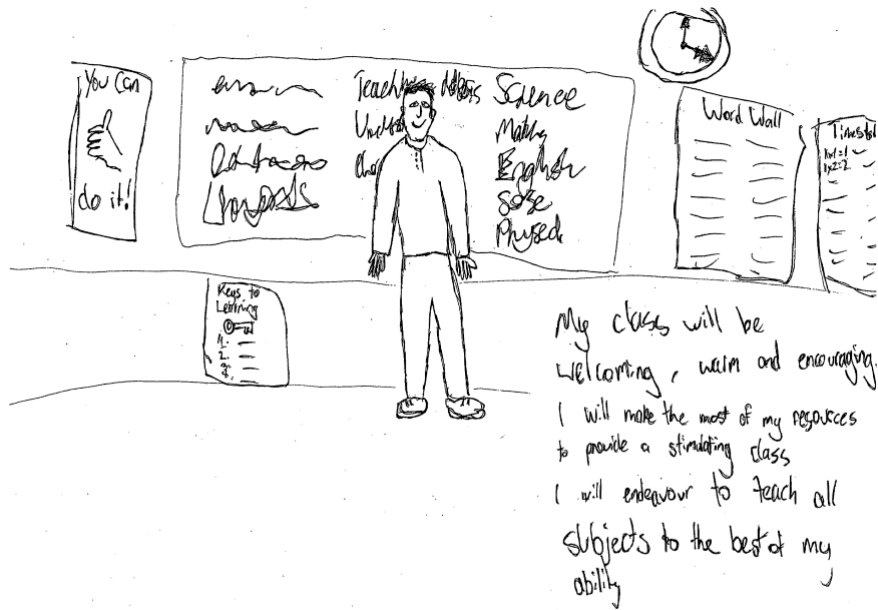
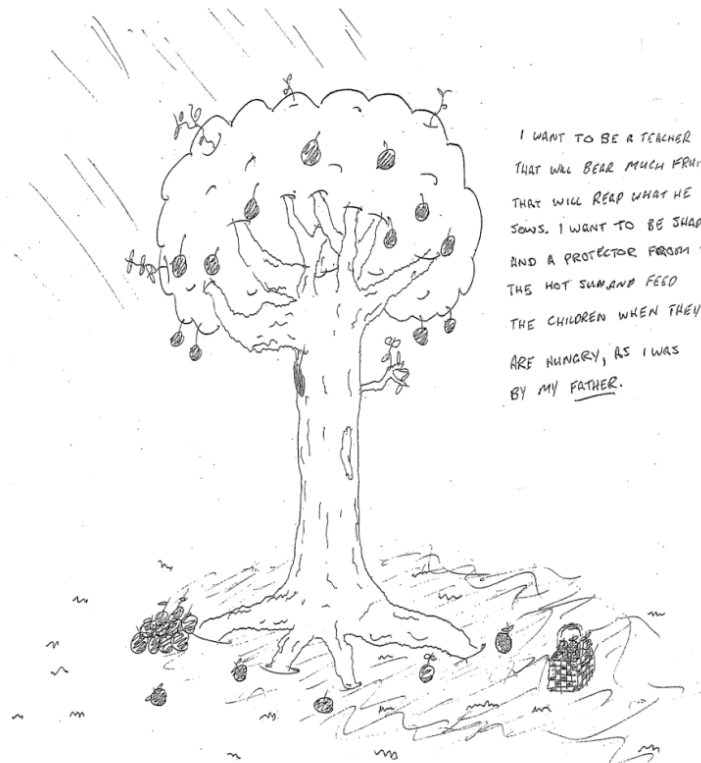Figure 5: Teacher and artefacts category example

Figure 6: Metaphor category example

Artefacts only

The final category illustrated (*n*=3) only contains artefacts and indicates a space where teacher identity may be enacted but without the teacher or students being realised pictorially. The environment that the teacher and students might inhabit is depicted and includes details such as learning centres. However, the drawings in this category do indicate a teacher who is organised and prepared and has a welcoming approach to his/her work. The teacher, although absent, is still recognised as being part of the class. The selected drawing (Figure 7), although sparse in terms of what is included, still gives a clue as to the way this teacher will work. Preparation is done and information about the day's activities is provided. There is a welcoming sign on the door and the class is in readiness for the teacher and students.
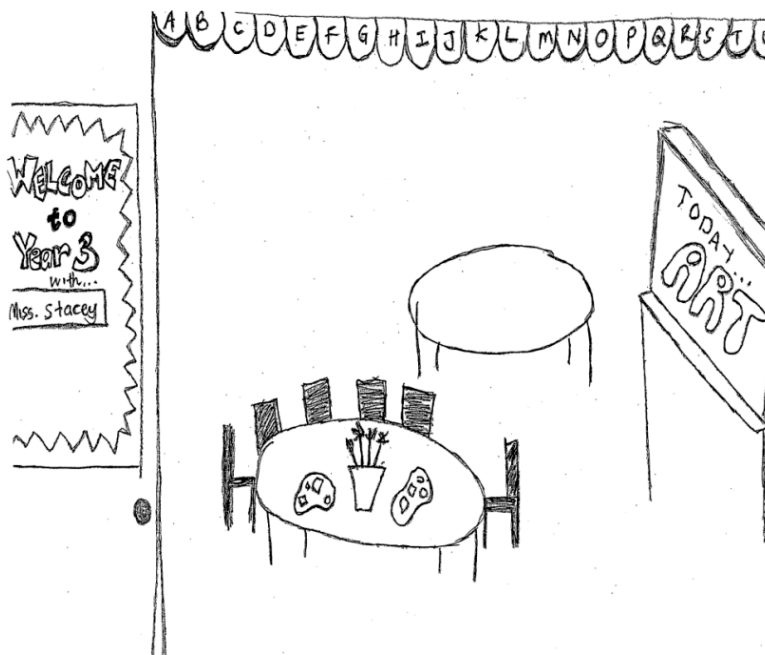

Figure 7: Artefacts only category example

Discussion

Summary of findings

Becoming a teacher is a complex business, but in these drawings it appeared to be an uncomplicated process. The joy of the teachers as exemplified in the selected drawings and the confidence with which they face the work are indicative of these pre-service teachers who have yet to experience the classroom as a teacher. They portrayed themselves as the teacher with an open smiling stance in all but fifteen drawings and whether more realistically realised or represented by a stick figure, displayed a positive

identity of themselves as the teacher at the centre of the classroom. The pre-service teachers' drawings indicated a confidence in their capacity to become the teacher and to do the work of teaching in an engaging and caring manner. Much of what is relevant to teaching, however, was not addressed in the drawings and some of these important issues will be examined along with what is included at this stage of their journey of becoming the teacher. Three major themes across the categories related to the complexity of teaching, positive emotions, and the confidence of the pre-service teachers.

Complexity of teaching

The drawings showed an emerging understanding of the complexity of teaching, in that the majority of drawings included teachers, students and artefacts situated in a learning environment, illustrated in varying degrees of detail. As participants had only had approximately one semester of study in their four year program, this finding seems appropriate. Nevertheless, there were some key aspects of the work of a teacher that were not included. There was little reference to the broader education community. Only one or two drawings included colleagues and these were represented in a different context or at a different time point. Teachers were never represented working *with* other colleagues such as teachers or education assistants. Similarly, no administrative staff or families appeared in drawings, nor did employers or teacher educators. The only explicit reference to teacher education was a teacher represented as a graduate in regalia and holding a certificate. Explanations could be that the task was to draw themselves as a teacher, rather than the work of a teacher, or that prior experiences or the focus in the course so far had highlighted the responsibility of the individual teacher. Standard 7 of the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (AITSL, 2014) requires teachers to "Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community", so this will be an expectation for this group of pre-service teachers as they move through their course. Given also that formal and informal mentors, school administrators and teaching colleagues provide key social and professional supports for early career teacher resilience (Beltman et al., 2011), it may be that the collegial nature of teaching needs to be emphasised early in the pre-service program.

Positive emotions

The second largest group of drawings included only teachers and their students and illustrated positive relationships between them. Even where teachers alone were present or whole classrooms portrayed, almost all drawings explicitly showed teachers and / or students expressing positive emotions. The caring, nurturing, joyful, happy demeanour of the teacher portrayed appeared as an important feature in the majority of drawings. Explanatory words such as "supportive", "fun", "friendly", "approachable" and "happy" were used. The participants in the study expected that they would enjoy teaching and that their students would enjoy learning as well as just being in their classrooms. AITSL Standard 4 (AITSL, 2014) requires graduate teachers to be able to "Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments" and this group of pre-service teachers saw that they would achieve this. Emotions, however, play a complex role in the formation of teacher identity (Zembylas, 2005), and teaching has been seen as demanding emotional

work where teachers at all stages of their career "face the growing demands of emotional labour and are engaged in the emotional work that underpins learning environments" (Newberry, Gallant & Riley, 2013, p. 271). As yet the participants in this study did not seem aware of any possible negative emotions or struggles. The dilemma for teacher educators would be in how to prepare them for what the literature says can be an emotionally challenging profession, and yet still achieve the positive learning environment and relationships with students that are also known to sustain early career teachers in difficult times (Kitching, Morgan & O'Leary, 2009).

Confidence

The third largest group of drawings featured a teacher only with no students or any evidence of learning activity. In these, and indeed all categories, teachers looked confident and professional and accompanying text confirmed this intention. Drawings showed no evidence of current or potential identity conflicts suggested by other studies using drawings with pre-service teachers. Unlike Brand and Dolloff's (2002) work, the participants did not express doubt about becoming a teacher in their drawings, but it could be argued that the confident expression of themselves as the future teacher could be seen as unrealistic. This hoped for teaching self may be disrupted by the reality of working in schools, such as when they commence school placements and encounter potentially conflicting worlds (Horn et al., 2008). Will this group of pre-service teachers become less confident as they progress through their course, or experience a 'confidence slump' as they begin their career as Demetriou, Wilson and Winterbottom (2009) found in new graduates? Others have found that self-efficacy increases during pre-service courses only to drop in the early career stage and then increase as more successes are experienced (Chan, 2008; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007; Woolfolk Hoy & Burke Spero, 2005). Self-efficacy is important in teacher resilience (Beltman et al., 2011; Day & Gu, 2014; Ee & Chang, 2010; Leroux & Théorêt, 2014). Resilient teachers with a strong sense of identity believe they can make a difference (Day, 2008; Flores, 2006). So one challenge highlighted in the positive, confident representations of future teachers in this study's drawings, is how to maintain and nurture this confidence.

Methodology

In this qualitative study where drawings were used for pre-service teachers to represent the teacher they see themselves as becoming, there were a number of ways to interpret the data. As outlined we elected to focus on the content of the images and have discussed the complexity of the drawings, and the emotions and levels of confidence portrayed.

The large number of pre-service teachers involved in the study (N=125) provides an opportunity to add to the existing literature on emergent teacher identity using arts based methods to enable a greater 'voice' to the participants. Drawing allows for the expression of the self that may not be heard through surveys or questionnaires (Mitchell et al., 2011). The majority of drawings indicated a confident, caring, nurturing teacher without reference to what might be the reality of classrooms. Ganesh (2011, p. 238) suggested that "drawings can permit expression of feeling and imagery, and allow for defining and

redefining shared attitudes", and the joy and positive expectation of their future work was evident in the drawings of these participants.

Using drawings to examine and reflect on identity can be easily incorporated into workshop activities and as part of the developing and sharing of experiences of teachers and teaching. The opportunities for reflection and discussion of what impinges upon individuals' beliefs about teaching and their developing identity can emerge from the drawings and reveal "the nuances and ambivalences in people's views of teachers, as well as the historical, social, cultural, and personal stereotypes that can inform our professional knowledge of teacher education" (Weber & Mitchell, 1996, p. 312). As suggested by Utley and Showalter (2007), "self-reflection can make clear existing beliefs about being a teacher and therefore has the potential to make changes in these perceptions and beliefs" (p. 10).

Limitations and implications for research and practice

One limitation of the study was that because many of the drawings were not identified it was not possible to connect a drawing with a course or with the gender of the individual to explore any group differences. Although looking through the drawings did allow the researchers to identify that differences were minimal across the whole cohort, a more nuanced view may provide additional information that could prove helpful for particular groups of pre-service teachers. As this research was conducted prior to the first school field placement it has provided a base-line for further research so that those participants who identified themselves can be followed up to compare drawings completed after they have experienced the reality of classrooms. As analysing drawings can be challenging when grappling with "the richness of images" and "their amenability to interpretation" (Mitchell et al., 2011, p. 3), interviews with these participants would enable a deeper understanding of their developing teacher identity.

The use of drawings has enabled an exploration of beginning pre-service teachers' professional identity. The outcomes of the research indicate further questions to be answered in relation to the process. Identity is contextual (Gee, 2000) and shaped by interplay of the personal and the contextual, with potential conflict, for example, between the personal and the professional (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Pre-service teachers in other studies have reported a tension between the expectations of the school and the university and that the teacher they want to be is not valued in a school (Beijaard et al., 2004). The story of learning to teach is a difficult one and can by highly conflictual (Britzman, 2003), but in the drawings of the participants of this study, conflict and difficulties were not present.

For teacher educators, an important role could be one of supporting pre-service teachers to develop the awareness that the image they have of themselves and the reality of the classroom could be different. As suggested by Brand & Dolloff (2002), the examination of drawings by both pre-service teachers and educators may provide an appropriate way forward to understand the reality of the work of teachers. Post-placement reflection where any tensions and conflicts can be identified and pre-service teachers helped to make sense of their emergent teacher identity is an opportunity to use drawings to focus on the

"images and ownership" of that identity (Bennett, 2013, p. 55). Such reflections and discussions would help pre-service teachers to apply knowledge acquired from teacher education programs into workplace situations in the future. Similarly, pre-service teachers could be made aware of the supportive and practical role that other adults play in the resilience of pre-service and early career teachers in discussions about the content of drawings.

Conclusion

There are many complexities involved in developing a teacher identity. However, pre-service teachers in this study were near the beginning of their four year program and represented their future teacher self as positive, confident, capable and happy. Using drawings enabled them to depict key aspects of themselves as future teachers. Identity is shaped by both personal and contextual factors, but there seemed to be no hint of potential future challenges that might destabilise these individuals' positive emotions as they encounter the realities of teaching (Friedman, 2004; Pillen et al., 2013). They seemed to be confident of controlling their environment and unaware that they may work in contexts where there are discrepancies between their own beliefs and preferred teaching practices and what is acceptable - tensions between the personal and the professional (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Identity is dynamic and during their pre-service programs as they learn more and encounter different school practices in their placements, these visions of themselves as teachers could change. The challenge for teacher educators and for mentor teachers in schools as these pre-service teachers encounter the complexities of their course and field placements is to maintain this enthusiasm and provide support and opportunities for them to create a strong, professional teacher identity.

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